



*« A show where sound and movement are one. »*

# Les Payenkes Utopistes

*Fug*

*« Hug is a 30 minutes show where you will meet two artists who are both acrobats and musicians. A circular podium, placed in the middle of the audience, is the stage as well as the music instrument. The audience will be immersed in a sound and visual atmosphere specific to the company Les Payenkes Utopistes : a subtle mix between abstract and absurd, inviting everyone to travel in a raw, sensitive and humorous world. »*

—▶ Link to the trailer : <https://youtu.be/txFLVL1gu7I>

## Hug

—The world stops breathing for a brief moment, which seems to touch eternity. The audience, the musicians, everyone is hanging on the conductor's direction stick, here we go, the movement is starting. It settles down, regular cadence, the heart of the piece. Unchanged repetitions. Organized clatter beating time. —

Considering the fact that a pianist needs his fingers to make music, Les Payenkes Utopistes created an instrument requiring two full bodies to play on it.

In Hug, this instrument, a circular wooden podium, stands in the center. Seated all around, the audience is being immersed in the show to be completely part of it.

Music, the ideal emotion carrier, is used in symbiosis with dance and acrobatics : the music becomes visible and the movements hearable.

Thanks to a sound amplification system and some effect pedals, the rough sound coming out of the podium is transformed and modulated throughout the 30 minutes of the performance.

The sound spatialization in 360 degrees contributes in creating an intimate atmosphere, allowing the two acrobats (who are also the musicians) to invite the audience to reconnect to their own body and emotions, and to unite all together for the time of this trip.

The starting point of this show is the passion that our two artists, Saphia Loizeau and Samuel Rhyner, have for the circus and music. BUT this combination is no accident, music - or sound arrangement - and movement are two separate things but intimately related.

In performing arts, and more precisely circus, at least two of our senses are being triggered : hearing and seeing (it would be easy to extend this reflection to the 5 senses, but this is not our subject here). Unlike music, circus cannot be narrowed down to one senses only. It is part of its essence to be immersive and to stimulate more than one senses. Of course, there are circus shows without music, but the silence is fully part of the soundtrack.

Music on the other hand can easily be narrowed down to hearing, despite it often producing a kinesthetic response like moving the head or tapping the foot.

*— To be precise, it is impossible to hear music without movement : hearing starts with movements of the membrane of the eardrum responding to pressure changes in the air. So, already here, mouvement and sound are connected. Coming back to the « bigger » movements, the body movements :—*

When we go to a concert, it is common that the musicians dance to support the rhythm of the music they are playing. In circus, in opposition, music is usually a support for the act, a support for movement. An interaction can occur between music and movement, further than a simple connection, both can be combined, supporting one another. For Hug, our duet asked themselves how to go further than an interaction or a connection. They want the acrobat and the musician to be the same person, and the movement to be essential to the sound, and vice-versa.

# Challenges and motivations

**Saphia et Samuel :** « Our will to create this new show, using live music, and to create this instrument that has to be played with the whole body comes from our need of reconnection. After this sanitary crisis, we would like to reconnect with our audience that we suddenly stopped seeing, and reconnect people to art. And more importantly, we would like to help people reconnecting with their bodies and emotions.

Music is probably the best way to communicate, to express feelings and emotions. It is crossing all borders of nationality, race, and culture. Music appears to be similar to features of language, but in our brain, it is more rooted in the primitive structures that are involved in motivation, reward and emotion.\*

In this show, we play with rhythm as well as with expectations :

When you hear a song, the brain synchronizes neural oscillators with the pulse of the music (through cerebellum activation), and starts to predict when the next strong beat will occur. The response to 'groove' is mainly unconscious. Music involves subtle violations of timing and, because we know through experience that music is not threatening, and we also might have learned in our everyday life some musical patterns and musical styles, these violations are ultimately identified by the frontal lobes as a source of pleasure. The expectation builds anticipation, which, when met, results in the reward reaction. But also other feelings when your expectations weren't met. Somehow, music is a way of communicating directly with emotions.

The scenography of Hug (the audience seated all around the stage, close to the performers and embraced by the speakers) sets up this immersive atmosphere, reconnecting everybody. The 360° panning also helps us in that direction : if sound comes from one side, all eyes and minds are led to the source of this sound, thus allowing an opportunity to make eye contact, meet, smile, etc.

We can neither hug, nor touch our audience (because of corona), but we want to invite them in a trip with us, in this intimate piece. Music on the other hand can embrace the audience, hug them, that's why we chose to have the speakers all around them.

Through this show, we want to allow a moment of attentive listening. In fact, we are nowadays bombarded with sounds and images, making us numb to our sound and visual environment. What does your entrance door sound like, your dripping tap, is the reverberation of your voice in the bathroom different than the one in the living room ?



\* <https://psychcentral.com/lib/music-how-it-impacts-your-brain-emotions/>

*« Named after a tropical bird, the circus company Les Payenkes Utopistes was founded by Samuel Rhyner and Saphia Loizeau in 2019. They want to promote the performing arts in all its forms, as well as the creation and the touring of shows internationally. »*

## The association



Saphia Loizeau is a French circus artist that has a background of more than 10 years in competition gymnastics and began practicing circus quite late. It's at the age of 15 that she started by studying at "Ecole Nationale de Cirque de Chatellerault » and continued then at the "Academy for Circus and Performance Art" in Tilburg (NL). She is now graduated since summer 2017 and touring her swinging trapeze act in circus and theater companies (Wintercircus Arlette Hanson, Ashton Brothers, cirque Starlight). Thanks to her studies, hobbies and family, she is now an artist with more than one string to her bow : swinging trapeze, floor acrobatic, partner acrobatic, chinese pole, music ...

Samuel Rhyner is a Swiss circus artist graduated from the Academy for Circus and Performance Art. At first, his desire to understand and his interest for physics led him to study in the EPFL (Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne). During his first year, he realized that physics would only reply to the question « how ? » and not to the question « why ? ». He decided then to stop his physic studies and joined the Academy for Circus and Performance Art in 2016. He is now specialized in acro-dance. Interested in movement in general, but thirsty for knowledge, Samuel decided to learn Piano, electronic music composition and Cyr Wheel besides his main discipline. He is working on few different project with circus and dance companies.



Both having studied in the same school, we quickly realized that we had a connexion and started working together.

We first gave acro-dance workshops and created the show « Bonne question! » in 2018. It was at the end of July that we had our last residency in Switzerland and started to tour this 20 min street show in Collombey-Muraz (CH), to continue then in La Rochelle (FR), Ile de Ré (FR), Festival d'Aurillac (FR), Tours (FR), festival Circolo (NL), prejavu in the Nieuwe Vorst in Tilburg (NL) and finally in Boulevard Theater festival (NL).

We then decided to create another show « O-zero ». This time targeting the theaters and inside festivals. We premiered it in December 2019 in the Theater De Nieuwe Vorst in Tilburg (NL). It is thanks to this show that we started to have the support of Makershuis Tilburg.

From the sanitary crisis emerged our will to create « Hug ».

Today our artistic vision is still evolving and getting clearer. We develop a « transdisciplinary » (circus-dance-music) approach, embracing the crossbreeding of arts that circus has, and be part of its ongoing expanding.

As the immediate theatre — « Le théâtre immédiat » — claimed by Peter Brook, we want to question everyday the discoveries of the last rehearsal, or show, as if our technic and research would always slip through our fingers.

« Le théâtre est un art autodestructeur. Il est écrit sur le sable. Le théâtre réunit chaque soir des gens différents et il leur parle à travers le comportement des acteurs. Une mise en scène est établie et doit être reproduite – mais du jour où elle est fixée, quelque chose d'invisible commence à mourir. »

— L'Espace vide, Peter Brook

This quote evokes the fact that whenever you create art and from the moment you fix it, something invisible is going to start dying. Peter Brook talks here about theater, but we are definitely agreeing that it works in the same way for circus or any live performing art. That's why we want to keep questioning everything and learning from it.

The role of the audience is then really important, we would like to have a direct contact with the spectators, they should be part of the global artistic creation, as Antonin Artaud proclaimed. Circus is a performing art, we use our bodies and skills to pass messages across. During the live performances, we want to try to strengthen the idea of a unique and ephemeral experience by accepting and magnifying the opportunity of interacting with the audience (changing at every performance), and all the technical hazards that can happen. Creating an environment conducive to meet and connect with everyone.

## *Supporters and collaborators*

We are currently being supported by the organization Makershuis Tilburg, its collaboration partners are Het Zuidelijk Toneel, De Nieuwe Vorst, DansBrabant, Theaters Tilburg and Festival Circolo. They unite their strengths to give the artists of the futur a place in the city and in the world. Makershuis Tilburg is also an International Network in which the artists meet and meet their audience. Together, they contribute in the debates and cross the borders between disciplines and sectors.

They offer us a financial support, residency spaces and experimentation moments during events for this creation.

For more information, here is the link to their website :

<https://www.makershuistilburg.nl/home-en.html>

We worked with the musician, composer and audiovisual installation specialist : Bart Van Dongen, as well as with Wouter De Belder : a musician specialized in violin and loop station. Their expertise was extremely useful for all the audio part of the show, which is, unlike movement, out of our comfort zone. We both are music lovers (piano, clarinet, electronic music, ...) but our strength is circus and more specifically acrobatics and dance-contact.

We also worked with the choreographer Piet Van Dycke

For more info, here is the link to their websites :

<https://www.bartvandongen.com/?lang=en>

<https://doft.be/wie-wat-hoe/1/Piet>

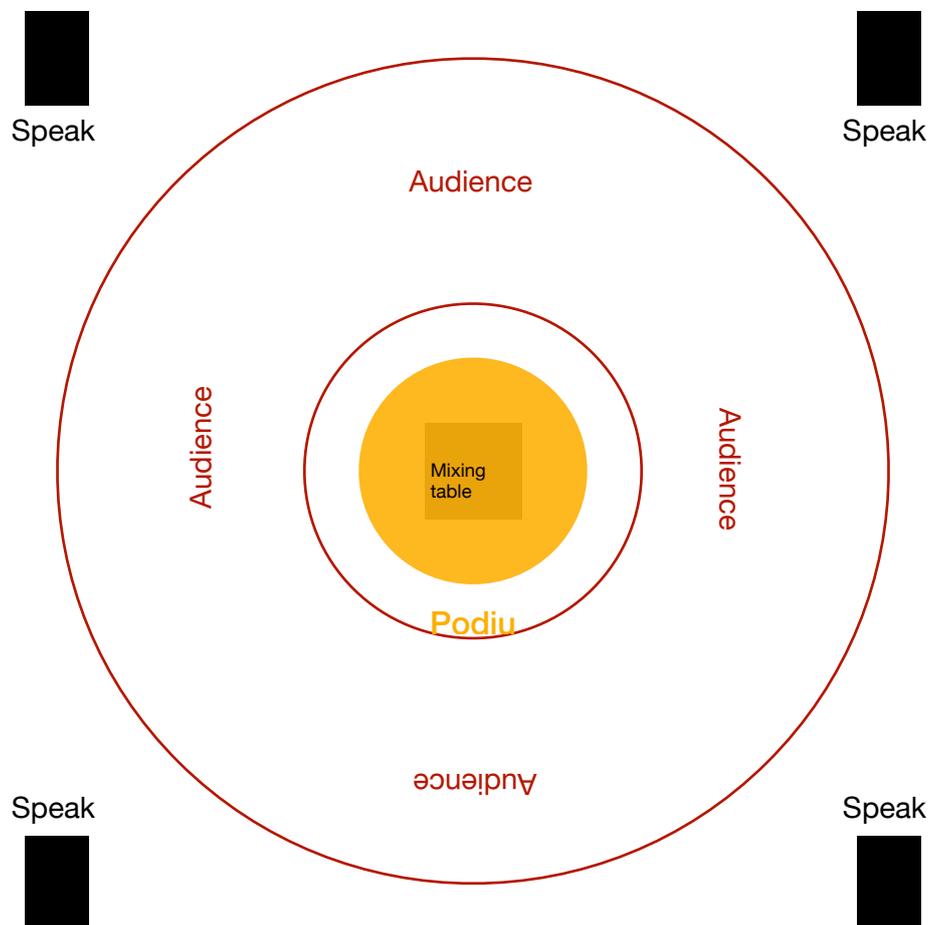
Last but not least, we are working with Buro Piket, an organisation which is trying to develop the current circus world. Created by Wendy Moonen and Sandra Smits, who help us broadcast the performances we create.

For more info, here is the link to their website :

<https://buropiket.com/artists/>

# Fiche technique

Hug is a show for inside or outside, for 10 to 250 people.



What we bring :

- A « table », the instrument, of 2 meters de diameter (= stage)
- 4 speakers
- A mixing table
- A set of cables.

What we need :

- An extension cord which goes until the middle of the performing place
- 3,5 meters of minimum hight
- Minimum 3 meters between the table and the audience
- 2h of build up and 1h of build down
- Space to change and warm up
- Arrangement of seats for the audience

EVERYTHING CAN BE DISCUSSED AND ADAPTED SO THE SHOW CAN HAPPEN IN THE BEST CONDITIONS FOR THE ARTISTS AND THE AUDIENCE.

# Contact et videos

**Facebook page :** <https://www.facebook.com/lespayenkesutopistes/>

**Instagram :** <https://www.instagram.com/lespayenkesutopistes/>

**Website :** [lespayenkesutopistes.com](http://lespayenkesutopistes.com)

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**Trailer de Hug :** <https://youtu.be/txFLVL1gu7I>

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