

# Le Duc

A meeting of  
sculpture, dance and puppetry



# The Meeting

In June of 2019 the dancer-choreographer Thomas Noone presented the preview of his show “After The Party” at the Teatro Biblioteca Quarticciolo in Rome as part of the Fuori Programma Dance Festival. The artist Angela Maria Piga attended the show and shortly afterwards contacted him to invite him to see her sculptures explaining that his show had sparked a feeling of connection with her own creation. On seeing the works he recognised this affinity and a mutual desire to collaborate was born leading them to meet again in Rome to investigate ways to work together.

**Video trailer of the show After the Party**



# The artist's viewpoint

As I read the Edgar Allan Poe's 1832 humorous short story "The Duc de l'Omelette" I imagined it as a performance between a man and his alter ego, the Devil meeting in hell, surrounded by works of art and void. I then thought at once of the outstanding performance by Thomas Noone "After the Party", where a man who is unaware of himself struggles with a puppet, that stands for his alter ego. Noone's performance was a great discovery to me. His use of mimic and his way to express the physical gap between a human being and his own body echoed my own work as a sculptor. My work is based on the hard struggle the matter has with existence, that results in a shape looking for an impossible balance with the insight, a fight that ends up in a grotesque series of faces, obsessions, poses, tics, clumsy bodies who do not fit into their Persona.

I interpreted Noone's approach to movement and physical relations as bodies skipping over each other and falling like dead weights instead of interacting through a harmonic balance. Bodies who do not represent the person they are supposed to be. The Duc de l'Omelette and the Devil are two sides of a unique one: the former, a full body deprived of awareness and conscience, and the latter a brilliant mind deprived of sense and attachment for life. The end of the short story is unexpected: the mindless plain body, the ridiculous Duc, wins over the intellectual and static clairvoyance of the Devil. Matter wins over the idea, body over mind, clay over shape. Lonely bodies whose choreography and words end in grimaces: those of Edgar A. Poe, of Noone's figures and moves, and of my sculptures, which are primordial matter stuffed into reality, a location which doesn't seem to be of their own.

Angela Maria Piga

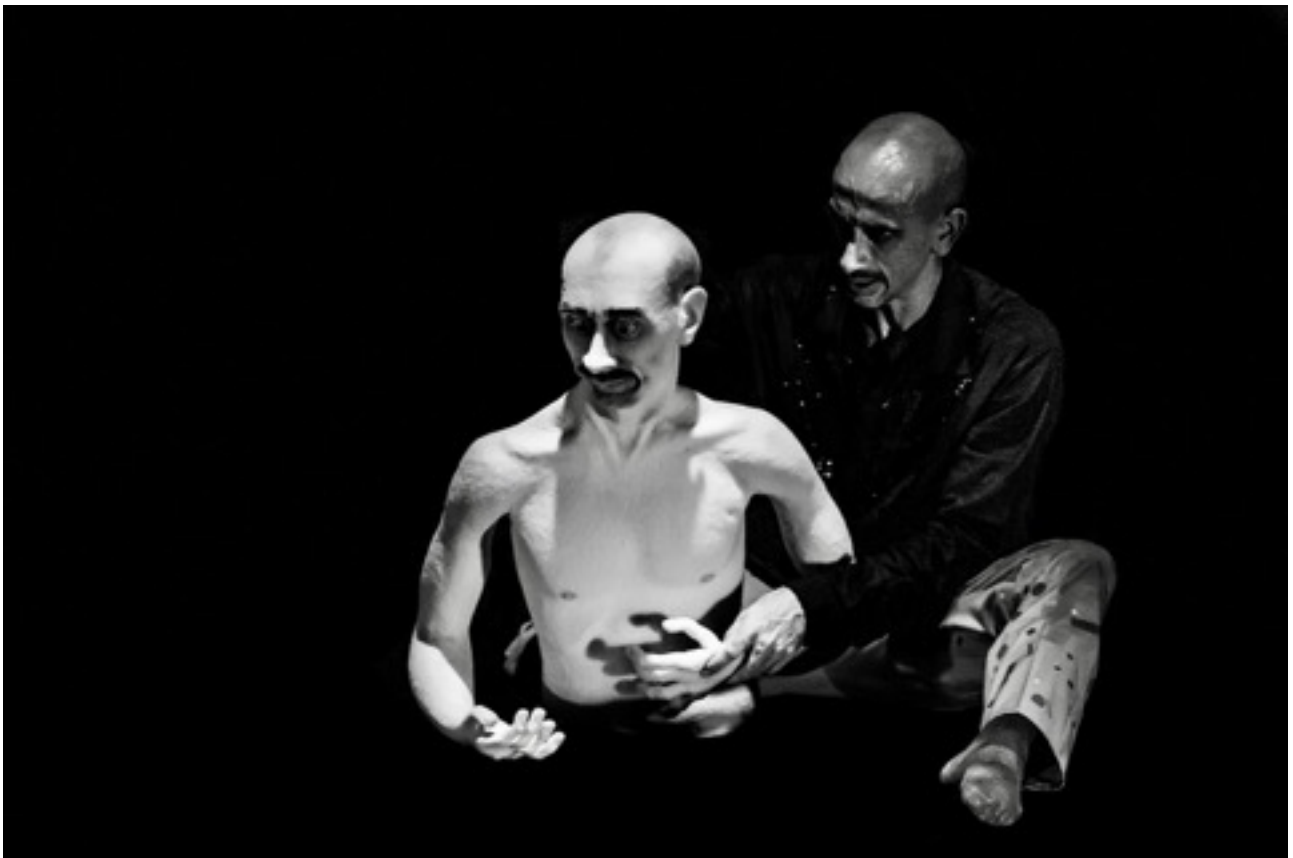


# The choreographer's viewpoint

When I saw the works of Angela Maria Piga firstly I just enjoyed the non intellectualised reaction I had, very much a visceral response to a visual. This is very much how I enjoy watching dance, and also how I wish others to perceive my own work - a sharing of an emotion caused by seeing the body move (or not) in space. This affinity was also related to the fact that I had recently been working with puppets and had discovered their power to act as an extension of not only the physical dancer but also permitting the creation of new personae. I felt that the use of puppets could create an interesting link between the two art forms, sculpture and dance, and that it would not only be stimulating for Angela and myself, but could actually produce a very interesting end visual, capable of bridging audiences from different fields and creating a dialogue between them.

In the tale of "The Duc de l'Omelette" I am drawn by a sense of duality, that these two polar opposites are in fact one, maybe even how the author sees the extremes of himself. The fact that the frivolous triumphs through ignorance also strikes a chord in todays times and this relevance observed almost 90 years back illustrates for me how we perceive our own human nature when we actually stop to consider it.

Thomas Noone



# The Idea

Together sculptress and choreographer will create a short work inspired by “The Duc de l’Omelette”, Piga creating a sculpture that will be transformed into a puppet to accompany Noone in the dance. The resulting performance will be a reflection of the two collaborators thoughts and a response to the possibilities that the puppet-sculpture offers. The character association Duc-Devil-Dancer-Puppet permits multiple dialogues and interpretations, both reinforcing the idea man-flesh and puppet-devil as well as allowing conflicting ideas.

It will be designed to be performed in close proximity to an audience in a gallery space, connected to an exhibition of further works of the artist.

In order to bring the project together two other collaborators are essential for the process, André Mello, the puppet maker and Jim Pinchen, composer.

André is an artist who sculpts puppets creating fantastic figures that are not only aesthetically interesting in themselves but also highly functional in performance. Working in high density foam he will transform the clay works of Angela into dynamic living puppets.

Jim Pinchen was the composer for the show “After the Party” that brought Noone and Piga together, and his soundscapes are both evocative for the audience and supportive to the dance.



# Biographies

## Angela Maria Piga - Sculptor



Angela Maria Piga was born in Rome from an Australian and Sardinian family. She graduated in French Literature at La Sapienza University in Rome. While working in two contemporary art galleries from 1990 to 2005 she continued thriving on literature, cinema and art, writing novels and poetry.

During this time, in 1997 she attended the Drama class at Teatro Agorà in Rome, where she played in "Radia" directed by Julio Solinas, and in 2003 her novel "La sindrome di Salomone" (Salomon's Syndrome) was published by Oèdipus ed.

From 2006 to 2009 she worked as an author and host of english speaking cultural radio programs for the Italian public network Rai International after which she went on to work as an art and film critic and journalist, writing essays for art catalogues and contributing to national and international magazines (Il Messaggero, Il Secolo XIX, Lo Specchio, Casa Vogue, Uomo Vogue, Art Passions, Cahiers du Cinéma).

In 2015 she co-curated two exhibitions: "A View of One's Own: three women photographers in Rome" at the American Academy in Rome and "Portrait Voice", at the Museo della Mente di Roma before moving to Düsseldorf (Germany), where many of the artists she had been writing about lived. During her time in Düsseldorf (2015-2017) her literary, narrative and visual background radically transformed into sculpture making. In 2017 she refined the technique at the Ugo Paoletti ceramic workshop in Rome.

She currently lives in Rome where she continues to create sculptures (unique artworks) and also paints. She had her first solo exhibition in 2018 in Rome, at MAC Maja Arte Contemporanea gallery.

Web [Angela Maria Piga](#)



## Thomas Noone - Choreographer and Dancer



Thomas Noone creates contemporary dance pieces with a signature physical and athletic style.

Born in London, he obtained a degree in Geology at Oxford University before changing direction and training at Rambert Dance School. He danced in Holland and Belgium before moving to Barcelona where he founded his own company in 2001.

With this group, Thomas Noone Dance he has created more than 30 productions over the last 18 years including collaborations with Barcelona institutions such as the Grec Festival, the Mercat de les Flors

or the Theatre Lliure and these have toured across Spain, Europe, Latin America and beyond. In 2006 Thomas Noone Dance became resident company at the SAT! theatre in Barcelona.

As a guest choreographer he has made works for many companies including Ballet Basel (Switzerland), Norrdans (Sweden), Ballet du Rhin (France), Company E (Washington), Ballet Nacional Chileno (Chile), Tanz Theater Münster (Germany), Kyo Integrated Dance Company (Japan) and Stopgap (U.K).

He is also artistic director of the Dansat! festival in the SAT! since 2006 and consultant for the regular dance program in the theatre. He has organised additional activities for the theatre including international collaborations, (Grec, Aerowaves,) inclusive programming activities and audience development initiatives.

Other activities include work as a teacher imparting workshops and participation in various juries. In 2011 he was awarded Barcelona's city prize for Dance.

Web [Thomas Noone Dance](http://thomasnoonedance.com)

## Jim Pinchen - Soundscape



A talented multi-instrumentalist and electronic composer, he is capable of creating modern and contemporary soundscapes while integrating both real instrumental sound and urban textures.

Based in Brighton, England, he combines his work as a composer with social cultural initiatives and is an active member of Musicians without Borders, with projects in Ciudad Juárez in Mexico and Santa Ana in El Salvador. Back in the U.K. he is very active in work with groups in risk of exclusion such as young offenders and refugees.

His extensive list of collaborations with Thomas Noone include Balbir el meu avi, Lugares extrañamente desastrosos, Brutal Love Poems, Medea, Just a Dancer, Dancing Bodies, Breathless, Alicia, Perverso, Closer and After the Party, as well as creations for Noone for his pieces in Basel, Münster and Leeds.

web [Jim Pinchen](#)

## André Mello - Puppet Artist



André Mello is a sculptor who specialises in the creation of puppets. Having studied set design and film art design at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in the Netherlands he worked for 12 years in and around Holland before returning to his native Brasil.

He is a long time collaborator of the pioneer in dance puppetry fusion Duda Pavia and had already made a name for himself working in foam using highly particular sculpting techniques.

André created the puppet for Thomas Noone for the solo After the Party, and managed to make not only an incredible replica of Noone, but also a fantastically expressive and malleable puppet. André lives and works in Brasil.

web [André Mello](#)



# References

**“Le Duc de l'Omelette” - A short story by Edgar Allan Poe (1832)**

## **Synopsis**

Le Duc de l'Omelette is a frivolous and vain French aristocrat who dies suddenly out of disgust while at a dinner because the ortolan bird he is served is not presented correctly as would pertain to his status.

He descends to Hell where he finds himself before His Majesty Beelzebub, the Devil, who is surrounded by outstanding classic works of art and accompanied by tremulous music which turns out to be the cries of the damned. Challenged, the Devil refuses to fight the Duke in a duel and instead invites him to play cards.

Surprisingly, luck is on the snobbish side and the Duke wins. He leaves Hell as snotty and condescending as when he first arrived, assuring His Majesty “que s’il n’était pas De L’Omelette il n’aurait point d’objection d’être le Diable.”

## **Full web references**

### **Video After the Party mi**

<https://vimeo.com/350583543>

### **Web Angela Maria Piga**

<https://angelamariapiga.com>

### **Web Thomas Noone**

[www.thomasnoonedance.com](http://www.thomasnoonedance.com)

### **Web Jim Pinchen**

<https://www.jimpinchen.com>

### **Web André Mello**

<https://andremelloarte.wixsite.com/portifolio>