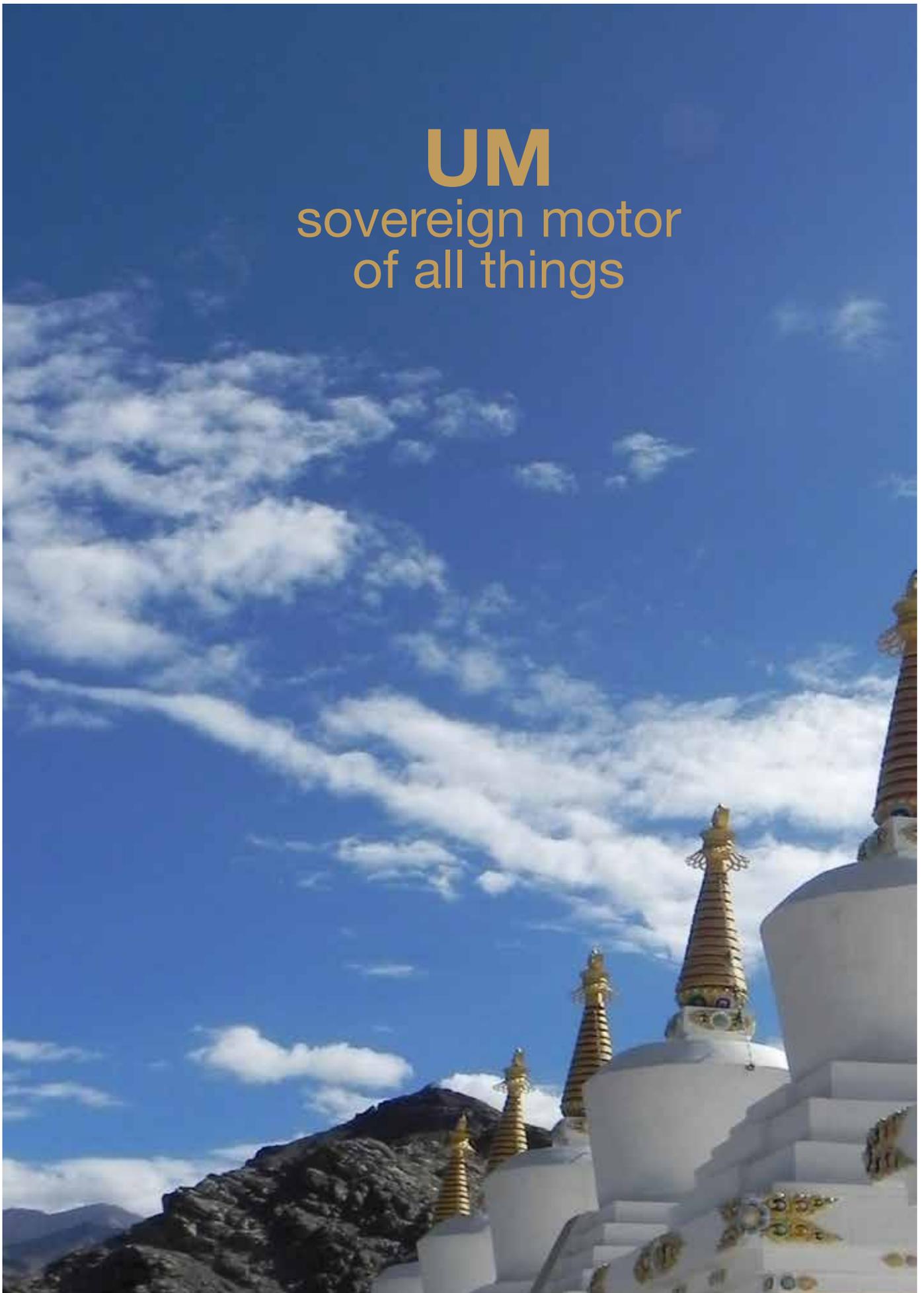


**UM**  
sovereign motor  
of all things



A project by  
Zad Moultaka,  
Ars Nova ensemble instrumental  
& Neue Vocalsolisten



Coproduction Ars Nova ensemble instrumental, IRCAM and Festival d'Île de France  
With the support of the Fonds franco-allemand pour la musique contemporaine / Impuls neue Musik

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**UM SOVEREIGN MOTOR OF ALL THINGS**  
**POUR SETS & ELECTRONICS**  
A PROJECT BY ZAD MOULTAKA WITH  
ARS NOVA ENSEMBLE INSTRUMENTAL,  
& NEUE VOCALSOLISTEN

CRÉATION 2016 / 2017 - 75'

*UM* is a sound meditation that draws inspiration from the Tibetan Book of the Dead and from rituals chanted in monasteries so as to explore the notion of sacredness in modern society. Seven singers surrounded by two instrumental groups, and suspended loudspeakers strewn across the ground, interconnect the poles of the sound spectrum: sub-bass and super-treble. The singers seem to be searching through these strata for man's place in the universe.

In its quest for inner space, *UM* sets up a series of mantras – phonemes culled from our consumer society – thereby delivering sharp criticism that bemoans our lost relationship to the sacred.

The composer deliberately wishes to combine two ensembles – one French and one German – in order to enliven the work by creating contrasts and dynamism. Strong links already exist. The Ars Nova instrumental ensemble conducted by Philippe Nahon has frequently collaborated with the composer, and since 2004 they have jointly created scores of works. The Neue Vocalsolisten Stuttgart, an international reference in 20th and 21st century vocal music, is currently working on a first commission, to be premiered at the Stuttgart Eclat Festival in February 2014.

A third partner, the IRCAM, will implement the electronic spatialization and the electro-acoustic architecture.

The synergy between the three structures bodes well for high-level music, while opening up prospects for broad dissemination and creating space for an artistic and human adventure of great power.

*UM by Zad MoultaKa*

*UM* is a project that stems from the energy and sound-space of Tibetan rituals. This topic has been extensively explored and even exploited, often for pseudo-spiritual or dangerously media-centered purposes.

Our aim is not to portray the actual monks, nor to embark on proselytism, apologia or any sort of political position regarding the Tibetan drama, but rather to examine our own waning civilization, which is being stripped of meaning and anchorage. We wish to probe our relationship to sacredness and the ways in which it sometimes gets dismally warped, by setting up a space in search of shared resonances.

The ensembles are arranged in three strata: a mixed ensemble upstage, an ensemble consisting of brass and percussion at one side of the stage, and in center stage seven singers uttering fragmented words, «names», syllables that sound like hollow mantras deriving from our consumer society.

Seven Men, situated in the hall's acoustic nucleus, are seeking for the connection between upper and lower spheres, between sky and earth, in the extreme space of harmonics and sub-bass frequencies.

Loudspeakers suspended above the audience and scattered across the ground embody these extreme highs and lows.

Buddhist monks delve deep into vocal matter to bring out the most transparent of sounds: harmonic overtones, which emerge as if miraculously, reminding us that the visible and the hidden, the material and the spiritual, are intertwined and have the same nature. Following an infinite line that turns out to be a circle; pursuing an inner path that merges into space.



And if we could descend even lower? Delve even further?  
Go beyond the depths, even deeper than deep, so that  
the monks' chant becomes the peak of an unrevealed  
underground vibration? What would this matter be?  
How would the highest highs come across?

Can a computer machine show us the way? A direction?  
The machine... a lovely paradox, which will take shape  
in the IRCAM labs.

«A motor produces or yields a physiological motion». It  
is also a «device for transforming energy into mechanical  
energy», a force that brings about motion. It is said that  
«God is the primary motor, the sovereign motor of  
all things». And if we were to take this adage literally?  
The motor... in its most mechanical sense...UM, can  
this mantra-sounding syllable also cynically embed the  
acronym of United Motors? Tibetan monks were indeed  
used for a car advertisement!

The motor would thus be to our societies what Buddhist  
chant is to their society.

How can one inquire into the motor's sound-matter  
by using monastic chant as a model? Can the motor's  
sub-bass and super-treble frequencies provide us with a  
pathway? A poetic space? Dare we say the word: spiritual?  
Does all this suffice to remind us, once again, that the  
visible and the hidden, the material and the spiritual,  
are intertwined and have the same nature? Does this  
mean that despite our «ascent» to the extreme surface  
of things, we are not yet utterly lost? That our salvation  
resides in listening?

In listening to the most insignificant things? Listening...

For these monks who are at home in spirituality, the  
universe was created with a sound...

### *UM by Philippe Nabon*

In view of Zad Moulata's contained force, sensitivity and  
mastery of form, it makes sense that his encounter with  
Tibetan monks has culminated in a musical creation.

Ars Nova takes active and ongoing part in the evolution of  
creative output. This is due to a desire and need to focus  
its forces on art's constructive intelligence, in opposition to  
silence and obscurity.

Tibetan ritual has supplied Zad Moulata with the driving  
force underlying form, momentum, sounds, and rhythms.  
The spark gives rise to the flame, toward which all life-forces  
converge to reach equilibrium or sublime death like the  
dazzled butterfly that burns its wings.

Zad Moulata has found the motor of a new gesture. His  
talent will guide him, and Ars Nova is happy to follow suit  
in this new musical adventure.

## PROVISIONNAL CAST LIST

*Conductor / music direction*  
*Philippe Nahon*

### **Ars Nova ensemble instrumental : 11 musicians**

1 tuba  
2 trombones  
1 horn  
1 trumpet  
1 flute  
1 clarinet  
1 percussion  
1 viola  
1 cello  
1 double bass

### **NEUE VOCAL SOLISTEN : 6 voices s/m/a/t/b/b**

## SCHEDULE

### **October 7, 2016 - CREATION**

Théâtre Jean Vilar - Vitry-sur-Seine (94)  
in the context of the Festival d'Île de France

### **November 8, 2016**

La Comédie, Scène Nationale de Clermont-Ferrand (63)  
in the context of the Festival des Musiques Démesurées

### **November 10, 2016**

La Filature, Scène Nationale de Mulhouse (68)

### **November 22, 2016**

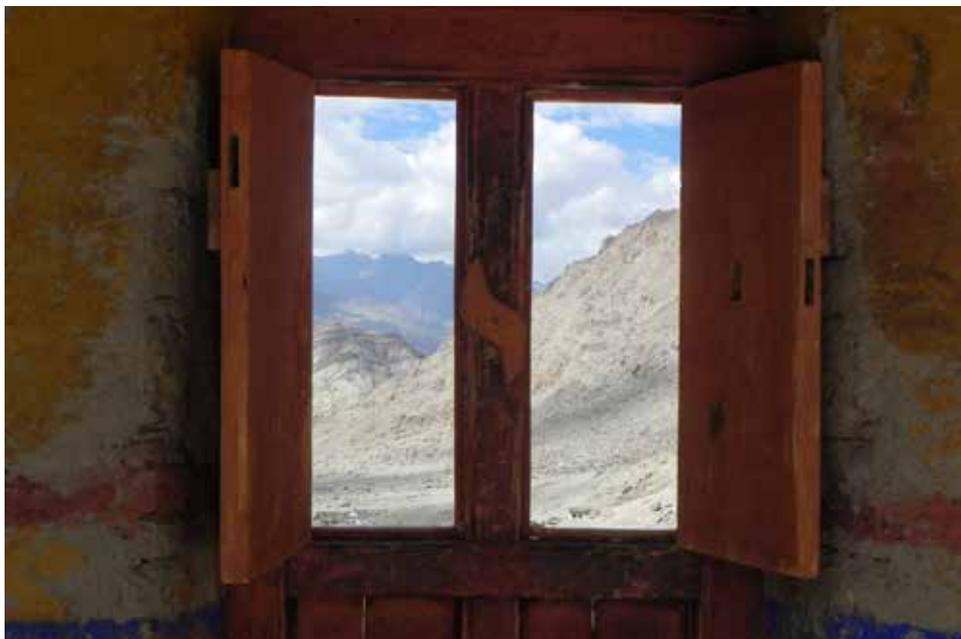
TAP Théâtre Auditorium de Poitiers (86)

### **May 13, 2017**

Arsenal de Metz (57)

### **June 2017 (TBC)**

Stuttgart Summer Festival (Allemagne)



## L'ÉQUIPE ARTISTIQUE

### ZAD MOULTAKA

*more information on [www.zadmoultaka.com](http://www.zadmoultaka.com)*



For several years, Zad Moultaqa has been searching for a personal musical language, one which integrates contemporary Western music practice with Arabic music via different forms of experimentation.

Moultaqa has the distinctive grace of those who are prepared to lose themselves in order to find their own way. He tirelessly opens himself up, decoding mysteries and resistances that surge within

him, while questioning history, memory and contemporary experience. He is a multifaceted character, always in search of boundaries and dreams, with that particular feeling of urgency unique to creators.

The slow maturation of Moultaqa's expression has developed since 2003, resulting in an growing body of work including choral music, music for orchestra, ensemble, opera, chamber music, electroacoustic works, music for solo voice, sound installations and music for dance.

Today, Zad Moultaqa's catalogue comprises over 100 works. He has collaborated with musicians around the world, including the ensembles Ars Nova, Accroche note, Montreal's Nouvel Ensemble Moderne, Musicatzeize, the Netherlands Radio Choir, the Chamber Choir Les Elements, Neue Vocalsolisten, and many others.

### ARS NOVA ENSEMBLE INSTRUMENTAL

*more information on [www.arsnova-ensemble.com](http://www.arsnova-ensemble.com)*

Ars Nova was founded in 1963 by the composer and conductor Marius Constant, and is the longest-standing contemporary music ensemble in France today. It was set up at a time when new structures for contemporary music were being developed (festivals, ensembles...) and is deeply committed to aesthetic pluralism. Right from the start, the ensemble has stood out for its incorporation of different musical trends and its refusal to adhere to any dogma - a policy vigorously pursued by Marius Constant, and subsequently by Philippe Nahon (assisted by Benoist Baillergeau until 2012). As a result, 50 years of concerts have unfolded in a spirit of musical profusion, fueled by interchange between the arts and the desire to experiment with new concert-forms.



This policy of openness to different musical and artistic realms has given rise to several 20th century masterpieces (such as Messiaen's *Des Canyons aux étoiles*, premiered in France by Ars Nova in 1975), brought various top-notch composers to the limelight (such as Maurice Ohana), launched young composers (such as Pascal Dusapin), and created innovative multidisciplinary shows (such as the 1,000 performances of Peter Brook's staging of Bizet's *Carmen* in the 1980s). Under the direction of Marius Constant and then Philippe Nahon since 1987, Ars Nova has continued to foster long-term collaborations with artists. As a result, two generations of musicians have joined the ensemble's ranks since its inception, taking active part in the life of the ensemble and inspiring composers by way of their musical and personal qualities.

In a similar spirit of joint venture, the past five decades abound in relationships with composers and creators such as Georges Aperghis, Pascal Dusapin, Luciano Berio, Bernard Cavanna, Luc Ferrari, Alexandros Markéas, Zad Moultaqa, Martin Matalon and many others, who have accompanied Ars Nova season after season by nurturing close relationships with the musicians and sharing the rich spectrum of their music with various public sectors. Although originally founded within the ORTF, the ensemble quickly opted for independence and public outreach.

Thus even before turning into a political notion, decentralization has been a core issue for Ars Nova. As of the initial steps in 1975 in Le Gers until moving to the Poitou-Charentes region in 1987, first in La Rochelle and then in 1999 in Poitiers,

there has been a constant desire for close links between art and the public, and for active involvement at the local level, with the aim of dissemination, awareness, interchange, amateur activities and education.

Ars Nova has always been regarded as a main player in the contemporary music scene. It performs all over the world in major theaters and festivals dedicated to contemporary music and creation. Its concerts are accompanied by awareness-raising activities and educational workshops, in order to facilitate public access to contemporary composition. Following its fiftieth anniversary celebrations abounding in emotions and new works, Ars Nova is pursuing its music venture, in a mood of enthusiasm and rekindled desire, under Philippe Nahon's direction.

The Ars Nova Ensemble is currently based in the Aquitaine Limousin Poitou-Charentes region and in Poitiers, and works jointly with the TAP Théâtre Auditorium de Poitiers. Its activities receive funding from the Région Aquitaine Limousin Poitou-Charentes, the French Ministry of Culture and Communication (DRAC de Aquitaine Limousin Poitou-Charentes) and the Ville de Poitiers, and additional support from SACEM and SPEDIDAM.

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## NEUE VOCALSOLISTEN STUTT GART

*more information on [www.neuevocalsolisten.de](http://www.neuevocalsolisten.de)*

They are researchers, discoverers, adventurers and idealists. Their partners are specialist ensembles and radio orchestras, opera houses and the free theater scene, electronic studios and countless organizers of contemporary music festivals and concert series in the world.

The Neue Vocalsolisten established as an ensemble specializing in the interpretation of contemporary vocal music in 1984. Founded under the artistic management of Musik der Jahrhunderte, the vocal chamber ensemble has been artistically independent since the year 2000. Each of the seven concert and opera soloists, with a collective range reaching from coloratura soprano over countertenor to «basso profondo», shapes the work on chamber music and the co-operation with the composers and other interpreters through his/her distinguished artistic creativity.

According to the musical requirements a pool of specialist singers complements the basic team. The ensemble's chief interest lies on research: exploring new sounds, new vocal techniques and new forms of articulation, whereby great emphasis is placed on establishing a dialogue with composers. Each year, the ensemble premieres about twenty new works. Central to the group's artistic concept are the areas of music theater and the interdisciplinary work with electronics, video, visual arts and literature, as well as the juxtaposition of contrasting elements found in ancient and contemporary music.



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## PHILIPPE NAHON, DIRECTION

*more informations on [www.arsnova-ensemble.com/compositeur/philippe-nahon](http://www.arsnova-ensemble.com/compositeur/philippe-nahon)*

Philippe Nahon was born in Paris in 1946. Following his studies in art and piano, he was prompted by the encouragement of his teachers to pursue orchestra conducting. Philippe Nahon has studied with Louis Fourestier, Jean-Sébastien Béreau, Pierre Dervaux, and Roberto Benzi, and taken part in a workshop led by Herbert Von Karajan. At the age of 28, he heard that Marius Constant, founder of the Ars Nova Ensemble, was looking for an assistant. It was an era brimming with discoveries and innovations in contemporary music, jazz, improvisation, happenings and experimental theater. During this time, he came in contact with significant creators and composers who had a profound influence on him, such as Olivier Messiaen, Maurice Ohana, Luciano Berio and Luc Ferrari. He also encountered Peter Brook, who launched him on the path of exploration and vast creative potential in the interaction between today's music and theater, dance, circus...

After a transition period working alongside Marius Constant, in 1987 Philippe Nahon was appointed Music Director of the Ars Nova Ensemble. His passion for his time is expressed by the countless works he has created with composers whose work he loves. Philippe Nahon is spurred by various motives (exchange, novelty, transmission), and he continues to work towards discovering artists, disseminating their works, and reaching out to the public.

His view of music is deeply impacted by theater, as comes across in his scope of performances ranging from musical theater and opera to staged concerts. When offstage, Philippe Nahon enjoys traipsing across France, especially in the Aquitaine Limousin Poitou-Charentes region, to convey his passion for contemporary composition and to share his knowledge of repertoires and conducting.





## CONTACTS

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