

AFRICA SIMPLY THE BEST #6

Bobo-Dioulasso Pan-African Solo Choreography Platform

The Winners

Create. Meet. Feel. Bodies in motion, a world in the making.



ACOGNY D'OR

Stéphanie Mwamba

Kizazi · DRC · 25 min

ACOGNY D'ARGENT

Arsène Etaba

Les dieux dansent mal · Cameroon · 30 min

ACOGNY DE BRONZE

Farage Barka

Ould · Burkina Faso · 30 min

ACOGNY DE BRONZE BIS

Thierry ZL (Rakotoniriana Tokiniaina Thierry)

Tambatra — Oppression · Madagascar · 25–30 min

I. ORIGINS

Created by choreographer Serge Aimé Coulibaly (Faso Danse Théâtre) and carried by ANKATA, **Africa Simply The Best** is the pan-African platform dedicated to upcoming choreographers.

Driven by creativity, innovation and originality, the event reveals emerging talents and supports their circulation in Africa and internationally.

After 6 editions, Africa Simply The Best has become one of the continent's major cultural gatherings, bringing young African creators together on one stage and propelling the best of them towards an international career.



II. OBJECTIVES

- Facilitate the international visibility of talented young artists.
- Stimulate transdisciplinary creativity and strong, innovative proposals.
- Present works on international stages, notably in Europe.
- Support creation rooted in African realities that brings audiences together.
- Give audiences the drive to become creators of their own lives through emotion and artistic reflection.

III. A) STÉPHANIE MWAMBA — DRC

KIZAZI — 25 minutes

Synopsis

Kizazi (“the womb” in Swahili) dives into the memory of women's bodies, in a region of the DRC where the female body has become a territory of power and conflict.

Alone on stage, the artist sculpts an organic physicality — pulsations, contractions, undulations — moving through plant imagery: roots, branches, sap. Between sensory improvisation and structured composition, the dance becomes a celebration for those who are absent, an act of political and poetic memory, a gesture of resilience and emancipation.

She celebrates free, powerful women who carry the promise of a fairer society.

Biography

Choreographer, performer and actress based in Goma (DRC), Stéphanie Mwamba founded the Ochula Centre (Minova) in 2019, a space dedicated to dance training, research and education. Her path, shaped by the conflicts that have swept through the DRC, draws on dance to reconnect with her culture and carry the memory of bodies. A performer in Pina Bausch's *The Rite of Spring* (African version), she tours internationally with the piece. Since February 2025, owing to the security situation in Goma, she has been hosted at the École des Sables in Senegal.



III. B) ARSÈNE ETABA — CAMEROON

LES DIEUX DANSENT MAL (THE GODS DANCE BADLY) — 30 minutes

Statement of intent

If everything is dance, if everyone dances whatever they do and whatever happens, how do the world's rulers dance when we measure all the frustration and incomprehension into which the world is plunged?

Les dieux dansent mal is a contemporary space for reflection that questions rulers and their governance through bodily and musical narratives, in which everyday human life breathes hope.

A destandardised physicality, precise and energetic, embracing the off-kilter and the sarcastic, carried by afrobeats, rap, hip-hop and revisited traditional sounds.

Biography

ETABA AMBASSA Jérôme Arsène is a choreographer-performer and a doctor of pharmacy (University of Douala). Founder of The Performers and of the Arsène Etaba Company since 2017, he moves between traditional African dances, afrostyles and contemporary creation. His commitment focuses on transmission, professionalisation and the development of a choreographic industry in Cameroon. Winner of the Goethe-Institut Kamerun Discovery Prize 2022 for EN(S)EMBLÉES.



III. C) FARAGE BARKA — BURKINA FASO

OULD — 30 minutes

Synopsis

In a society that has lost its bearings, where the question of identity arises with growing urgency — that of the individual in a consumer society pushed to the extreme, of a displaced or disintegrated family, of a weakened nation — knowing and asserting oneself prove more than necessary in order to exist and survive.

While the moon lights up the night horizon, irritated by a voice rising from deep within himself, a young adolescent enters into a dialogue with it. This insistent voice plunges him into a state of instability expressed through gestures that build in crescendo, from gentleness to trance. Between intuition, awareness and doubt, he embarks on a search for, and a reconstruction of, his own self.

Born to a Souraka father (a nomadic ethnic group from Mauritania) and a Bissa mother (an ethnic group from Burkina Faso), Farage Barka grew up in Bobo-Dioulasso in a kind of identity wandering. *Ould* is his first personal creation: a pared-down, symbolic choreography in which the pain of uprootedness reveals an unsuspected cultural richness. Like a tree that must take root well before reaching out to the outside world, the piece invites everyone to know and assert themselves.

Biography

A graduate of the first cohort of the three-year ANKATA Next Generation programme and holder of a diploma in the Art of Transmission (CDC La Termitière, Burkina Faso), Farage Barka recently specialised in art therapy at the Haute École Libre de Bruxelles (HELB). Artistic director of Cie Feréen, he teaches at the Institut français de Bobo-Dioulasso and trains young dancers in several schools across the city. Founder of the WEEKEND'PERF movement (monthly performances in the neighbourhoods of Bobo-Dioulasso) and of the public-space training programme “Fari Golo Maga Kan” (since 2023), he anchors his artistic commitment in a strong social approach. A performer in numerous productions (*Kalakuta Republik*, ANKATA Next Generation revival; *Unsung* by Wilfried Souly; *Vonvonli* by Kossivi Senagbé Afiadegnigban; collaborations with Cie Lettre Louve in Paris, Pantin and Nogent-sur-Marne), he created the show *Gnanamini* in 2025, a call-out on the state of degradation of the world.



III. D) THIERRY ZL — MADAGASCAR

TAMBATRA — OPPRESSION — 25 to 30 minutes

Synopsis

Tambatra — Oppression explores the dialogue between Malagasy tradition, urban dance and contemporary dance through the artist's "Fiteha technique". Two structures suspended on a diagonal symbolise social fractures and hierarchies: on one side, the claim to the right to water, light and speech; on the other, domination, corruption and violence. The balloons embody withheld opinions and stifled silences. The video projection (in the venue) becomes the shared breath.

A humanist journey in which resistance and resilience are embodied in gesture, breath and memory. "Izay mitambatra vato, izay misaraka fasika": united, we are rock; apart, we are only sand.

Biography

Rakotoniriana Tokiniaina Thierry, known as Thierry ZL, is a choreographer and dancer based in Antananarivo who builds a bridge between urban dance, contemporary dance and the traditions of Madagascar. Since 2019, through Litefeet Nation Madagascar, he has driven a movement that makes roots and innovation talk to each other. National champion in experimental dance and international laureate, he toured *Tambatra* through the network of Alliances françaises in Madagascar (2023), then to La Réunion at the Souffle Océan Indien #5 festival (2024).



IV. PROGRAMMING PROPOSAL

The four winners can be presented together in a single evening with an interval, or spread over two evenings.

Option 1 — One evening with an interval

All four works in a single programme.

Part one — Memory, body, rebirth

Kizazi	Stéphanie Mwamba (DRC)	25 min
Ould	Farage Barka (Burkina Faso)	30 min
— Interval —		

Part two — Powers and counter-powers

Les dieux dansent mal	Arsène Etaba (Cameroon)	30 min
Tambatra — Oppression	Thierry ZL (Madagascar)	25–30 min

Performance time: 1 h 50 to 1 h 55, excluding interval and stage changeovers.

Option 2 — Two evenings

Evening 1 — Memory, body, rebirth

Intimate narratives, mourning, identity and rebirth.

Kizazi	Stéphanie Mwamba (DRC)	25 min
Ould	Farage Barka (Burkina Faso)	30 min
Duration: 55 min		

Evening 2 — Powers and counter-powers

Governance, inequality, collective resistance. Two readings of power: one sarcastic and urban, the other humanist and rooted.

Les dieux dansent mal	Arsène Etaba (Cameroon)	30 min
Tambatra — Oppression	Thierry ZL (Madagascar)	25–30 min
Duration: 55 to 60 min		

V. CONTACTS

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