

20 SILENCES

a project by **groupe Karol Karol**

concept & performance **Charles Chemin**

music **Dom Bouffard**

20 SILENCES

*In April 2014, Charles Chemin led an 'Arts and Space' research at Cape Kennedy Space Center, NASA Command Center and Rice Space Institute in Houston, with director Bruno Meyssat. The interviews with astronauts, engineers and technicians from the Apollo missions, as well as the access to facilities, instruments, vessels and rock samples led to conceive **20 SILENCES**.*

is a theater piece and a music piece.

A human being contemplates outer space. We witness his journey in time, and his conflicted interaction with the powerful environment that surrounds him. The soundscape, altered live by both the composer and an algorithm, enacts the impenetrable formation of galaxies, stars, planets, and the emergence of life forms.

It is a study on infinity and eternity, nothingness and other worlds, planets and stars, human destinies, the unknowable, life before birth and after the grave.

And what we commonly call "understanding" is in reality "getting to know that we don't know".

It is an irrational study, as it is drawn by humans with limited understanding.

There is no such thing as an empty space or an empty time. A silence is a complex composition.

production

groupe Karol Karol (France)

in collaboration with

Officine Montecristo (Italy)

The Watermill Center, New York (USA)

Babel International Festival, Targoviste (Romania)

and the generous support of

National Aeronautics and Space Administration - NASA (USA)

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*texts, influences and quotes / CHARLES CHEMIN, EMILY DICKINSON, FRED HAISE,
HERACLITUS, MAURICE MAETERLINCK, OVID AND ARTHUR RIMBAUD*

*recorded voices / DOM BOUFFARD, LUCA BOUFFARD, CAROLINE BRETON, PAOLA
CALLIARI, CHARLES CHEMIN, MARIUS CHEMIN, GIOVANNI FIRPO, ALLI MCINNES,
LUIZA MITU AND ROBERT WILSON*

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duration **1h10**

dates

2017 / June 10th

Babel International Festival, Targoviste (Romania)

2017 / September 22nd & 23rd

Conversazioni - 70° Teatro Olimpico Festival, Vicenza (Italy)

20 SILENCES

concept and performance

Charles Chemin

music

Dom Bouffard

lights

Aliberto Sagretti

assistants

Giovanni Firpo

Luiza Mitu

dramaturgical advisor

Caroline Breton

sculpture

Adrian Damian

costume & masks

Robin Chemin

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20 SILENCES is a project by theatre director Charles Chemin and composer Dom Bouffard. They focus on human singularity and spontaneity, in regards of infinity and eternity. In order to talk about humans, they convoke space and fomation of planets. Letting aside traditional dramaturgy, they attempt to work on the human beings' sensible, cognitive and intellectual reactions to their environment.

A human being contemplates outer space. For humans, the feelings of infinity and of losing control are fascinating and disturbing. Surrounding matter lives its own life, at a scale that they can't comprehend.

THE SHOW is an environment for the audience to experience their relation to the unknown, matter, and other humans, with two scores happening at the same time, the soundscape and the live performance.

One score is **THE SOUNDSCAPE**, made of natural elements, voices, texts, sounds, instrumental music, vibrations. It represents the outer space, living matter. Even though its layers are carefully composed, it has its own life. The volume, spatialization (through about 10 speakers), vibration level are altered live by the composer and an algorithm. We know the scenario, like fixed chemical elements, but their dozage and mixing is unpredictable. The content of the score is made as an environment of spacial activities, the big bang, formations of planets, evolution of matter until the natural conditions of emergence of life. There is a challenge in composing elements that are traditionally not represented in sound, like void, outer space, and especially silence, which doesn't really exist. What we commonly call silence is necesserarily full of noise, of activity, whether it is a street rumor or one's pulse.

THE LIVE PERFORMANCE is a visual, spacial and vocal score produced by the actor, interacting with the audience and in a conflicted interaction with the soundscape score.

He tries to be autonomous, but often succombs to the sound's influence. The actor performs alone in front of the audience, addresses people at times and defies the distance with them. He goes until exchanging roles, getting crowds to fill the stage and him performing in their seat for a few minutes at the start of the show. The construction of the actions results from research, interviews and workshops at NASA, and addresses the self-redefinition of a human facing the immensity of space. The action deals with notions of freedom and the unexpected. It is a composition of dances and speeches, spanning from live improvisation and free talk to the audience, to very choreographed moves and poetical texts. He alternates dreamy and very concrete moods, with great human versatility.

Creating the scores separately and with distinct materials allowed to create the conditions of natural random chaos. But, as in nature, elements are all part of the same whole, and they find a way to respond to each other. Life manages to appear from originally scattered elements.

some of the actions

Silence #1

The audience is gathered outside the room of the theater. They can hear that the show already started, sound and vibration, but they can't get in. They will be allowed in the room for Silence #2.



Silence #6

The actor has disappeared in the seating area, and reappears with a monster mask, executing the Space Monster Dance, developed after testimonies of fear and fantasies by astronauts from the Apollo missions.

Silence #9

The audience is on stage or in front of it, with the actor. He tells a fantasized tale of how planets were formed. It's been 20 minutes since the start of the show, the actor stops his tale which could be infinite and the audience is finally invited to get to their seats.



Silence #12

The actor is on top of a tall ladder on the empty stage and realizes a NASA psychological training experiment : an improvised text based on the colliding of long term memory and short term memories. When he comes down, a field of rocs has appeared on stage, and from there on, his materials and their order will be dictated by the soundscape.

Silence #16

The actor stops the action. He can't follow the soundscape anymore. The lights come up, he tries to start a dialogue on what to do next with the composer and light designer. But they ignore him, the sound continues its own life, so he has to continue performing.



Silence #20

The actor leaves. Then the composer and light designer leave as well. The audience remains with the soundtrack, vibrations and lights still changing on their own. They are left alone with their present time and space.

Charles Chemin

is a French/American director born in 1983. He was trained by Meg Harper (Merce Cunningham Co.) and Robert Wilson, with whom he collaborates since 1993.

Since 2008 he conceives and directs shows between theatre and visual arts, and stages contemporary music pieces. In 2018, he creates *Athens by Night* based on *Timon* and *Midsummer Night's Dream* by Shakespeare at Craiova National Theatre and Shakespeare International Festival. In Cuba, he directs the opera *Cubanacán* by Roberto Valera and Charles Koppelman, on the architect Ricardo Porro at 2015 Havana Biennial, before touring in Cuba in 2018 and USA in 18/19. From 2008 to 2013, he creates the pieces *Girldmachine* at Performa09 New York, *PigPigPig* at Moscow Contemporary Art Biennial and *Have Mercy on me* in collaboration with visual artist Carlos Soto, *Round2* with Meg Harper and Jenn Dees and directs Ictus Ensemble musicians in *Home Work* by composer François Sarhan at Bregenz International Festival.

He also co-directs Robert Wilson's theatre shows in many countries, such as *The Blacks* by Genet at Odeon National Theatre Paris, *Krapp's Last Tape* by Beckett where he directs Wilson on stage, on world tour since 2009, *Rhinoceros* by Ionesco at Craiova National Theatre, *GARRINCHA* in São Paulo, *DomP* at Versailles or the installation *Living Rooms* at Louvre Museum. He participates in the artistic orientation of the Watermill Center, a laboratory for performance created by Wilson in New York, where they work together on the next pieces like *Jungle Book* with CocoRosie at Théâtre de la Ville or *Phaedra* by Racine at Comédie-Française.

He has had a long career as an actor, including with Robert Wilson, Bruno Meyssat, Philippe Chemin, Christine Fersen or Andrew Ondrejčák, in places like Comédie-Française, Lincoln Center Festival in New York, Festival d'Avignon, Festival d'Automne à Paris, Mmoma Moscou, Barbican Center in London, DeSingel in Antwerp and other major French and European theatres.

Dom Bouffard

is a musician and composer from London. From 1997 to 2006 he played guitar with Alt Rock bands Sona Fariq and Queen Adreena, touring internationally with artists including Marilyn Manson, Sonic Youth and Public Enemy, and collaborating with producer Jagz Kooner (Primal Scream) on remixes for artists including Massive Attack and Kasabian.

He has since worked as a performer and arranger on the Robert Wilson/Berliner Ensemble productions *Shakespeare's Sonnets* (2009) with Rufus Wainwright, and *Lulu* (2011) with Lou Reed; composed two Wilson radio plays (*Monsters of Grace II* and *Tower of Babel* for ARD/BBC), and *Flying* — a video portrait featuring Lady Gaga at the Musée du Louvre.

Dom's work, which also spans film, TV and fashion, includes his radio piece *WW1* (2015, hr2) which was nominated for the Karl Szucka and Kriegsblinden Prizes, and several dance works with Marianna Kavallieratos: *Recalculate* (2013), *Stations* (2014), dance film *Metal Mark*, and installation *4WALLS* (2016). He is also a singer-songwriter with Alt Country/Punk Blues duo Emperors of Rome.

Technical specifications

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TRAVEL

The venue will provide for **4 people on tour** :

Dom Bouffard (London)

Charles Chemin (Paris)

Giovanni Firpo (Bologna)

Aliberto Sagretti (Rome)

- all travels and transportation to and from the venue
- accomodations (3* hotel minimum) in single rooms with large bed
- a per diem food stipend (amount TBD)

SPACE and SET-UP

- The show needs 2 days of set-up (performance at the end of 2nd day).
- The venue can be a theatre but other spaces can be considered, indoors or outdoors.
- The audience should be able to pass on the stage and/or in front of it (facing the audience area) at the start of the show for a few minutes before getting to their seats. The space has to be discussed and determined ahead.
- If it is a theater, the stage should be as empty as possible, or be equiped with neat top borders, side legs and black carpet (TBD ahead depending on venue)
- There will be a rehearsal with the venue's ushers on the day of the premiere, schedule TBD ahead.
- The venue will provide 1 stage technician for set-up and performance.

PROPS

The venue will provide (to be ready at company arrival) :

- 1 tall and steady A ladder (height and color tbd ahead)
- approximately 20 rocks of different sizes (10cm to 30cm of diamater)
- 1 (or 2) haze machine

SOUND

The sound will be played from a laptop touring with the composer.

The venue will provide :

- about 8 professional speakers + 2 subwoofers (make, power and amount depending on venue, tbd ahead)
- 1 HF Lavalier microphone type DPA 4061 or above (skin color) with discrete headset and all equipment for its functioning
- 1 professional sound desk / minimum 10 outputs
- 1 firewire audio interface (sound card) / minimum 10 outputs
- 1 sound engineer for set-up and performance

LIGHTS

The venue will provide :

- all lighting equipment / TBD AHEAD depending on the space and venue's equipement list. FYI light needs are about 8 pars, 10 profiles, 8 PCs (2kw), 3 moving lights, filters, memory desk, dimmers...
- 2 electricians/light technicians for set-up and 1 for performance.

SURTITLES and TRANSLATION

The show is in English, French & local language.

- If needed, the venue will provide an operator, video-projectors and a computer to project surtitles on side walls or above the stage. The venue will coordinate ahead a translation of the few texts spoken in the piece.
- Also, if needed, a translator or an usher or any member of the theater who speaks good English (or French) will translate one speech live.

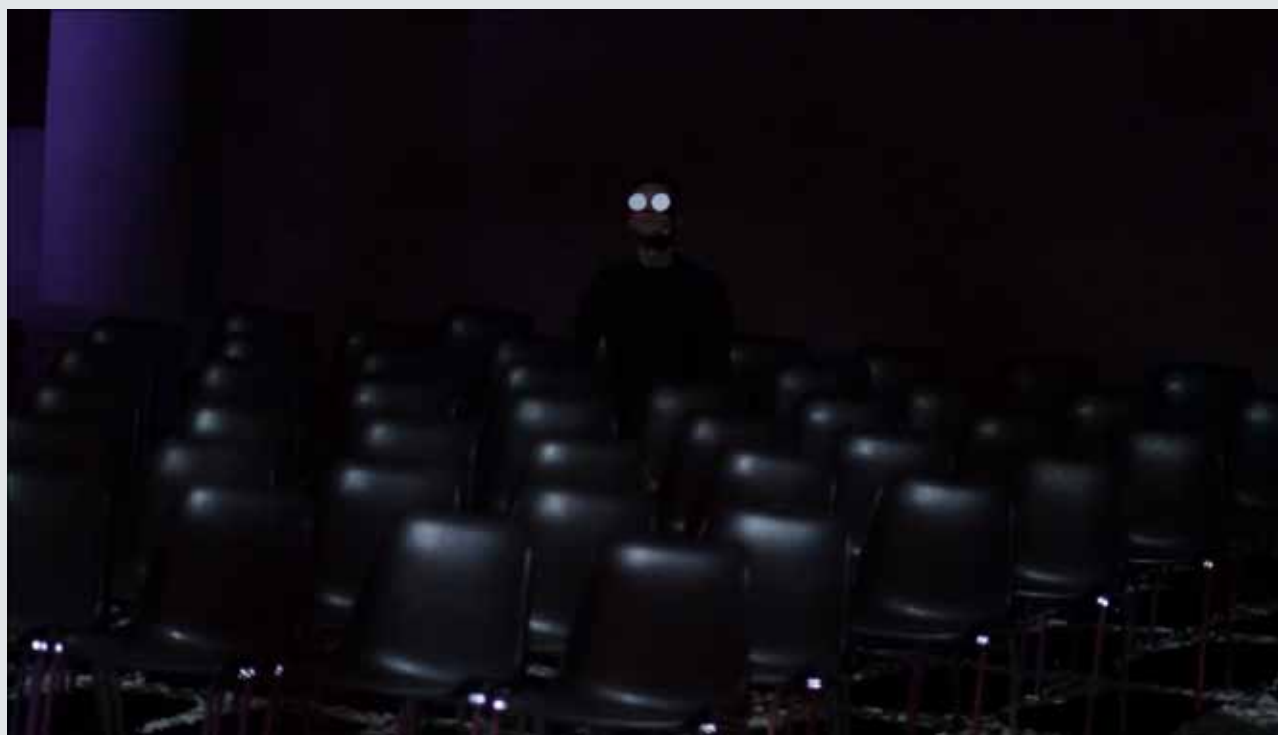
PRICE

- 3.400 euros for 1 performance
- 4.600 euros for 2 performances
- 5.800 euros for 3 performances

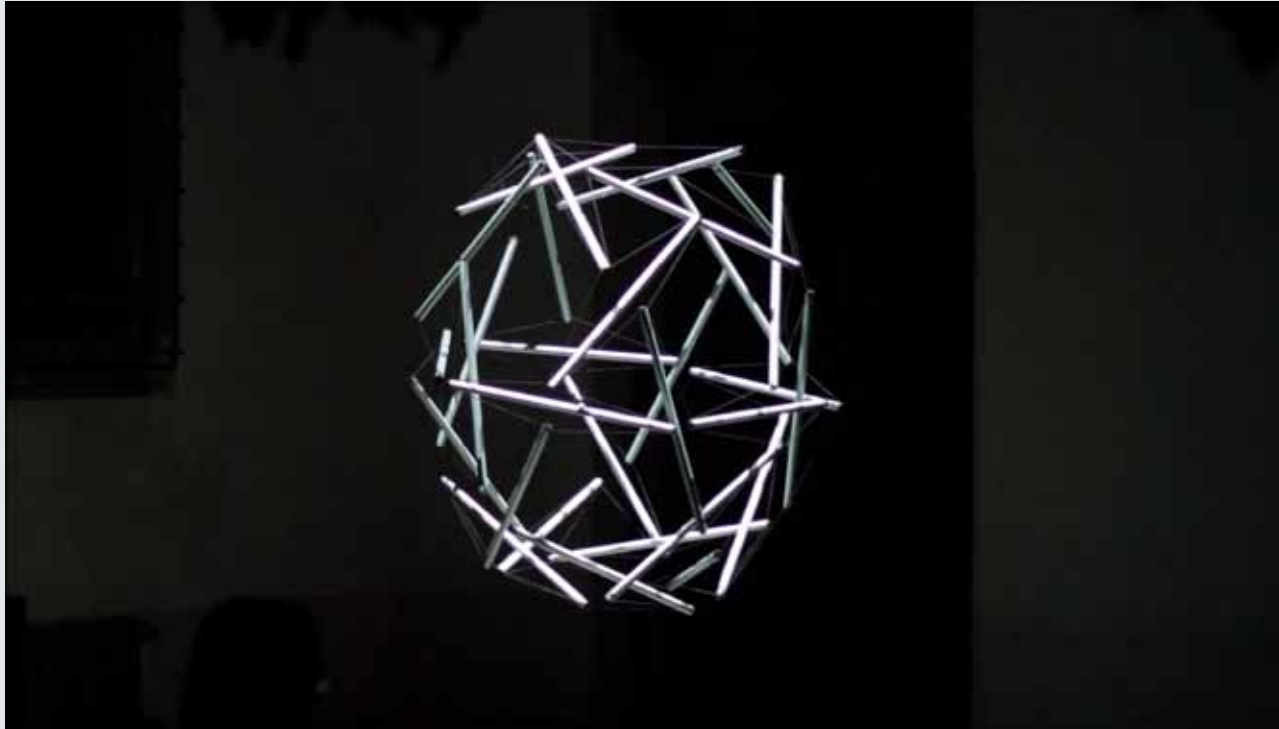
The prices are excluding taxes and can be negotiated for more performances.

duration of performance **1h10**

photos of 20 SILENCES

















visual references





