

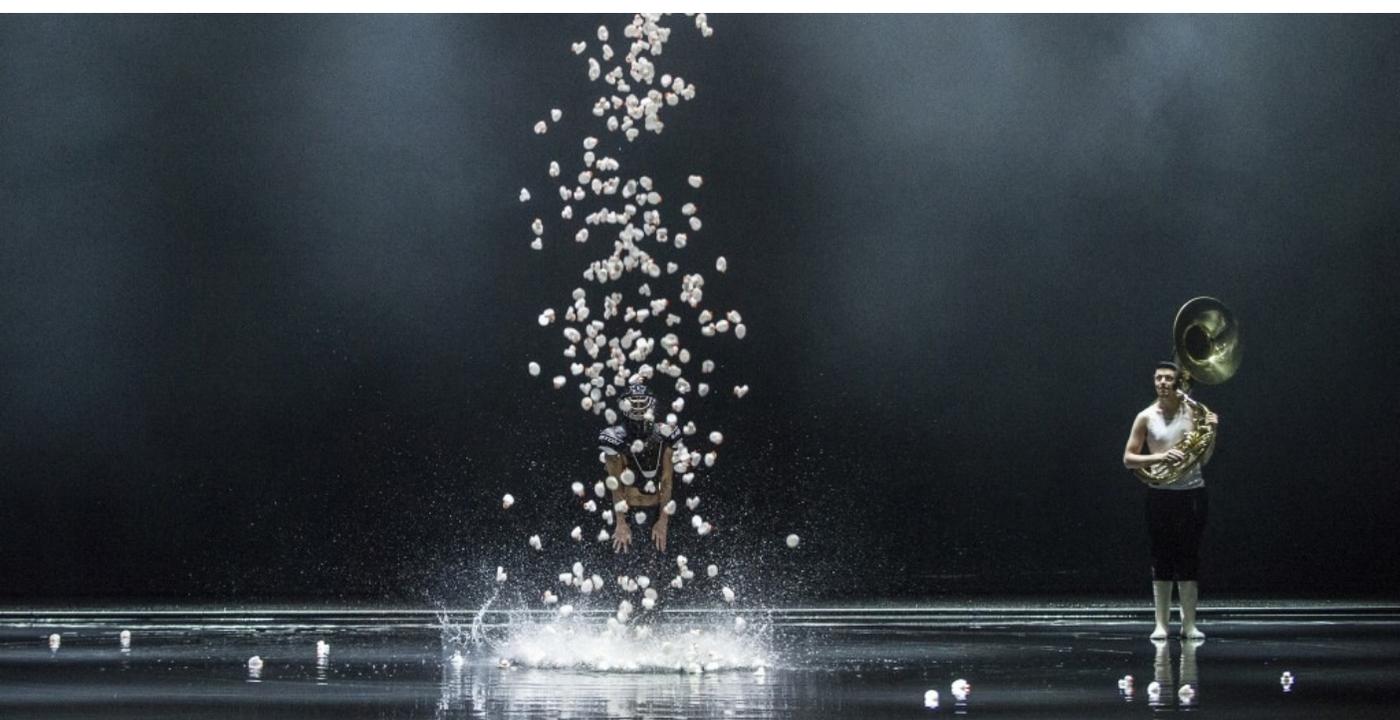
# A Swan Lake by Alexander Ekman



[1]

Photo: Erik Berg

Wild, wet and beautiful was the review headline in the national newspaper Aftenposten after the premiere of A Swan Lake by internationally acclaimed young Swedish choreographer [Alexander Ekman](#)[2]. Yes, it was a blast! Wet how, you ask, and the answer is a pool on stage; 16 x 16 m/17.5 x 17.5 yds with a water depth of 3-4 cm/1.1 -1.4" filled with 5 000 litres/1320 gallons of water. The dancers were sliding gracefully – I did not know this was even possible – even using the water for sound effects by taping it, jumping and playfully dancing in the pool. The first splashes in Act 2 felt like an attack on the senses, and very surreal. Accompanied by a opera singer Elisabeth Teige, in the role as The Diva, my mind seemed to have lift off. This, you might realize was not a new version of the mythical Swan Lake with music by Tchaikovsky, but inspired by it with an additional large portion of humor and madness according to Ekman himself. How about adding a 1000 plastic ducks? Tick. Each one had its hole glued to avoid bacteria spreading. How do swans actually move in the water? A demanding task given to the dancers, who needed special ballet shoes made of rubber with a leather inside, knee pads to avoid cuts, wetsuits to keep warm, and bicycle helmets after numerous concussions when rehearsing the production, see a video here: [Rehearsing](#)[3].



[4]

Photo: Erik Berg

Swan costumes by Danish designer [Henrik Vibskov](#)[5], made in neoprene used for wetsuits. Apparently the material made such a smell that it has been hanging outside since October. Does neoprene breathe, and how well does it wash? The head seamstress made her own gym outfit to test on the treadmill to make sure it would work. Suits made of especially printed fabrics had falling plastic ducks on them, and I do wish I had brought some opera binoculars. Take a look at the making of the neoprene outfits here: [Costumes](#)[6].

The music was by Swedish composer Mikael Karlsson performed by the orchestra together with sound effects which made my heart miss a few beats here and there. For a long time the performance was called naturally enough water; a water ballet. In the introduction before the ballet we saw Ekman's introduction made on a New York roof terrace. I hope you will enjoy this short video presentation, as much as I did: [Water Research](#)[7].

The performance is sold out, but Norwegian state television, NRK, has filmed the performance so I do hope to see it again, for more details see: [Operaen](#)[8].