

# GRUPO CORPO

## BACH

(Opening 1996, Lyon)

choreography: **Rodrigo Pederneiras**

music: **Marco Antônio Guimarães** (based on J. S. Bach's music)

set design: **Fernando Velloso** and **Paulo Pederneiras**

costume design: **Freusa Zechmeister**

lighting: **Paulo Pederneiras**

(duration: 45 minutes)

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A Bach who is more than baroque. He's from Minas Gerais. The colors are deep blue sea, graphite and also gold. Like the churches from the gold cycle, in the old days of Minas Gerais. Sculpted by the genius of artist Aleijadinho and blessed by Ataíde's frescoes. A Bach who has been divinely profaned. Who suddenly falls from heaven to again rise up. A Bach who is in a cantata but also in a child's tune. A Bach who's more from Minas than baroque.

Classical, contemporary, universal, from the interior, divine, profane, solemn, languid – thus *Bach* appears in the first production of GRUPO CORPO while it resided at the Maison de La Danse, in Lyon, in its three consecutive years of internship. *Bach* had its world opening in September 1996, in the traditional Dance Bienal of Lyon, and was applauded uninterruptedly for ten minutes.

*Bach* was the 26<sup>th</sup> choreography from the Dance Company of Minas Gerais. It was the result of a free and enlightened creation of Marco Antônio Guimarães, based on the work of the greatest composer of all times.

Marco Antonio is from Minas Gerais but studied music in the legendary *school of sounds*, started by the Swiss Walter Smetak, in Salvador, Bahia, who was actually the brain and the bone marrow of Uakti – the most intriguing and original instrumental group of Brazil. Guimarães has been a collaborator of Grupo Corpo since 1992, when he composed the extraordinary soundtrack for *21*. For *Bach*, he went deep into the baroque universe of João Sebastião (1685-1750), visiting libraries, resorting to old memories, researching movement, merging cantatas, choirs and preludes. He exposed hidden parts of the genius' compositions, transformed suites in accompaniments and, like in Gounot's *Ave Maria*, poured the new melody over them. And more. He did what he had never done

before: researched, altered and created sounds and instruments in electronic keyboards. This was almost like heresy for someone who dedicated most of his life to investigating new sounds, invariably based on acoustic instruments (most of them also newly invented). The soundtrack became a CD, with synthesizers and two string instruments (Chori from Mr. Smetak's lineage and the Gig, his own) which are personally directed by the re-creator, while two heavenly voices sing arias, cantatas and songs. They are: Conceição Nicolau and Sandro Assunção, from the Palácio das Artes choir, in Belo Horizonte.

The intense religiosity emanating from Bach's music finds a visual interpretation unfolding on the stage setting, in two different levels: one, aerial/celestial, the other, low growing/earthy – they are the determining resource at the end of the show created by the artistic and lighting director of the group, Paulo Pederneiras, who signs the stage setting design of this ballet with the “official set designer”, artist Fernando Velloso. Like futuristic stalactites, black metallic tubes come forth, creating a unique space on the stage, from where the dancers fall into the scene and through which they pretend to ascend. The diagonal lighting imprints on the retina of the public, the image (or similar image), of the instrument that the German composer played with passion and precision.

The same deep blue paints the floor and appears on the two layers of material at the rear of the stage. From the middle till the end of the performance, 172 m<sup>2</sup> of deep blue sea patches of material falls over the stage, forming an enormous monochromatic patchwork, in a glorified version of the joyful tapestry found in the interior of the state.

Freusa Zechmeister undresses the dancers' arms and legs and plays with the three basic colors of the stage, worn over opaque stretch leotards and short boots.

The unique and very Brazilian language developed by CORPO in 21 years of dance, expands its vocabulary incorporating phonemes, syllables and rock and rolls' diction – a language turned universal since then. Meanwhile Rodrigo Pederneiras choreography becomes freer from form, removing the spectator's support point and launching them into the hands of the irresistible unexpected.