two thousand and ten concepts
They can be autonomous but more often they are interwoven and enrich one another mutually. It’s intended that they should be conceived and performed across a span of roughly seven years.

Cornucopiae’s Concepts are a means of support for creative action in the arts.
The first ‘creative action’, INDEPENDANCE n°1, made for the Montpellier Dance Festival 2010, is an installation using dance, sound, light and images, exhibited in the Chapelle de la Miséricorde from the 25th to the 29th of June, between 5pm and 8pm. For unravelling: a solo dance concerning the layers of memory. For hearing and listening to: a gathering of frank and complementary words, assembled from interviews—begun in the autumn of 2009 in Montpellier—with nine people who witnessed the passage to Algerian Independence. For seeing and looking at: an exhibition of photographs, the outcome of a trip to Constantine and the Aurès last April which made it possible to record, in film and image, the landscapes of a region whose history is closely identified with the Algerian war. For absorbing: the daylight, accommodated by the building. For enjoying: the feeling of being close to animals, stirred by Hops, a white donkey, and his young companion, Martha.

“The blind dancer and the voice”, inspired by an ancient Kanak tale told in Nengone – a creation for the Hivernales d’Avignon, the 18th to the 20th of February, 2010. 6 public performances. Soundscape and danced gesture: duration, 30 minutes. The work was given again as part of the Festival d’Avignon Off 2010, between the 20th and the 24th of July. 10 public performances. A new version is in preparation with Moïse Kuiesine, choreographer with the Wetr dance company in Drehu (Lifou), for the Auckland Festival in New Zealand, for performances in Tokyo and Yokohama, Japan and for the Tjibaou Centre, Nouméa, in March 2011. Further performances programmed for the Maison de la Nouvelle-Calédonie in Paris and the Uzès Festival in June 2011.

After 2 preparatory visits in May 2009 and January 2010, the first IN SITU À DREHU (Lifou – Loyalty Islands) took place from 22nd April to the 16th May 2010. For 3 weeks artists from Europe and the South Pacific met to exchange ideas and experiment with dance, music, sound and image. A 30-minute video was made as a record of the project. The objective is to develop over time a special relationship with the Wetr dance company in order to shape a musical and choreographic work. With support from Culture(s) en chantier, directed by Cyril Pigeau in Nouméa, we hope to present this artistic investigation into the nature of tradition and modernity, in New Zealand, Australia and Japan. IN SITU is a dynamic and open form. On each occasion it’s offered in one of these three countries it will include dancers/artists that are either Kanak and Maori, Kanak and Aborigine, or Kanak and Japanese. A second IN SITU is to be organised in Lifou, in January 2011 and, for the first time, in New Zealand and Japan in March 2011.

In its form and its means, a luminous medium that uses dance – the art of movement, relationship (and silence!) – to explore the difficult and on-going problem of the relation of France to one of its former colonies. The perspective isn’t primarily that of an historian but rather that of an artist in search of a ‘living memory’, pores open, ears open, listening to echoes from an Algeria whose recent past has touched so many souls on either shore of the Mediterranean.

From September 2010, for 3 months of the year, Cornucopiae is collecting audio, visual and movement-based materials to form the artistic elements of a dance-sound-image-light installation, ‘ALGERIA COMINGS/GOINGS’, for Marseille 2013.
INDEPENDANCE n°1

A MEMORY:
"It was a ritual, each evening, always at the same hour, following the last meal of the day and before going to bed, that the child – between the ages of one and a half until nearly five - would sit upon her grandmother’s knee and gaze upon the Mediterranean through every season from the shores of Algeria. It would continue unvariedingly and in silence, a wordless ritual, for at least an hour—watching the same region of the sea, the same stretch of horizon, in all weathers, from the last moments of light until all was swallowed up in darkness. We lived in a little hut that gave directly on to the beach. There was nothing to do. We were simply there, in the warmth from one another’s body—studying, seeing, watching or not, for how the colours changed, inventing things perhaps which would appear and disappear… the rhythms of boats, waves, birds, wind, light. Contemplating perhaps. Waiting on nothing but the nightfall, the stars. Seeing, or not, the details of the landscape as a whole, of nature, and of the beauty of things. Being caught between ennui and emptiness, between well-being and the unknown. Being at once inside oneself and beyond the self, being lost to self entirely, being alert as an animal, being eyes, skin, mizzle, ears, being pebbles, waves, being in suspension, in a waking dream, knowing no longer who you are, what you do, being sheer presence. Between a feeling of lightness and of gravity. Something that you don’t put a name to, something you’ll never put a name to since no word can describe this sense of suspension in time and nature. I lived as a waif and stray among the rocks and sea and sand and sun, sustained by the love of a silent woman, Paule Peurière."

ALGERIA
The perspective isn’t primarily that of an historian but rather that of an artist in search of a ‘living memory’, pores open, ears open, listening for echoes from the Algeria whose recent past has touched so many souls on either shore of the Mediterranean, 1962 – 2012: fifty years! Finally enough time has elapsed that we can reflect without too much emotion or personal sentiment, that our thinking can be weighed with tolerance and intelligence. Born in Algeria in 1952 and collaborating now with Nicolas Barillot, I’ve made a series of interviews with people whose history bears direct witness to what it was to live through the independence of the country. Everything I heard reflected thoughts and feelings that, while undoubtedly intense and often startling, were also diverse, complex and above all lucid and which, tempered by the passage of time, sought to do justice to events and people. There exists now an opportunity, fragile but distinct, for such eye-witness accounts to be articulated, precisely and with discernment, yet without glossing over the force of what happened in the past nor the uncertainties of the present. As if to speak of this mismanaged past that proved tragic for the majority of people we encountered, was essential to them, to us all and to the generations to come.

IN THE CHAPELLE DE LA MISÉRICORDE.
For unravelling: a solo dance concerning the layers of memory.
For hearing and listening to: a gathering of frank and complementary words, assembled from interviews—began in the autumn of 2009 in Montpellier—with nine people who witnessed the passage to Independence in Algeria.
For seeing and looking at: an exhibition of photographs resulting from a trip to Constantine and the Aures last April which made it possible to record, in film and image, the landscapes of a region whose history’s so closely identified with the Algerian war.
For absorbing: the daylight, tamed by the building.
For enjoying: the feeling of being close to animals, stirred by Hops, a white donkey, and his young companion, Martha. In its entirety, the original work is designed to last 3 hours. Considering the Chapelle de la Miséricorde’s small capacity (30 people) and in order to respect, even anticipate, the public’s response, it will be possible to enter at 3 different moments: 17:00, 18.00 and 19.00, the idea being that spectators should choose for themselves how long the work should last – so a person may choose to leave after 20 minutes or to remain for the entire 3 hours, as he or she sees fit.

A printed version in English of the interviews heard during the work is available.

Montpellier Danse 2010
From Friday, 25th to Tuesday, 29th June, 2010
From 17:00 to 20.00. Five showings.
In the Chapelle de la Miséricorde, Montpellier

Sound: Nicolas Barillot
Dance: Régine Chopinot
Image: João Garcia
Lighting: Maryse Gautier
Hops, the Egyptian white donkey & Martha Barillot, its companion
Technical direction: Véronique Bridier and Gianni Fornet
Thanks to all those who offered their testimonies.

Production : Cornucopie
Coproduction : Festival Montpellier Danse 2010
With the support of CulturesFrance
Cornucopie is aided by the Ministère de la culture et de la Communication – Direction Générale de la Création Artistique
I continue to go forward by retracing my steps, going back to forgotten times, to the childhood days of this 'pied-noir' between 1952 and 1962, on the beach at Bains-Romains, west of Algiers. One of the few memories I have left is of the hours spent studying the sand, walking or crouching, searching for the shells known as "St Lucie's Eyes": Ten years vanished into thin air. Where have those ghost years gone, lost in what hidden corner?

Today, I'm in the phase that follows on from «Cornucopiae», a work made in November 2008 concerned with disappearance - of both the face and the outward view - and the last work to be made at the dance centre in La Rochelle. So I'm a dancer now, a nomad, without wishing for a company nor a base, ready to cross the space opened by these returned-to memories, my mind wandering, confronted by turbulence.

The blind dancer and the voice
To pass from the eye to the ear, to privilege the oral over the written, above all to listen. To reconnect with a certain idea of representation by choosing to present one's work in non-frontal contexts, to realign oneself, to reassemble oneself using words gathered from others, evocative fragments exterior to us.

"...arriving at the shore, she tears out her eyes and walks towards the sea. She begins then to dance with her head tilted back towards what lies behind, following the beach to its limit. All night. The same each night. When dawn breaks, she gathers up her eyes once more and returns them to their sockets..."*  

*extract from the myth of the blind dancer « Of flesh and stone. Essay in Kanak mythology (Maré, Loyalty Islands) » – Charles Illouz.
A meeting between artists from Europe and the South Pacific; a three-week residency at Drehu (Lifou) from April 26th to May 16th, 2010; a period of exchange and experiment using dance, music, sound and image; a sowing of ideas, a project for time to bring to fruition.

NOTE CONCERNING THE INTENTION TO WALK DREAM EXPERIMENT RISK QUESTION DOUBT LISTEN HEAR SEE SEE THROUGH TO OBSERVE DANCE

Following an initial journey in May 2009 and a second in December/January 2010, I now feel certain that there’s “something” to be done, some work to be imagined for New Caledonia in the South Pacific. Since I’m currently only in the first stages of a project, artistic intuition has obviously a lot to do with this conviction but it’s clear too that, after 30 years of creative work in dance, I feel the need to continue to broaden my study of the body in movement in cultural contexts other than those offered by the Europe by which I was formed. It’s a need that’s evident: to confront that which I don’t yet know, which is remote and which poses questions about the meaning of being human in every sense.

For the artist-dancer-choreographer that I am, to travel and feel myself “worked on” through the encounter with other cultures has always been of primary importance. The exchange is essential as much for the creativity it engenders in itself as for how it transforms how things are seen. Alongside my work in France running the Centre Chorégraphique in La Rochelle from 1980 to 2008, in the course of numerous tours in Europe and across the world – particularly in Brazil, China, and more recently Vietnam - I’ve specifically sought to create, research into, teach and share this passion for the art of choreography. Nothing in these encounters has been premeditated. They’ve always developed out of a mutual eagerness, nursed and watched over by time without which no true, enduring work occurs. On each occasion a new adventure has been woven from the strands of a unique and potent experience.

The simple truth is « I’m a daughter of the sea ». Born and brought up on the Algerian coast and having worked for the last 20 years beside the Atlantic at La Rochelle, the fact that I’m now nurturing a new project on the other side of the world on shores washed by the Pacific, doesn’t in the least surprise me. To the imagination that sustains all my energy and informs all my dancing, the sea is a constant source and resource…

I do things slowly. I like to take my time. I have to be patient and methodical. Turning to face the unknown I go one step at a time, carefully, gently. You have to sniff the air without being rushed. You have to be willing not to know, to grope forward, to watch and be watched, to try things out. And then sometimes you find a way, often where it’s least expected. That’s what the zest for invention is all about. I’ve a capacity to hang in, to commit myself without asking anything in return and to be open to the unexpected. That’s how I bring things together—by being both detached and involved.

Dancers aren’t solitary beings; they prefer dialogue. Hence, for this project, I’ll be accompanied by the guitarist and author of texts for theatre, Gianni Fornet, by the sound technician, Nicolas Barillot and by João Garcia, photographer and film-maker—artists, friends, partners.

Since January 2009 I’ve a new creative team known collectively as CORNUCOPIAE, that’s to say ‘horn of plenty’, a name inspired by the conch-like shells into which people blow and which you see over the homes of certain Melanesian tribes. This independent company is supported by the Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication - Direction Générale de la Création Artistique (D.G.C.A).
OUTLINE

IN SITU À DREHU, a workshop of researches into the oral tradition, based on the myths of the Kanak culture. The 26th April to the 16th May, 2010.

3 weeks of collection, selection and organisation.
3 weeks of confirmation, experimentation and elaboration.

WEEK ONE: the period devoted to clarifying with the various participants in their various capacities, the content, extent and objectives of this research. The idea is to create a group of people for whom oral traditions are a primary concern, whether they are dancers, painters, sculptors, musicians, actors or writers. For this workshop, held in situ, the core of the participants will be drawn from amateurs and professionals with a commitment to the realm of ‘living memory’ that informs Kanak culture.

WEEK TWO: the period given over to the actual workshop. Starting with myths arising from the oral tradition that have been chosen beforehand, we will work in the places and landscapes where the oral transmission of these stories actually occurs. Thus we will be outdoors, nomadic, without a home-base, seeking distinct sorts of topological features—pebbles, trees, slopes, streambeds—the elements that sustain the ‘living memory’. We will gather up and sift the various materials, whether danced, played or spoken, and then prepare them in such a way that they can be spontaneously performed. Taking into account the nature of Kanak traditions which favour non-representation, we’re not looking to arrive at a performance with a fixed form.

WEEK 3: the period given over to organising and making a record of the various traces left by this work, whether aural or visual. It will be the occasion for an initial feedback that will help lay the ground for further work. I very much want to be able to continue and broaden this gathering in situ with the intention of organising a further encounter of this kind before the end of 2010.

THE INFLUENCE OF “CULTURE(S) EN CHANTIER”

“Culture(s) en chantier” – an association concerned with cultural studies created in March 2010 at Boulouparis in New Caledonia – has its origins in a professional career that spans 16 years, from its beginnings in La Rochelle (where I had my first experience of cultural and artistic work alongside the choreographer, Régine Chopinot) to New Caledonia where I’ve just spent 7 years working as director of cultural services for Nouméa town. Along the way, I’ve made many contacts - in Africa, South America and Canada before arriving in the South Pacific – a life’s journey that has nourished a profound desire to seek out that which I’m as yet unaware of, to meet other peoples and other cultures.

To find myself once more working with Régine Chopinot on the island of Dréhu, in the region of the Kanak whose language I’ve begun to learn, and to be part of her meeting up with Kanak artists, is a fine way to launch my own project of ‘cultural mediation’ I can see for myself what can emerge when artists share a portion of their route. / Cyril Pigeau

FOLLOW-UP AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC PROJECT

A 30-minute film can be seen on the website. It documents how the project developed up until the creation of a choreographic and musical sketch « EKE-ENY » (the 4 winds). This initial phase will serve as a point of reference for further IN SITUs. The intention is to continue to piece together over time the fabric of a special relationship with the Wetr company of dancers in order eventually to realise a new creation. With support from Culture(s) en chantier, directed by Cyril Pigeau in Nouméa, we hope to present this artistic investigation into the nature of tradition and modernity, in New Zealand, Australia and Japan.

IN SITU is a dynamic and open form. On each occasion it’s offered in one of these three countries it will include dancers/artists that are either Kanak and Maori, Kanak and Aborigine, or Kanak and Japanese. A second IN SITU is to be organised in Lifou, in January 2011 and, for the first time, in New Zealand and Japan in March 2011.
COURANTS D’A.I.R.

Cornucopiea and Régine Chopinot offer a series of courants d’A.I.R. on the slopes of Châteauvallon, in Ollioules. A freely-circulating residency for mobile, visual and sound actions inspired by the Algeria of today, both here in France and Algeria. In its form and its means, a luminous medium that uses dance – the art of movement, relationship (and silence!) – to explore the difficult and on-going problem of the relation of France to one of its former colonies. The perspective isn’t primarily that of an historian but rather that of an artist in search of a ‘living memory’, pores open, ears open, listening to echoes from an Algeria whose recent past has touched so many souls on either shore of the Mediterranean.

ALGERIA COMINGS / GOINGS

ALGERIA

1962 – 2012: fifty years! Finally enough time has elapsed to be able to reflect without too much emotion or personal sentiment – let tolerance and intelligence guide how we share our thoughts. Born in Algeria in 1952, and with INDEPENDANCE n°1 a new work for Montpellier Danse June 2010 in perspective, I’m in the process of conducting a series of interviews with people whose history bears direct witness to what it was to live through the independence of the country. Everything I heard reflected thoughts and feelings that, while undoubtedly intense and often startling, were also diverse, complex and above all lucid and which, tempered by the passage of time, sought to do justice to events and people. There exists now an opportunity, fragile but distinct, for such eye-witness accounts to be articulated, precisely and with discernment, yet without glossing over the force of what happened in the past nor the uncertainties of the present. As if to speak of this mismanaged past that proved tragic for the majority of people we encountered, was essential to them, to us all and to the generations to come.

COMINGS / GOINGS

A choreographer with a passion for cinema, I pay close attention to what a new generation of artists in their thirties are doing with film. Tariq Teguia (Inland - 2008) and Nassim Amaouche (Adieu Gary – 2009), to mention only a representative couple, are remarkable directors, as if the renaissance of film-making was to pass through this imposing new wave. These are film-makers in tune with the direction of the world and history. Undeniably they have a clear vision on
other projects and works-in-progress that converge... concern... continue...

VIDEOS
Since the beginning of August 2009, Cornucopiae, in association with the Portuguese photographer João Garcia has filmed and produced a number of highly varied video objects. These films - Portillon, Axis, Air, Pessac, Flûte, INDEPENDANCE n°1, In Situ à Drehu – can be viewed on the Cornucopiae site.

www.cornucopiae.net
Cornucopiae's website online since June 2010 – source of information about the company’s activities using the internet as the principal means of sharing its creations.

EXPOSITION « LE DÉFILÉ »
In collaboration with Les Arts Décoratifs de Paris, the exhibition Jean Paul Gaultier-Régine Chopinot, «Le Défilé», is showing at the musée des Beaux-Arts in Taïpeï (Taiwan), from May 15th to August 8th. Olivier Saillard is once more curator.

DROMOSPHERE
From the outset Cornucopiae has accompanied and supported the work of Dromosphère in creating new drama.

CHOPINOT
Publication in June 2010 of Annie Suquet’s study, «Chopinot», from Editions Cénomane. An English translation is also available.
In a career spanning 30 years, Régine Chopinot has lived through the emergence (in the ’70s), development (in the ’80s), institutionalisation (in the ’90s) and commercialisation (the years since 2000) of contemporary dance. From her base in France she actively participated in the writing of the first two chapters of the still brief history of a new art. But she has never ceased to set herself against the unfolding of the next two—directing, from 1986 to 2008 one of the important national dance centres of France (the CCN in La Rochelle) and steadfastly refusing to push her creative energies down already well-trodden paths.

At the beginning of the ’90s, she abandoned the “fashionable spaces” where as a young dancer she was known through her long association with the couturier Jean Paul Gaultier. Since that time she has thrown herself into less ‘trendy’ explorations—confronting contemporary dance with natural elements and rhythms, and using it to test such ancient and complex body-sciences as Yoga.

In 2002 she began the triptych « Of the End of Time », an extended questioning of the meanings of choreography arising from a deliberate challenge to brood ideas about time, memory and structure.

CHAIR-OBSCUR evoked the obliteration of the past and memory, while WHA confronted the disappearance of the future. O.C.C.C. was concerned with the ‘time remaining’, with what remains to be done, with what it’s still possible to do, right here and now in the moment of performance.

CORNUCOPIAE was given in November 2008: “it’s as if I was created out of some ideal of untruthfulness that could go so far as to suffocate love.”

Since July 2008 a new independent company exists as vehicle for all of Chopinot’s works, both creations and repertoire: the company is likewise called CORNUCOPIAE.