



Oliver Houeix

# MALANDAIN BALLET BIARRITZ

## THE SEASONS

**ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AND CHOREOGRAPHER** Thierry Malandain  
**COMPOSERS** Antonio Vivaldi and Giovanni Antonio Guido

**DANCERS** Noé Ballot, Giuditta Banchetti, Julie Bruneau, Elisabeth Callebaut, Raphaël Canet, Mickaël Conte, Loan Frantz, Irma Hoffren, Hugo Layer, Guillaume Lillo, Claire Lonchampt, Timothée Mahut, Julien Rodríguez Flores, Neil Ronsin, Alejandro Sánchez Bretones, Yui Uwaha, Chelsey Van Belle, Patricia Velázquez, Allegra Vianello, Laurine Viel, Léo Wanner

**SET AND COSTUME DESIGNER** Jorge Gallardo

**LIGHTING** François Menou

**COSTUME PRODUCTION** Véronique Murat and Charlotte Margnoux  
assisted by Anaïs Abel

**SET PRODUCTION** Frédéric Vadé

**ACCESSORIES PRODUCTION** Annie Onchalo

**SET AND PROPS ASSISTANTS** Nicolas Rochais, Gorka Arpajou, Félix Vermandé, Raphaël Jeanneret, Christof t'Siolle, Txomin Laborde-Peyre, Maruschka Miramon, Karine Prins, Sandrine Mestas Gleizes, Fanny Sudres, Fantine Goulot

**BALLET MASTERS** Richard Coudray, Giuseppe Chiavaro, Frederik Deberdt

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Zellerbach Theatre

Friday, May 2 @ 8 PM

Saturday, May 3 @ 2 PM

Saturday, May 3 @ 8 PM

There will be no intermission.

### INSIGHTS

Stay after the performance on Friday evening for a chat with company manager Arnaud Mahouy and ballet master Frederik Deberdt, led by our Executive & Artistic Director Christopher Gruits.

PROGRAM

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\*Friday, May 2  
+Saturday, May 3

“Spring” - Vivaldi

**DANCERS** Yui Uwaha\* and Mickaël Conte\* | Giuditta Banchetti+ and Hugo Layer+

Noé Ballot, Giuditta Banchetti\*, Julie Bruneau, Elisabeth Callebaut, Raphaël Canet, Mickaël Conte+, Loan Frantz\*, Irma Hoffren, Hugo Layer\*, Guillaume Lillo, Claire Lonchampt, Timothée Mahut, Julien Rodríguez Flores, Neil Ronsin, Yui Uwaha+, Chelsey Van Belle, Patricia Velázquez, Allegra Vianello, Léo Wanner

“Spring” - Guido

Time Flies  
Each Season Slips Away

**DANCERS** Julie Bruneau\*, Loan Frantz+, Guillaume Lillo\*, Timothée Mahut\*, Alejandro Sánchez Bretones+, Chelsey Van Belle, Laurine Viel+

Dance of the Shepherds  
**DANCER** Mickaël Conte\* | Hugo Layer+

“Summer” - Vivaldi

**DANCERS** Laurine Viel\* and Loan Frantz\* | Patricia Velázquez+ and Noé Ballot+

Noé Ballot\*, Julie Bruneau, Giuditta Banchetti, Elisabeth Callebaut, Raphaël Canet, Mickaël Conte, Loan Frantz+, Irma Hoffren, Hugo Layer, Guillaume Lillo, Claire Lonchampt, Timothée Mahut, Julien Rodríguez Flores, Neil Ronsin, Alejandro Sánchez Bretones, Yui Uwaha, Chelsey Van Belle, Patricia Velázquez\*, Allegra Vianello, Laurine Viel+, Léo Wanner

“Summer” - Guido

The Air Is on Fire  
Zephyrus Vanishes  
Song of the Cuckoos

**DANCERS** Allegra Vianello and Noé Ballot\* | Allegra Vianello and Léo Wanner+

Fly to Our Aid, O Adorable Demeter!  
**DANCERS** Laurine Viel\* and Mickaël Conte\* | Patricia Velázquez+ and Hugo Layer+

“Autumn” - Vivaldi

**DANCERS** Julie Bruneau\* and Alejandro Sánchez Bretones\* | Irma Hoffren+ and Raphaël Canet+

Noé Ballot, Giuditta Banchetti, Julie Bruneau+, Elisabeth Callebaut, Mickaël Conte, Loan Frantz, Irma Hoffren\*, Hugo Layer, Guillaume Lillo, Claire Lonchampt, Timothée Mahut, Neil Ronsin, Julien Rodríguez Flores, Yui Uwaha, Chelsey Van Belle, Patricia Velázquez, Allegra Vianello, Laurine Viel, Léo Wanner

“Autumn” - Guido

Let Us Celebrate the Return of Autumn  
**DANCERS** Giuditta Banchetti\*, Elisabeth Callebaut\*, Guillaume Lillo, Julien Rodríguez Flores, Yui Uwaha+, Chelsey Van Belle+

Allegro

**DANCERS** Raphaël Canet<sup>+</sup>, Hugo Layer<sup>+</sup>, Patricia Velázquez<sup>+</sup> | Mickaël Conte\*, Alejandro Sánchez Bretones\*, Laurine Viel\*

### “Winter” - Vivaldi

**DANCERS** Allegra Vianello\* and Julen Rodríguez Flores\* | Claire Lonchamp<sup>+</sup> and Mickaël Conte<sup>+</sup>

Noé Ballot, Julie Bruneau, Giuditta Banchetti, Elisabeth Callebaut, Raphaël Canet, Mickaël Conte\*, Loan Frantz, Irma Hoffren, Hugo Layer, Guillaume Lillo, Timothée Mahut, Neil Ronsin\*, Julen Rodríguez Flores<sup>+</sup>, Alejandro Sánchez Bretones, Yui Uwaha, Chelsey Van Belle, Patricia Velázquez, Allegra Vianello<sup>+</sup>, Laurine Viel, Léo Wanner

### “Winter” - Guido

The Season of Frost

**DANCERS** Julie Bruneau<sup>+</sup>, Loan Frantz<sup>+</sup>, Yui Uwaha<sup>+</sup>, Léo Wanner<sup>+</sup> | Elisabeth Callebaut\*, Irma Hoffren\*, Guillaume Lillo\*, Timothée Mahut\*

The Cruel Boreas Declares War on Us

**DANCERS** Raphaël Canet<sup>+</sup>, Hugo Layer<sup>+</sup>, Claire Lonchamp<sup>+</sup>, Patricia Velázquez<sup>+</sup> | Mickaël Conte\*, Alejandro Sánchez Bretones\*, Allegra Vianello\*, Laurine Viel\*

Let the Winds Roar

**DANCERS** The Company

## PROGRAM NOTES

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Based on an idea by Laurent Brunner, Director of Château de Versailles Spectacles, and Stefan Plewniak, violinist and first conductor of the Royal Opera of Versailles, this ballet intertwines Antonio Vivaldi's famous *The Four Seasons* with several pages of *Le Quattro Stagioni dell'anno* (*The Four Seasons of the Year*), a little-known work by Giovanni Antonio Guido, contemporary and compatriot of Vivaldi.

Having unfurled their passionate energy long before their publication in Amsterdam in 1725, *The Four Seasons* by Vivaldi is a cycle of four violin concertos naturally named “Spring”, “Summer”, “Autumn” and “Winter”. Each title has three movements, whose main purpose is not virtuosity. When originally performed, they were preceded by sonnets attributed to Vivaldi and provided a succession of pastoral scenes descriptively celebrating nature.

One of the most internationally known opuses with more than a thousand recordings to date, not counting concerts, catalogues of telephone on-hold music and advertisements, this universal hymn to nature, rediscovered in the mid-20th century, has the undeniable ability to please. Hence its immense popularity and also the weariness, or even the rejection that the work can arouse. Thus, after Igor Stravinsky stated in 1959, “Vivaldi is greatly overrated - a boring fellow who could compose the same form so many times,” the public focused on the ease of the music to the point of saying, as composer Luigi Dallapiccola did, that he composed “the same concerto five hundred times.” This is not true and completely unfair.

That being said, in all their grandeur, in terms of their promise, it is true that the Venetian musician's *The Four Seasons* has been heard so often, exploited so much to the point of misunderstanding, that in turn they may have become old repetitive melodies to some. They can be irritating, cause total indifference or, in our case, overwhelm us with gloomy thoughts, and even more so in today's disillusioned and corrupt climate, where nature's deterioration constitutes an existential threat. In contrast, since the word "nature" literally means birth in Latin, Giovanni Antonio Guido's *The Four Seasons of the Year* should, because of its uniqueness, provide a breath of fresh air, renewal and a reason for hope.

Guido, a first-rate Genoese violinist, served Philippe d'Orléans, Regent of France. His work was published in Versailles around 1726 but may have been written earlier than Vivaldi's, around 1716 for the opening exhibition of Jean-Antoine Watteau's four oval paintings representing the seasons which adorned the Paris mansion of Pierre Crozat, Treasurer of France, patron and collector. Written in the French form of Suite de danses, like Vivaldi, the score sets four anonymous poems to music: *Les Caractères des saisons*. Guido attempted to describe seasonal changes by adding notes of green, blue and very light pink, but also rural deities, as in *Les Saisons* by Abbot Jean Pic, performed at the Royal Academy of Music from 1695 to 1722.

As for its accomplishment, Guido's *Seasons*, under the arithmetic influence of the number four and closely linked to creation, balance and harmony, brings to mind baroque dance. This form emerged in the 17th century from the notion of governing one's body and mind, and moving with grace, accuracy and lightness. The number four is also associated with the Earth and the wheel of life, which does not always turn smoothly, if not completely askew, given the ugliness, senselessness and inhumanity that proliferate. With Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*, we are moved by a more natural, more human form of dance.

Finally, we spice things up with some poetic fantasy, two words that communicate the essentials. Against a backdrop of black petals spread across the horizon, winged beings mourn the loss of spirit and clarity. Why? Because *The Seasons* is a ballet and there is nothing more serious than the unbelievable.

- Thierry Malandain

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

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### **Malandain Ballet Biarritz**

Created in 1998 in Biarritz through the initiative of the Ministry of Culture and the town of Biarritz, with the support of the Nouvelle-Aquitaine Region and the Atlantic Pyrenees Department, Malandain Ballet Biarritz is one of 19 National Choreographic Centres (CCN) in France today. Malandain Ballet Biarritz is made up of 22 permanent dancers trained in classical technique and Thierry Malandain's contemporary choreography. Today, Malandain Ballet Biarritz is one of Europe's most widely seen companies with audiences of 100,000 per season and almost 100 performances per year, a third of which are abroad.

As a National Choreographic Centre, Malandain Ballet Biarritz also works intensely in terms of public awareness of dance—with on average over 450 events per year—and supports artists and companies thanks to the Accueil Studio program.

24/25 SEASON

To assist the development of young ballet choreographers, an international competition is organized by the Biarritz CCN every two years with the Bordeaux National Opera Ballet and the Ballet of the Opera National du Rhin. Thierry Malandain and his team pay special attention to supporting ballets and choreographers.

Because of its specific geographic location, Malandain Ballet Biarritz has forged fruitful partnerships with many Euro-regional cultural participants. This is how the Ballet T project came to be, which is now managed by the Pôle Chorégraphique Territorial (Regional Choreographic Centre) in conjunction with the Basque Country Community. Since 2021, the CCN has been responsible for the Le Temps d'Aimer Dance Festival, which takes place every year in September in Biarritz.

### **Thierry Malandain** (Artistic Director and Choreographer)

Member of the Academie des beaux-arts of the Institute of France and choreographer of a repertoire of more than 85 works, Malandain has developed a very personal vision of dance, closely linked to ballet, where priority is given to the dancing body, its power, virtuosity, humanity and sensuality. The search for meaning and aesthetics guide a powerful and sober style, which can be both serious and insolent, based on the pursuit of harmony between history and today's world. Malandain's troupe is comprised of dancers with classical dance training who express themselves in a contemporary way via Malandain's choreography.

"My culture is that of classical ballet and I confidently remain attached to it. Because while I readily admit that its artistic and social codes are from another time, I also think that this heritage from four centuries represents invaluable resources for dancers. A classical choreographer for some, a contemporary one for others, I play with it, simply trying to find a dance I like. A dance that will not only leave a lasting impression of joy, but that will also restore the essence of the sacred things and serve as a response to the difficulty of being."

### **Noé Ballot** (Dancer)

Ballot was born in Amilly, France. He trained at the Conservatoire à Rayonnement Communal of Montargis and at the Conservatoire à Rayonnement Départemental of Orléans. He studied at the École de danse de l'Opéra national of Paris from 2013 to 2016 and then at the École de Ballet Lipszyc in Biarritz until 2018. Later, he joined the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse of Paris as a student for the national diploma of professional dancer. He joined Malandain Ballet Biarritz in July 2021.

### **Giuditta Banchetti** (Dancer)

Banchetti is from Florence, Italy and trained at the Academic School of Classical Dance in Florence, graduating under the Marika Besobrasova method. She joined London's New English Ballet Theatre in 2017 and received the Great Award 2018 in the Dance Project Charles Jude Association's first international ballet examination, supported by the Serge Lifar Foundation. She joined the Malandain Ballet Biarritz in October 2018.

### **Julie Bruneau** (Dancer)

Bruneau was born in Bayonne, France. She trained in Biarritz at the Conservatoire Maurice Ravel Pays Basque and joined the VM Ballet de Toulouse in 2014. She then developed her professional experience at the Ballet de l'Opéra national de Bordeaux, the Ballet du Capitole de Toulouse and the Ballet Magdeburg in Germany, and then took part in the production *Mon premier Lac des cygnes*, directed by Karl Paquette of the Opéra national de Paris. She joined Malandain Ballet Biarritz in July 2021.

**Elisabeth Callebaut** (Dancer)

Callebaut, born in Courtrai, Belgium, trained at the Antwerp Royal Ballet School l'École royale de Ballet d'Anvers, directed by Kevin Durwael from 2019 to 2023. She participated in several workshops and courses with the Nederlands Dans Theater, the European School of Ballet in Amsterdam and the English National Ballet School. She danced with the Opera Ballet Vlaanderen before joining Malandain Ballet Biarritz in September 2024.

**Raphaël Canet** (Dancer)

From Avignon, France, Canet studied at the Conservatoire Régional d'Avignon before joining the Ballet de l'Opéra national de Bordeaux. He joined Dantzaz Konpainia in 2009 and then Malandain Ballet Biarritz in 2011.

**Mickaël Conte** (Dancer)

Born in Libourne, France, Conte trained at the Conservatoire à Rayonnement Régional of Bordeaux since 2001. He got into the Ballet Biarritz Junior in 2006, before joining the CCN/Ballet de Lorraine, directed by Didier Deschamps, in Nancy the following year. He joined Malandain Ballet Biarritz in 2011.

**Loan Frantz** (Dancer)

Frantz was born in Tinago Camalig in Albay, Philippines. Trained at the Conservatoire à rayonnement régional of Toulouse and the Ecole de danse de l'Opéra National of Paris, he began his career in 2012 at the Ballet Nice Méditerranée, directed by Eric Vu-An. He joined the Ballet de l'Opéra National de Bordeaux directed by Charles Jude in 2013 and then the Ballet de l'Opéra Théâtre de Metz under the direction of Laurence Bolsigner in 2016. He joined Malandain Ballet Biarritz in 2017.

**Irma Hoffren** (Dancer)

Hoffren grew up in San Sebastián, France and studied at the Thalia Dance School in San Sebastián and then with Maria de Avila and Carmen Roche. She joined Ballet Biarritz Junior from 2005 to 2008 and then the CCN/Ballet de Lorraine, directed by Didier Deschamps. She joined Malandain Ballet Biarritz in 2012.

**Hugo Layer** (Dancer)

Layer was born in Sens, France. He studied dance at the Conservatoire de Sens until 2007 and at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse of Paris. During his studies, he took part in the creation of *Rhapsody in Blue* with Cathy Bisson, acted in the film *Fais danser la poussière* by Christian Faure and Marie Dô, and was the soloist in *Clowns* by the Pietragalla/Derouault company. He joined Malandain Ballet Biarritz in 2013.

**Guillaume Lillo** (Dancer)

Lillo was born in Joinville-le-Pont, France. He studied at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Danse de Paris, then joined the school's Junior Ballet in 2011. In 2012, he joined the Scottish Ballet (UK) for one season before joining the Israel Ballet in 2013. He joined Malandain Ballet Biarritz in 2015.

**Claire Lonchamp** (Dancer)

Lonchamp was born in Sèvres, France. She trained at the Ecole de Danse de l'Opéra National de Paris from 1998 to 2001 and then at the European Dance Center before getting admitted to the CNSMD of Paris in 2002, where she joined the Junior Ballet in 2005. She began her career at the Zurich Ballet. She then moved to the Finnish National Opera Ballet in Helsinki in 2007 to the Het National Ballet in 2010. She joined Malandain Ballet Biarritz in 2011.

**Timothée Mahut** (Dancer)

Mahut was born in Nancy, France. He trained at the Conservatoire de Nancy, the Basel Theatre Ballet School in Switzerland from 2017 to 2020, and at the Northern Ballet in England in 2020. He joined the Europa Danse Company in Brussels in 2021 and then the Junior Ballet of Zürich in 2022 where he danced choreographies of Crystal Pite, Hans Van Manen and Christian Spuck. He joined Malandain Ballet Biarritz in September 2023.

**Julen Rodríguez Flores** (Dancer)

Rodríguez Flores was born in Ibarra, Spain. He began Basque dancing before moving out to Madrid at age 17 to study classical and contemporary dance at the Mariemma Conservatory. He started his career in Madrid with the Metamorphosis Dance Company, before joining San Sebastián's Dantzaz company in 2019. He joined Malandain Ballet Biarritz in July 2021.

**Neil Ronsin** (Dancer)

Ronsin, born in Toulon, France, trained at the Pôle National Supérieur de Danse Rosella Hightower in Cannes starting in 2016 and earned a National Postgraduate Occupational Diploma. His career began in 2023 with the Cannes Junior Ballet Rosella Hightower, and he then joined Malandain Ballet Biarritz in September 2024.

**Alejandro Sánchez Bretones** (Dancer)

Sánchez Bretones was born in Elche, Spain. He trained in his hometown at the Escuela de Danza Pilar Sánchez and then with Sofía Sancho in Alicante. In 2011, he was admitted to the Escuela de Danza Víctor Ullate in Madrid and began his career in 2014 with the Víctor Ullate Ballet. Hired in Lisbon in 2019 with the Companhia Nacional de Bailado, he then joined Malandain Ballet Biarritz in December 2020.

**Yui Uwaha** (Dancer)

Uwaha was born in Nagoya, Japan. She studied at the National Ballet School of Canada from 2007 to 2011 and then at the Dutch National Ballet Academy in Amsterdam from 2011 to 2013. As a trainee, she joined the Dutch National Ballet directed by Ted Brandsen in 2012, before being hired by the Ballet de l'Opéra de Nice directed by Eric Vu-An in 2013 where she performed demi-soloist roles in ballets by Maurice Béjart, Jiri Kylian, Roland Petit, Nacho Duato and many others. She joined Malandain Ballet Biarritz in 2019.

**Chelsey Van Belle** (Dancer)

Van Belle, born in Ostende, Belgium, trained at the Royal Ballet School of Antwerp under the direction of Curtis Foley from 2018 to 2022. She has participated in numerous summer workshops and classes with the Royal Ballet of Flanders and Malandain Ballet Biarritz. In 2017, she was ranked in the top 12 at the Youth America Grand Prix. She began her career with Malandain Ballet Biarritz in September 2023.

**Patricia Velázquez** (Dancer)

Velázquez was born in Guadalajara, Mexico. She studied dance at the London Ballet Academy from 1994 to 2003. She then joined the Royal Ballet School of Winnipeg in Canada from 2003 to 2005 and the Royal Ballet Academy of Guadalajara afterwards. She began her career in Mexico with the Compañía de Danza Clásica y Neoclásica of Jalisco in Guadalajara in 2009, before joining the Compañía Nacional de Danza in 2010 and the Ballet de Monterrey in 2011. She joined Malandain Ballet Biarritz in 2012.

**Allegra Vianello** (Dancer)

Vianello was born in Venice, Italy. She trained at the Castelfranco Veneto Ballet School from 2007 to 2011, before being admitted to the English National School Ballet. She began her career in 2014 with Ballet Cymru in the UK. She joined Malandain Ballet Biarritz in October 2016.

## Laurine Viel (Dancer)

Viel was born in Paris, France. She began her training with Virgine Cosnier at the Conservatoire Municipal de Villejuif and then got into the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris in 2005, before joining the school's Junior Ballet Classique in 2009. She joined Malandain Ballet Biarritz in 2011.

## Léo Wanner (Dancer)

Wanner was born in Marseille, France. He trained in Italy for six years at the Accademia Teatro Alla Scala in Milan and graduated in 2021 before joining the Cannes Jeune Ballet Rosella Hightower. He joined Malandain Ballet Biarritz in September 2022.

## THE SEASONS

Proposed by the Royal Opera of Versailles.

Premiered on November 25, 2023 at the Palais des Festivals in Cannes - Cannes Dance Festival - Côte d'Azur France. Premiered with Versailles Royal Orchestra conducted by Stefan Plewniak on December 14-17, 2023 - Royal Opera of Versailles.

**PRINCIPAL CO-PRODUCER** Château de Versailles Spectacles - Royal Opera of Versailles and Orchestre de l'Opéra Royal de Versailles

**CO-PRODUCERS** Festival de Danse de Cannes - Côte d'Azur France, Teatro Victoria Eugenia - Ballet T - Ville de Donostia San Sebastián, Opéra de Saint-Etienne, Theater Bonn - Allemagne, Teatro la Fenice - Venise (Italie), CCN Malandain Ballet Biarritz

**PARTNERS** Opéra de Reims, Espace Jéliote d'Oloron Sainte-Marie, Théâtre Olympia d'Arcachon

**SPONSORSHIPS** Fonds de dotation Malandain pour la Danse, Suez, Association Amis du Malandain Ballet Biarritz, Carré des Mécènes du Malandain Ballet Biarritz



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**BIARRITZ**



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