



SIMUL & SINGULIS

Christian Ubl
Show for young audiences

Foreword

To explore and develop an artistic voice aimed at a young audience, I chose to focus on Andersen's tale "The Ugly Duckling," which addresses themes of difference and self-acceptance—subjects intrinsic to my work and closely tied to my experience as an immigrant from Austria who had to find his place. Also relevant is my path as a dancer and choreographer, which began on ice skates and continued at a high level in ballroom dance championships before I trained in contemporary dance and, through encounters and collaborations, developed my own choreographic language.

My life and artistic journey have been shaped by this notion of adaptation: understanding the norm and how to subvert it in order to find oneself and accept one's singularities. It is this journey, these questions, that I want to share in this new creation.

I therefore want to set myself a new challenge. After more than 20 creations—three of which were for young audiences—along with workshops, dances, and participatory projects with children and adolescents, how do I continue to write my path? From the first exchanges and reflections for this new work, the idea of addressing the youngest emerged, as well as a desire for a project that can adapt to many settings.

I therefore envision *Simul & Singulis* in several parts: 2026 will see the creation of an outdoor duo for children aged 4 to 6, and 2027 the creation of a trio for the stage and for children from age 7.

The creative process will be punctuated by meetings with children so that we can write this new path together.

Intention Note

"The Ugly Duckling" draws its themes from the collective imagination and accompanied my childhood in Austria. As with many children (and parents), it shows us how the child, as they grow, learns to know themselves and accept themselves as they are, even if their entourage sends back a negative image that does not help them develop self-esteem. And to make this difference, a force.

The story of the ugly duckling is thus a perfect metaphor for the search and quest for our true nature. I myself left the family cocoon to go abroad, settle there and flourish, in search of my "true self." I am convinced that it is almost impossible to awaken to one's true nature without the company of other beings also journeying to find their own nature.

But "**SIMUL & SINGULIS**" is also linked to our contemporary era and speaks of the relationship we have with ourselves and in relation to a certain social norm. The aim is not to transpose the tale onto the stage as it is, but to draw inspiration from it freely to put into contemporary story and movement the specificity of the individual who discovers themselves.

According to Aude Rabaud (Lecturer in Sociology, University of Paris), this tale primarily relates the "tribulations of a misclassified person." "Through this popular tale, we can see how children develop an awareness of differences and social hierarchies and thus their perceptions of the world and otherness, within the family but also outside. Stigmatization, socialization, experimentation with rejection: discrimination is also experienced from an early age."

Moreover, the new generation is inevitably influenced by technological advances. Their omnipresence in daily life further influences the personal construction of children by imposing a certain norm.

With "**SIMUL & SINGULIS**," I want to put the body back at the center. Through dance and its expressive power, I want to invent a story that, via extraordinary characters such as a unicorn, a dragon ... would embody the personalities and specificities of each child, as essential ingredients for their development. But also address the so-called "norm" with a third character, here the duck.

And then invent with the body a story and share it with others.

The title "**SIMUL & SINGULIS**" takes up the motto of the Comédie Française. Expression that comes from Latin, it can be translated by "being together and remaining oneself" and characterizes the philosophy of this troupe where each contributes by his own talent to the collective work



On stage, SIMUL & SINGULIS would be...

A piece in two formats - a duo that becomes a trio depending on the age group it addresses.

Intended for children between 4 and 6 years old (duo) then from 7 years old (trio), with the desire to make it a piece that can also play in all audiences and address adults.

For younger audiences, I imagine a duo focused on the discovery of one's own identity and personality through the prism of emotions. From anger to joy, passing through sadness, fear, incomprehension or serenity, children of this age build themselves in the intense experience of what they feel at every moment. Their encounter with the other comes in the expression of their own emotions that come up against those of others.

This duo would come to expand and become a trio and address children from 7 years old to address more specifically the theme of self-acceptance in the experience of norm and difference.

SIMUL & SINGULIS will be a show but also a time of collective movement. In the extension of the show, I want to invent a practice in the form of a ritual to put our bodies and our emotions, together, in the time of a shared present. Invest the lived and transform the euphoria, the excitement and the listening into availability and desire to plunge into the sensitive body of each: be with others while being oneself.

Format and duration

Duo for ages 4–6, site-specific/outdoors – 25 minutes + 10 minutes of ritual bal dancing

Trio for ages 7 and up, site-specific/outdoors or on stage (general and school audiences) – 40 minutes + 10 minutes of ritual bal dancing

Benchmarks

The Tale - Summary

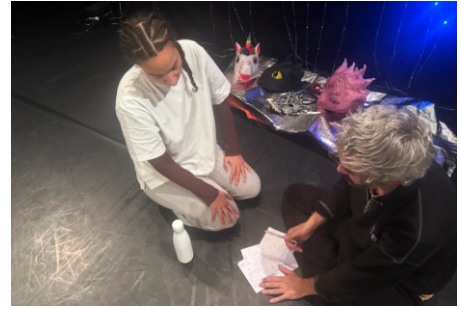
The story tells how a swan egg ended up - we don't know how - in a duck's nest. When the baby swan comes out of its egg, it obviously identifies with its brothers and sisters and perceives itself as a duck. But as it does not have the same appearance as the other members of the family, that it is larger and more clumsy than the others, it is quickly called the "ugly duckling."

Because of its non-conforming appearance and different behavior, despite the love of its mother duck, its life with its peers quickly becomes hell. It therefore decides to flee its family in the middle of winter, and leaves in the snow. On the point of dying of cold, it finds refuge in the hut of an old woman and spends the winter near the hearth in the company of a hen and a cat. In the spring, it continues its journey and enters a lake where it contemplates, fascinated, the majestic beauty of adult swans.

Although it believes it is an ugly duckling as it has been repeated so often, it nevertheless feels an irresistible desire to be like these swans that it sees sliding with such elegance on the still water of the lake. Then, approaching them gently, it suddenly sees its reflection in the water of the lake, realizing that it is itself a swan.

The Four Characters of the Tale and What They Symbolize

- The ugly duckling symbolizes difference, isolation, transformation but also the introspective journey towards the discovery of self and the acceptance of one's own identity.
- The mother duck represents society and its norms, tolerant of difference but conformist and rejecting the anomaly.
- The other animals on the farm represent the prejudices at work in society and exclusion based on appearance criteria
- The swans embody the fulfillment and realization of one's personal potential, the importance of finding one's place in the world



Writing and Dramaturgy

SIMUL & SINGULIS are characters in search of themselves...

At this early stage of writing a project, several avenues open up on the dramaturgical writing and the protagonists. **SIMUL & SINGULIS** as two friends who, on the fringe of the world, meet through their own otherness? Or one being the norm of the other, how to get rid of it to meet oneself? Then meet the other? Will other characters from the tale appear? Could a duck be a third character and, in the extension of the duo, this duck would impose itself as the representative character of a certain "normality"? Should we follow the plot of the tale and this ugly duckling who finally blossoms among his own at the risk of locking himself in a community? Or risk the adventure to the end to free himself - from himself and from others?

In connection with this dramaturgy in construction I imagine a purified piece, charged with tensions and absurd or incongruous situations in the face of order and the norm. The writing would mix concrete narrative elements from the tale, making emerge precise situations, states of body and deliberate attitudes. But it would also be abstract so as not to stick to the tale and allow everyone to invent their story. In connection with the music, I imagine a dynamic and rhythmic writing. Humor, as always in my work, will be present, to distance and allow at the same time to be touched, moved.

The body would set in motion animated by a thirst to discover the world and the other on the physical and emotional levels. Play and outwit the difference in the face of the other through a particular gesture, which could first give an impression of uniformity, then finally distinguish itself, denote. To embody and find driving movements during the creative process, I would rely on a collection of words in order to elaborate a part of the choreographic writing. Initiate a formal work, sometimes didactic, and manufacture a gesture that will feed on concrete acts: being together, differentiating oneself, madly, irregularity, being on the fringe, breaking, escaping, showing and assuming oneself, taking pleasure to please, feeling, touching, playing, manipulating, transforming oneself and becoming oneself. Also, a work on the state of body would embody the emotions that build us and constitute us, such as fear, astonishment, love, sadness, extravagance, shyness and joy or even anger. These emotions seem to me to be interesting axes to approach the intangible of human relations and energies. They sculpt the character of the characters, allowing to attach to them and to live this story through them, letting oneself be carried away in their world.

In connection with my own journey - more than ten years of practice of Latin dances but also of modern jazz without forgetting artistic skating before training in contemporary dance, I would like to work these different materials and styles: a crossbreeding in the service of the identity of each character. Making Latin and jazz dances collide with the conventions of contemporary dance would serve as a common thread to establish a writing on stage. These styles of dances for a long time depreciated by the world of contemporary dance are gaining visibility for some time. Thanks to social networks, television, they are the daily life of children today. Far from a fashion effect, I wish to open the field of the imaginary by proposing, without hierarchy or judgment, these styles of dance that have built me and still shape me today. And to claim the joy of dancing that all styles of dance provide, whatever they may be. It could be a matter of inventing materials and movements of unison by contemporary dance, while celebrating individuality and diversity by explosions of other styles. **SIMUL & SINGULIS** will dance together with their differences in the service of their individuality. Unity is a force in its diversity, it is the richness of life!

I would also like to use masks or rather "hat heads" to embody imaginary creatures such as the unicorn or the dragon. This approach aims to create the playful and humorous dimension I am looking for, but also because it places otherness in an elsewhere where everyone can recognize themselves, potentially identify. As a counterpoint or complement to the choreographic writing, these figures would therefore feed the imaginary. The figure of the unicorn would symbolize individuality, diversity, acceptance and openness and the dragon would be a profound symbol of mastery, spiritual awakening and the path towards self-realization.

With all these elements combined, dance will thus become a nourishment and a source of vital energy to discover, accept oneself and strengthen one's identity.

The Dada Aesthetic

My work is regularly influenced and imbued by the Dada artistic movement. It is an intellectual, literary and artistic movement of the early 20th century, characterized by a questioning of all conventions and ideological, aesthetic and political constraints.

In a few words - Dada artists want to be both disrespectful and extravagant. They seek to achieve the greatest freedom of expression by using all possible materials and supports. Their goal is to provoke and lead the viewer to reflect on our way of walking together and on the foundations of society. They thus aspire to a freedom of language.

I often find myself creating pieces where humor, delicacy, requirement, musicality, as well as various styles of dance, unite in the same momentum at the service of a scenic narrative. This gives me a certain freedom to approach the "blank page" of the stage before each choreographic creation.

In the recent press articles relating to my choreographic works the dada influence is clearly mentioned, and I wish to draw inspiration from it consciously.



Team

Conception & choreography | Christian Ubl with three performers

Performers | Martin Mauries, Kandé Magassa, Yuma Pochet

Costumes, accessories | Pierre Canitrot

Light creation - Sound universe and sound management | on going

Supporting eye | Emilie Cornillot

Accompanying eye | Emilie Cornillot

photos © CUBe association, taken during the 1st research residency in April 26

Projected creation schedule - Partners

2026 | duo performed outside the walls for ages 4-6

Premiere | **November 18-20, 26, Le Gymnase CDCN Festival Forever Young**

2027 | trio on stage and outside the walls, for ages 7 and up

Premiere | **October/November 27, in progress with L'Arc - Scène nationale Le Creusot and CLEA partners, Théâtre Au Fil de l'Eau – Pantin**

Research and creation of the duo - 2026

April 13-17 | Théâtre des Bernardines Marseille

September 7-11 | Les Tréteaux de France CDN Aubervilliers

October 5-10 | Le Gymnase CDCN Roubaix - immersion in a kindergarten

October 19-23 | Le Carreau du Temple – Paris

October 26-30 | Le Cent Quatre – Paris

November 2-6 | Théâtre au Fil de l'eau – Pantin

Writing residency for the trio – 2027

January-June 27 – 4 to 5 weeks | Théâtre Au Fil de l'Eau – Pantin (1 week – on going)

L'Arc Scène Nationale Le Creusot as part of CLEA 2027 (3 weeks – on going).

Fall 27 – 2 weeks for technical finalization | Théâtre La Licorne – City of Cannes and City of Sannois (on going)

Production | CUBe

Co-production | Le Gymnase CDCN Roubaix, L'Arc Scène Nationale Le Creusot as part of CLEA 2027

Support | Theatres Aix-Marseille, Théâtre au Fil de l'eau Pantin, Les Tréteaux de France CDN Aubervilliers, Le Carreau du Temple Paris, Le Cent Quatre Paris, City of Sannois.

In progress: Le Phare CCN du Havre, Théâtre de Suresnes, Réseau Tribu, Points Communs Scène nationale Cergy Pontoise, Opéra de Limoges, Théâtre Jean Vilar Vitry-sur-Seine, CCN Biarritz.

International | In resonance with the characters of the play, particularly the dragon, CUBe is working to establish a cooperation project with a country in Asia (Thailand, China, Cambodia...). Discussions are ongoing with the French Institute in correlation with the company's participation in PARI (support and reflection program on international)

Christian Ubl – CUBe association



Christian UBL was born in Vienna, Austria. He was trained and initiated first by sport, including figure skating and Latin sports dances practiced at a very high level for 10 years. He became interested in contemporary dance and decided to take courses in Vienna, Budapest, Nantes, Istres and New York with Trisha Brown. In 1997, he joined the Coline training in Istres for two years then left for Vienna in a private school. In 2005, he obtained a Bachelor's degree at the University of Lyon, theater section, and he worked as a performer with many choreographers in France and Europe, among others: Les carnets Bagouet, Michel Kelemenis, Thomas Lebrun (director of the CCNT), Daniel Dobbels, David Wampach, Christiane Blaise, Abou Lagraa, Ireland Dance Theater, Cie Linga.

In 2005, he founded CUBe - contemporary dance company established in Marseille. His artistic approach is characterized by the desire to create choreographresearch spaces while integrating other artistic disciplines.

The objective of the company is to respond in a poetic, transversal and hybrid way to contemporary questions, by questioning dance in its most powerful and fragile forms, as well as the role of the artist in current society. Christian Ubl has developed an approach centered on the notions of identity and origin, influenced by his Viennese roots and by his more than 25 years spent in France. "I consider choreographic art as a collective art, a total art within which multiple identities and origins must mingle and collide to form a work, a human experience." Within CUBe, Christian Ubl collaborates with many artists from various backgrounds, seeking to enrich his stage creations and stories. Each project takes the form of a multifaceted scenic proposal, aiming to forge a specific language around the body.

The company's repertoire is thus rich in about twenty choreographic pieces, some of which are intended for young audiences. He also develops other types of projects such as participatory projects, creation in public space, artistic hiking, balls ... and intervenes with dancers in training with in particular several creations for Coline in Istres.

He recently created The Way Things Go ... piece for 6 dancers and a live musician on the theme of the butterfly effect (2024) and Vagabondages & Conversations, duo with Gilles Clément renowned gardener-landscaper (2025).

Press - Excerpts

Vagabondages & Conversations | Duo with Gilles Clément

“While he speaks, he dances—and he dances well. Christian’s dancing is exceedingly generous and accessible. The piece finds a wonderful resonance with children and teenagers, who collapse with laughter at this duo of gentlemen who dare everything, even to dress up as a giraffe if needed. Adults love to watch a joyful yet earnest pas de deux unfold, which, in times of climate warming and political tension, allows leaving the worst outside the theatre doors.”

Cult.news - Amélie Blaustein Nidam – November 2025

The Way Things Go... | Christian Ubl and the Course of Things

“This little ballet full of suspense and comic invention, indescribable and inexhaustible, speaks to all ages, offering a multilayered set of entry points and meanings, from childish laughter to scientific theories and philosophical visions.”

Danser canal historique - Thomas Hahn - 08/02/24

“...is a tribute to childhood and to chance... The spectator, whatever their age, fully enjoys the poetry of the moment. Between laughter, suspense and suspension. Playful and whimsical, the septet questions the relationship between cause and effect. Big Dad’art.”

Transfuge Magazine – Thomas Hahn February 2025

GARDEN OF CHANCE | Avignon: dancer Christian Ubl catches luck mid-flight in the trees

“Nothing scares dancer and choreographer Christian Ubl. As part of the Vive le Sujet! initiative, led by SACD, this delightfully unclassifiable artist teams up with Belgian mentalist Kurt Demey in Garden of Chance. [...] With this new work—funny, fanciful, subtly participatory—this advocate for ‘an open, sensitive and universal dance’ risks shaking the tree of everything we think we know about contemporary dance.”

Le Monde - Rosita Boisseau - 17/07/2019

H&G | A delicious tale by Christian Ubl sends Hänsel and Gretel into the forest of tempting treats

“Neither moralizing nor misogynistic! In the Grimm tale, women have the villainous role—even the mother who sends her children into the forest because she cannot feed them. Here, the witch is as much a wizard and the mother does not appear. But the signs of overconsumption flood the stage and produce sensations of bliss in the children, which abruptly turn. That’s what it means to hold up a mirror, and it’s particularly effective here because it’s 100% playful.”

Danser canal historique - Thomas Hahn - 28/04/2018

Contacts



Artistic | Christian UBL

christian@cubehaus.fr

+33 6 13 04 77 82

Administration | Pascale BAUDIN

cubeasso@cubehaus.fr

+33 6 83 58 89 70

Production/Distribution | Cécile Vernadat

production.diffusion@cubehaus.fr

+33 6 38 80 28 67

Registered office

CUBe association Cité des Associations

93 La Canebière

BAL 361

13001 Marseille

SIRET : 439 998 311 00047s

N° TVA intracommunautaire FR3043999831100047

www.cubehaus.fr

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