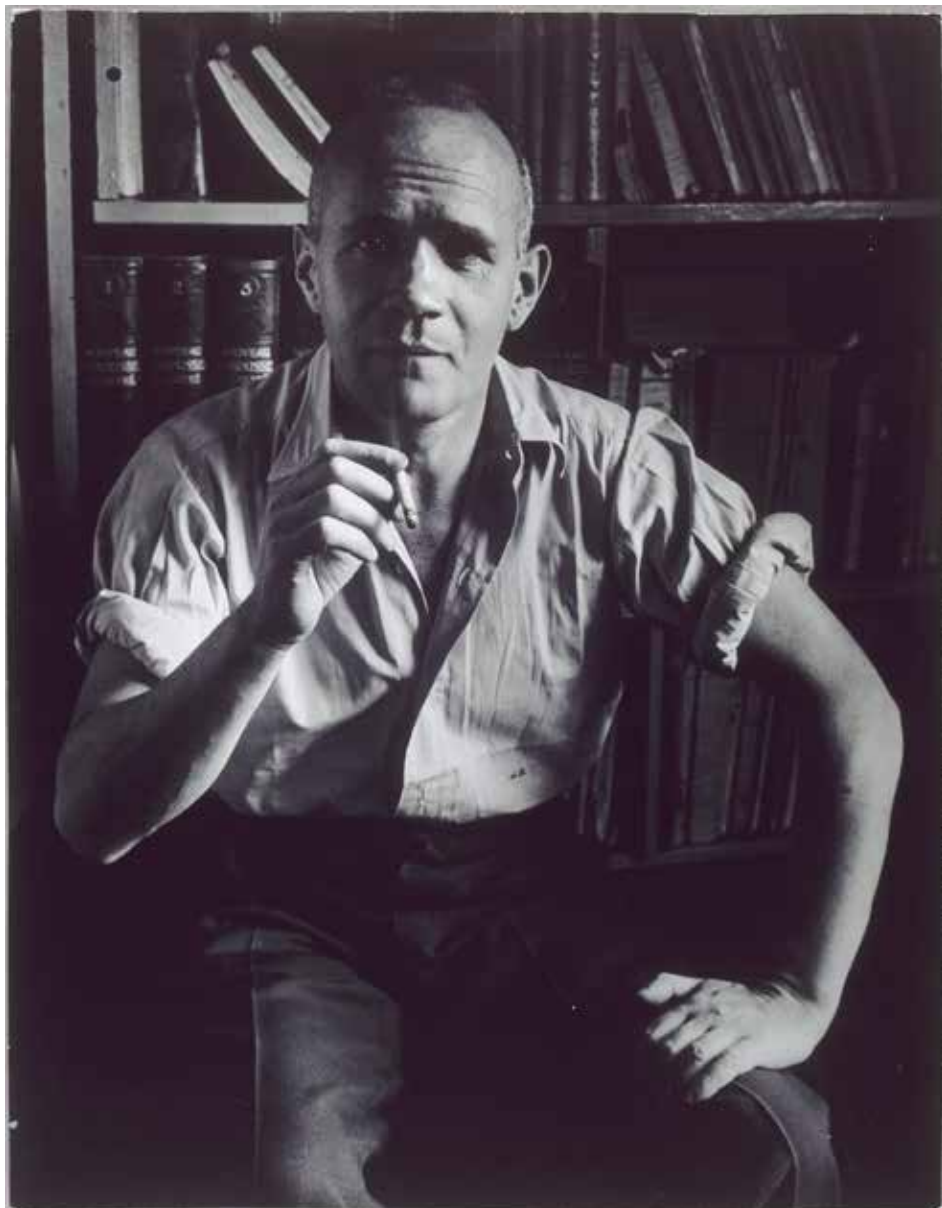


ARTISTIC DOSSIER
LES PARAVENTS
JEAN GENET
ARTHUR NAUZYCIEL



Théâtre National de Bretagne
Direction Arthur Nauzyciel
1, rue Saint-Hélier
35000 Rennes
T-N-B.fr



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“When we go to the theatre it is to enter the halls, the antechambers, of a temporary death, of sleep. My sombre fete will take place at nightfall, in a final moment, something very close to our funeral. When the curtain rises, we are in a place where infernal simulacra are being prepared.” – Jean Genet, *Le Funambule* (1958)



LES PARAVENTS

JEAN GENET

ARTHUR NAUZYCIEL

"[If *Les Paravents* isn't staged in France] it is because the French will find what cannot be found there but which they believe they have found: the problem of the Algerian War."

– Jean Genet

Published in 1961, considered by Genet "the pinnacle of his theatrical work", *Les Paravents* had to wait until 1966, and go through various rewrites, before it was finally staged in Paris through the intervention of André Malraux, the Minister for Culture in France. Jean-Louis Barrault, the director of the Odéon – Théâtre de France, commissioned Roger Blin to direct the play, with a cast that included Maria Casarès, Madeleine Renaud, and Barrault himself. It caused a scandal among those who, seeing it from a one-sided perspective, judged it an offence against France – an impact that spoke to the depth, the substance, and the importance of the work. Today, the play is one of the foundational pillars of contemporary French theatre. Set in an Arab country colonised by Europeans, it emerges from the chaos of the Algerian War and its image, as well as from the bottomless mourning Genet felt for lost companions.

A hundred or so characters revolve around the core members of the Orties family, made up of the mother, the son Saïd, and his wife Leïla. But *Les Paravents* is a kind of trompe-l'œil. You think the play is about war, but it's not. You think the rebels are the heroes, yet it is the traitor who triumphs. At every turn, this epic drama shuns morality and propriety, overturning our codes and expectations. Genet sweeps us away, illuminating the world of death and that of the living through a series of tableaux that make up the pieces of a fascinating political and poetic ritual.

"I never copied life," said Genet, and it is in the space between life and its double, the dream, that Arthur Nauzyciel's staging unfolds. Nauzyciel's artistic work is intimately linked to the world of Jean Genet. He has directed works by contemporaries of Genet such as Fassbinder and Ginsberg, and in 2015 directed Genet's own *Splendid's* at the CDN d'Orléans, with the voice of Jeanne Moreau and a team of American actors. After an international tour (France, Korea, Spain, Switzerland), the play was revived for the Théâtre National de Bretagne during the 2018 TNB Festival. Then, in November 2020, faced with another pandemic lockdown that made it impossible to present work to the public, Nauzyciel recreated the piece for presentation online: from their homes in the United States and France, the eight actors appeared on Zoom, broadcast to a public who witnessed the live and virtual construction of their performance. Now, in 2023, Arthur Nauzyciel presents *Les Paravents*, in which he directs 16 actors, including his regular collaborators such as Marie-Sophie Ferdane, Mounir Margoum, Xavier Gallais and Catherine Vuillez, young performers from the 10th class of the TNB Drama School, and actors who took part in a 1983 staging of the play by Patrice Chéreau, thereby writing a new page in the history of *Les Paravents* across three generations.

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CREATION 2023/24

Rennes, Théâtre National de Bretagne

ON TOUR 2023/24

Paris, Odéon-Théâtre de l'Europe
29 05 – 19 06 2024

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With
HINDA ABDELAOUI
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MOHAMED BOUADLA
AYMEN BOUCHOU
OCÉANE CAÏRATY
MARIE-SOPHIE FERDANE
XAVIER GALLAIS
HAMMOU GRAÏA
ROMAIN GY
JAN HAMMENECKER
BRAHIM KOUTARI
BENICIA MAKENGELE
MOUNIR MARGOUM
FARIDA RAHOUADJ
MAXIME THÉBAULT
CATHERINE VUILLEZ

And the voice of
FRÉDÉRIC PIERROT

Text
JEAN GENET
Direction
ARTHUR NAUZYCIEL
Assistant director
CONSTANCE DE SAINT REMY
THÉO HEUGEBAERT
Dramaturgy
LEILA ADHAM
Choreography
DAMIEN JALET
Lighting design
SCOTT ZIELINSKI
Set design and accessories
RICCARDO HERNÁNDEZ
With the collaboration of
LÉA TUBIANA
Sculpture
ALAIN BURKHART
Sculpture assistant
JEANNE LEBLON DELIENNE

Sound
XAVIER JACQUOT
Video
PIERRE-ALAIN GIRAUD
Costumes, make-up, hairstyles,
and paintings on djellabas
JOSÉ LÉVY
Costume assistant
MARION RÉGNIER
Hair and make-up
AGNÈS DUPOIRIER
Hair and make-up assistant
ANGÈLE HUMEAU
Casting
BÉNÉDICTE GUIHO
Physical training
JEAN-BAPTISTE ANDRÉ
Set production
ATELIERS DU THÉÂTRE
DU NORD
Costume production
ATELIERS DU THÉÂTRE
NATIONAL DE BRETAGNE
General management
JEAN-LUC BRIAND
Lighting technician
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FLORENT DALMAS
Stage manager
ANTOINE GIRAUD-ROGER
QUENTIN VIANDIER
Video technician
STÉPHANE POUGNAND
Dressing
CHARLOTTE GILLARD
Accessories
FANNY MARTEL

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CONVERSATION WITH ARTHUR NAUZYCIEL

STAGING «LES PARAVENTS»

As a play, *Les Paravents* can't be separated from the scandal it caused when it was first staged by Roger Blin at the Odéon-Théâtre de l'Europe. What made you want to present it again 60 years later?

Ever since staging *Splendid's* in 2015, an important show for me that featured Xavier Gallais among the performers, I've wanted to return to Jean Genet. *Les Paravents* had been in my mind for a long time, I'd been turning it over for years. The play was there, inside of me.

So when Stéphane Braunschweig and Didier Juillard invited me to do something at the Odéon, I immediately thought of *Les Paravents*. The Odéon and its history gave a connection to Genet's text, but it wasn't so much the scandal of the 1966 performances that made me want to stage it as the idea of simply directing the show in the same venue. These conversations started in January 2020. The pandemic lockdown gave me time to reread the play, and the period of isolation made it an increasingly obvious choice. *Les Paravents* is a play that celebrates theatre, celebrates language, celebrates bodies, and in one way or another invites uprising, insurrection. Genet's theatre is a call for change, for struggle, but also for dreaming. It's a utopia that speaks to both the political and the poetic. While this was happening I also made a chance discovery of the letters from Algeria that my cousin Charles, a young conscript studying medicine in Tlemcen from 1957 to 1959, wrote to his parents during his term of service. He wrote about what he saw, and his position as a doctor interested me because it made him an observer, a witness. His letters entered into a strange dialogue with Genet's play. And this delicate, but very personal, thread led me again back to *Les Paravents*.

IN MEMORY OF ONE WHO DIED YOUNG

Jean Genet dedicates *Les Paravents* to an unnamed man who died young. Whether that person is Abdallah Bentaga – the tightrope walker Genet fell in love with in the 1950s – or Jean Decarnin, the Communist he mourned a decade earlier, changes nothing in the end: the play is unique in that it is addressed to a dead man lying buried in the ground. Does this dedication change anything for you?

Yes, this sentence changes everything. For me, it is similar to the preface for *Les Bonnes*, in which Genet resolves any confusion about the work by insisting that his play is not a manifesto for domestic servants – he writes that he is not a union for French maids – but rather a poetic work. The dedication to the dead and the summoning of ghosts at the beginning of *Les Paravents* works in the same way: it sweeps aside the idea that the text was written solely to defend colonised peoples, and opens it up to another dimension. For me, the play is a spiritual meditation on life, destiny, and our relationship with death. And the writing is an attempt at a dialogue with the dead. Genet never stopped talking to his dead: those he knew, but also those he dreamed of knowing who became his friends after death. I am thinking of Maurice Pilorge, who was guillotined in 1939 in Rennes, and to whom Genet addressed a sublime poem written in 1942 from Fresnes prison. I believe that Genet has nothing to say to the living, in a sense, and much to say to the people of the dead.

DANCE

In Scene 1, Saïd says to his mother: "Put on your shoes. [...] And dance! And dance! Keep dancing, madame [...] there's the party." What kind of party, what kind of ritual will be performed in your *Paravents*?

The show will celebrate the other side of life, the dreamed life – that which adds a layer of spirituality, love, poetry and lightness to reality. Genet's play reminds me of a dream: situations follow one another with no apparent coherence, objects have a life of their own and we speak to them, humans bark out loud or cackle, the sky is beneath the earth... Poetry is a question of survival for Genet. I feel that our times are so bogged down in reality that theatre and acting can sometimes become suspect. Genet inspires me to have a different relationship with the world, a free and joyous one, in which we as people are never quite what we seem. Saïd is not just an Arab who flies, but a celestial wanderer who moves towards something absolute: "I'm going, me and me alone, I'm going and it must be far away, to the land of the monster" (Scene 13). And the piece ends with words that free him forever from any containment: "Saïd is in a song" (Scene 16). As far as the dance itself is concerned, Genet certainly makes bodies speak. And with the whole of the body. When Samuel Beckett was writing for mouths and minds – his *Oh les beaux jours* (*Happy Days*) premiered in 1963 at the Odéon, also directed by Roger Blin – Genet was writing for whole bodies. I see in this the influence of Alberto Giacometti, with whom Genet had extraordinary conversations around bodies and corporeality, but his awareness preceded any encounters with the sculptor. You only have to reread *Le Journal du voleur* and its description of the body's movements during a burglary to realise this. Genet brings to the stage everything that makes a human being alive. Bodies dance, but they also belch, spit and fart. He excludes nothing of our nature and brings back the dirty and the animal, reminding us what we are.

THE SPACE

Jean Genet sets his fable in an 'Arab town' that is difficult to identify: the few place names mentioned in the text are not in Algeria, but in Lebanon and Morocco. The landscapes are almost bizarre: as the scenes unfold, forest follows desert and sea replaces mountain. In what space did you choose to stage the show?

As with all my shows, I chose a single space: in this case, a monumental white staircase. Genet's text is full of ascents and descents, vertiginous falls and rises. The characters climb a mountain to get to a prison, travel to the depths of time, rise to the surface of the world, before sinking down to the realm of the dead. Everything unfolds along a vertical axis, an axis that also raises the political issue of colonisation. The staircase and its levels work concretely with this notion of verticality – the basis of Genet's imagination – and allow me to play with time and space. The staircase is also a kind of mausoleum, a monument to the dead. Genet used to say that the theatre was like a cemetery and that going to the theatre was like walking between graves. It is as if Genet had spent his life at the doors of the dead. Not quite among the living and not quite among the dead, in and out of the world. As for his own grave, Genet's body lies in Larache, Morocco. On the day of his funeral, Abdallah Bentaga was exhumed and thrown into a mass grave. The tightrope walker will never have a grave, like all the Algerian dead who fell in battle, or like the Arab demonstrators thrown into the Seine in 1961. The show is also a ritual that offers them a burial, a refuge.

THE TEAM

Who are the team you called on to create *Les Paravents*?

For this project I'm bringing together 16 performers. Some of them I've never worked with before, others I've directed in the past or worked with in other venues like the TNB Drama School. They belong to three different generations and are aged between 20 and 70. In the final scene, they will all be on stage together, facing the audience – that is, the world – as a reconciled community of people. Because that's where Genet's play ultimately leads us: into a shared space, where "the dead are dead" but can live, together, with what is left when it's all over. When Patrice Chéreau staged *Les Paravents*, he separated the characters on stage. France had woken up to and begun exorcising racism in the early 80s, symbolised by the little yellow hand of the 'Touche pas à mon pote' movement (the first demonstration I went on). Chéreau put the Arabs on stage and the colonists, the Europeans, in the audience. At the time, 'giving' the stage to actors from immigrant backgrounds was a powerful gesture because otherwise they seldom occupied it. For Genet, on the other hand, who was writing during the Algerian War, it was not necessary to have Arab performers. There was no need to stick to reality, or to lie and try to make people believe that what was on stage was real; instead he favoured artifice, make-up and excess, the invention of theatre. Today we dream of theatre in a different way and we create different images. It's no longer just the children of immigrant parents who will be on stage, but also the grandchildren of those people who arrived in France in the 60s. Staging the play today also means questioning different moments in time and the history of immigration in France. The 16 actors will be brought together in a single space that will not be divided by a screen, where they will play the roles of settlers and Arabs alike, whatever their true origins. Through the play, this new community tells the story of their parents and grandparents, but also the story of *Les Paravents*.

THE ALGERIAN WAR

What role does history, in other words the Algerian War, play in the show?

Jean Genet claimed that the play was not about the Algerian War. He also said "Everything is true and nothing is true". And in the end he came up with the beautiful formulation that *Les Paravents* was "a meditation on the Algerian War", as if history itself were a landscape. To meditate on the war is to bypass the word 'war', which is almost never used. Genet describes an uprising and recounts the turning point where the revolt, initially a minority, contained, isolated and nocturnal, becomes a revolution. In other words, the moment where it becomes the historical destiny of a country. When he began writing the play, in 1956, nobody in France was talking about 'war'. They spoke of 'events' or 'pacification operations'. Genet worked with this taboo, creating poetic detours that described a war without speaking its name. When the play was performed at the Odéon, the Algerian War was so recent that everyone understood this game of detours. But what about today? So little is said about our history... I'm afraid that denial will have turned into amnesia, which is why I felt we had to show some archive footage during the play: the idea is to bring fragments of a buried collective memory back to the surface.

– Interview conducted by Leila Adham, dramaturg (September 2023)





LES PARAVENTS EXTRACTS

SCENE 13

Leïla — I'm tired from walking, the sun, the dust. I no longer feel my legs. They've become the road itself. The dust on the road is the sadness of my face that's dropping to my feet. Where are we going, Saïd, where are we going?

Saïd — Where am I going?

Leïla — Where are we going, Saïd?

Saïd — Where I'm going, me, and me alone, since you're my misfortune and nothing but. Unless when speaking about me and my misfortune I say 'we'? Well, I'm going, and it must be far away, to the land of the monster. Even if it's where there'll never be sun, since I'm carrying you and dragging you along you're my shadow.

Leïla — You can separate from your shadow.

Saïd — If you stick to me the way crabs stick to balls, the way roundness sticks to the orange, I've still got to look for the land where the monster lives.

Leïla — Wasn't jail enough for you?

Saïd — Jail's the beginning. Before long there'll be nothing to sleep on but flint and nothing to eat but thistles. Will you eat that?

Leïla — Thistles?

Saïd — Flint.

Leïla — I'll obey you.

SCENE 16

Ommou — Push aside. Push aside the houses and gardens too. And the whole town if necessary to receive the native son in state! Push aside the night... push back the wheels of the planets to the edge of the wheel of heaven... and let them fall into the void to clear the way for us! Come on... Come along... three more steps... two more... one... there...

[Enter Saïd] Well?

Saïd — Well, here I am again... I wasn't so far away. Were you expecting me?

Bachir — We wanted to give you a welcoming party. It's being prepared. Here and among the dead. You've been very useful to us.

Saïd — I imagine so. But it's been quite an effort and I'd like to rest a bit.

Nedjma — And what if you were going to swing at the end of a rope?

Saïd — I wouldn't mind: between heaven and earth...

Ommou — We'll see later what's to be done with you, but we were supposed to receive you and pay our respects. You need homage. You were circling round the village for quite a while...

Saïd — I got lost.

Ommou — The more you lost your way in the stones and in the woods, the deeper you sank into another region to which it wasn't easy for us to descend. Though we made every effort: anger, grief, insults, fever... In showing us the way, you and your admirable spouse taught us how one must lose oneself...



DEDICATION TO THE DEAD

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Genet dedicates many of his texts to the dead, both those known and unknown to him. Indeed, it is to the dead that his whole oeuvre is addressed. In *L'Atelier* d'Alberto Giacometti, he writes: "Giacometti does not work for his contemporaries, nor for the generations to come; he makes sculptures that delight the dead." One could say that Genet, too, works to delight the dead.

Genet's work doesn't build society, rather it hopes for its downfall; it doesn't emancipate the oppressed, it addresses itself to the oppressors, only to leave them with the taste of death in their mouths; it says nothing about the facts of reality because they can be said elsewhere; it doesn't make the poor, black people, or servants speak other than to its own rhythm; it does not liberate spectators from their positions as spectators; it is neither immersive nor participatory; it does not document anything, does not compete with the dominant discourse; it disdains the living for the dead; it is ambiguous, shady, nasty and unfair.

"It was among the dead themselves that I had gone down to weep, even into their secret chambers, led by invisible but gentle birds' hands up stairs that were folded away as I went. I exposed my pain in the friendly fields of death, far from men: in myself. There was no danger of anyone catching me doing anything ridiculous, I was somewhere else."

– Jean Genet, *Pompes funèbres* (1947)

– Extract from *Le théâtre de Jean Genet*,
Olivier Neveux (Ides et Calendes, 2016)



CONVERSATION WITH JEAN GENET

Until the age of 30, you wandered around Europe, going from prison to prison. You describe this period in *Journal du voleur*. Do you consider yourself a good thief?

A 'good' thief... It's funny to hear those two words put together. A good thief, a good thief... You probably wanted to ask if I was a skilled thief. Well, I wasn't clumsy. But there is an element of hypocrisy in the act of stealing [...] an obligation to hide. If you hide, you hide part of your act, you can't admit to it. [...] For me, when I stole, a lot of it had to do with making my thefts public, 'publishing' them out of vanity, pride or sincerity. In every thief there is a Hamlet who questions himself, his actions, but must do this questioning in public.

Sartre explains that you decided to live Evil right to the death. What did you mean?

It was to live Evil in such a way that you are not reclaimed by the social forces that symbolise Good. I didn't mean living Evil until my own death, but in such a way that I would be led to take refuge, if I had to take refuge anywhere, only in Evil and nowhere else, never in Good.

Yet your reputation as a famous writer gives you the right to be named on the side of the Good in society. Does society accept you, when you go out into the world?

Never. Society makes no mistake about it. First of all, I don't like going out. That is not all my doing. People don't invite me out because they realise pretty quick that I'm not one of them.

Do you feel solidarity with criminals and the downtrodden?

None. There is no solidarity because, my God, if there were solidarity, that would be the beginning of morality, and therefore the return of the Good.

Are you still in touch with your former cellmates?

Not at all. Look at my situation. I get royalties from every country in the world, you come and interview me, and they're still in prison. How do you expect us to be in touch? For them, I am a traitor, nothing else.

Did you betray them?

I certainly betrayed something. But I had to do it for something more precious to me. I had to betray theft, which is just an action, in favour of a more universal activity, which is poetry. I had to do that. I had to betray the thief I was in order to become the poet I hope to be.

— Extract from an interview conducted by the journalist Madeleine Gobeil for *Playboy* magazine (January 1964).

Published in *L'Ennemi déclaré : Textes et entretiens choisis* (1970-1983), Jean Genet — prepared and annotated by Albert Dichy



EXTRACTS FROM JEAN GENET JOURNAL DU VOLEUR – FRAGMENTS

JEAN GENET ON HIMSELF

I was born in Paris on 19 December 1910. A ward of the Assistance Publique, it was impossible for me to know anything about my background. When I was 21, I obtained a birth certificate. My mother's name was Gabrielle Genet. My father remains unknown. I came into the world at 22 rue d'Assas.

I will find out something about my origins, I said to myself, and I went to the rue d'Assas. Number 22 was occupied by the Maternity Ward. They refused to give me any information. I was brought up in the Morvan by peasants. Whenever I come across genét (broom) blossoms on the heaths – especially at twilight on my way back from a visit to the ruins of Tiffauges where Gilles de Rais lived – I feel a deep sense of kinship with them.

I regard them solemnly, with tenderness. My emotion seems ordained by all nature. I am alone in the world, and I am not sure that I am not the king – perhaps the sprite – of these flowers. They render homage as I pass, bow without bowing, but recognise me. They know that I am their living, moving, agile representative, conqueror of the wind. They are my natural emblem, but through them I have roots in that French soil which is fed by the powdered bones of the children and youths buggered, massacred and burned by Gilles de Rais.

Through that thorny plant of the Cevennes, I take part in the criminal adventures of Vacher. Thus, through her whose name I bear, the vegetable kingdom is my familiar. I can regard all flowers without pity; they are members of my family. If, through them, I rejoin the nether realms – though it is to the bracken and their marshes, to the algae, that I should like to descend – I withdraw further from men.

The atmosphere of the planet Uranus appears to be so heavy that the ferns there are creepers; the animals drag along, crushed by the weight of the gases. I want to mingle with these humiliated creatures which are always on their bellies. If metempsychosis should grant me a new dwelling place, I choose that forlorn planet, I inhabit it with the convicts of my race. Amidst hideous reptiles, I pursue an eternal, miserable death in a darkness where the leaves will be black, the waters of the marshes thick and cold. Sleep will be denied me. On the contrary, I recognise, with increasing lucidity, the unclear fraternity of the smiling alligators. (p. 48-49)

THE TIGHTROPE WALKER

For Abdallah

You will dance in a total solitude, blindfolded, your eyes sewn shut. [...] Death is not the moment that follows your fall, but the one that precedes your appearance on the rope. It is before you climb that you die. The dancer dies in the search for beauty, dies to be capable of anything. When you appear a paleness will take you – and no, I am not talking about the pallor of fear, but its opposite, an invincible audacity. Underneath your make-up and glitter, you will turn pale; your soul will fade. Then your precision will be perfect.

When nothing ties you to the ground, you can dance without falling. Make sure to die before you appear, though, so that it is a dead man who dances on the rope.

If I advise him to avoid luxury in his private life, if I tell him to be a little dirty, to wear slouchy clothes and worn-down shoes, it is so that, in the evening, in the moment of the dance, the transformation is all the greater, as the hopes of the day are lifted by the approach of the party, it is so that a tension can arise between the apparent misery and this most magnificent appearance, such that the dance will be like a discharge or a shout, it's because the reality of the Circus lies in this metamorphosis of dust into gold dust, but above all it's because the person who will create this brilliant image has to be dead, or, if you like, has to drag himself across the earth like the last and most pitiful of humans. I would even go so far as to advise him to limp, to cover himself with rags, lice and stink. That his person be made smaller and smaller to let shine ever more brightly that image I speak of, inhabited by a dead man. That he may exist at last only in his appearance.

TOWARDS EVIL

Murder is not the most effective means of reaching the subterranean world of abjection. [...] Other crimes are more degrading: theft, begging, treason, breach of trust, etc.; these are the ones I chose to commit, though I was always haunted by the idea of a murder which would cut me off irremediably from your world. (p. 119)

THE WANDERING MAN

Almost always alone, I crossed other borders. Helped by the customs men, then abandoned by them, I went upstream, along a muddy torrent. Fought by the wind, by the cold, by the thorns, by November I gained a summit behind which was Italy. In order to reach it I affronted monsters hidden by the night or revealed by it. I got caught in the barbed wire of a fort where I heard the sentinels walking and whispering. Crouching in the shadow, my heart beating, I hoped that before shooting me they would fondle and love me. Thus I hoped that the night would be peopled by voluptuous guards. I ventured at random upon a road. It was the right one. I sensed it by the feel of my soles on its honest ground. Later on, I left Italy for Austria. I crossed fields of snow at night. The moon cast my shadow. In every country that I left behind I had stolen and had known prisons. Yet I was not going through Europe but through the world of objects and circumstances, and with an ever fresher ingenuousness. (p. 126)





L'ENNEMI INTIME PATRICK ROTMAN

THE SOLDIER

The nature of war is to be dirty. The Algerian war was no different. They were 20 years old—the young men, the conscripts, the rank and file, sergeants or second lieutenants, thrown into the cauldron of war. They found themselves in extreme situations, where lives were at stake, where death lurked, where the inner characters of men came forwards: cowardice or courage, submission or revolt, indifference or passivity. Each had his own experience, and followed his own tortuous path, while the markers of humanity faded and moral barriers crumbled. Sucked into an infernal downward spiral, they did things they would never have thought themselves capable of. You have to dig into a black hole of memory to understand how a young recruit can be pushed to kill, how a former maquisard, a member of the Resistance from an early age, can, 15 years later, designate hostages for execution. Youth, ignorance, vengeance. These words recur in their stories and illuminate the landscape. And yet they are not enough to understand certain acts.

We have to venture deep into the shadows of the soul, explore vertiginous lands where the beast lurks, delve into that dark zone where humanity falters.

The intimate enemy is the one within us.

THE TRAITOR

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For the Front de Libération Nationale, the harkis betrayed their brothers. But the truth is that the French betrayed them too. Thousands, tens of thousands of harkis were massacred at the end of the war. The FLN wanted to erase all trace of the Algerians who had chosen to help France. It had to reconstruct a history based on the myth of a people united behind the FLN.

Pierre-Alban Thomas: both sides carried out executions and reprisals, and the FLN assassinated those it called traitors.

On 3 July, Algerian independence was proclaimed. The National Liberation Army entered Algiers. A page had been turned. On the radio, the FLN anthem filled the airwaves. A few tricolour flags were still flying in the country, but soon they would be taken down and folded away. The war was over.

— Extract from *L'Ennemi intime*,
Patrick Rotman (Le Seuil, 2002)



LETTERS FROM ALGERIA CHARLES NAUCIEL

Z., 5 September 1957

In Z., there was a small gendarmerie unit of 3 or 4 men, commanded by a Frenchman from Algeria. The intelligence officer was a conscript from mainland France. He took a very radical view of the Algerian question: "We must kill them all."

Suspects were tortured with electricity in an almost systematic way, using a current generator used for communications, the 'telephone'. This was done in secret, in the gendarmerie. But all the soldiers knew what it meant to 'pass someone the telephone'. They also knew what it meant to 'take someone out to the woodshed'; that is, to carry out a summary execution.

When he left, the intelligence officer boasted that he had killed 150. He once told me that the first time he had killed a man it troubled him, but that once this taboo had been breached, things had gotten easier.

Z., 8 September 1957

I don't have much to do at the moment as I no longer provide free medical support. In fact, the infirmary meant for this purpose has been closed ever since my Muslim nurse was arrested. I still think he was a good sort, but he must have given some medicines to the FLN, probably under duress.

Tlemcen, 12 May 1958

We're in a mess. We are constantly pursuing a policy that is a compromise between two opposing positions. It's absurd. We are practising neither a policy of negotiation nor a policy of war.

Tlemcen, 26 May 1958

What a mess we're in. We no longer receive newspapers from France. As for the Algerian newspapers, they are a bundle of complete lies. But it is on these lies that our policy has been based until now. And this is the same path that the Algiers *coup de force* wants to take us down. Our entire policy is based on the assumption that the Arabs are with us, apart from a few fellaghas who terrorise the population. It is true that the fellaghas hold the population in terror, but there are other reasons why they constantly benefit from their complicity.

Tlemcen, 29 January 1959

The class that has just been discharged has served 27 and a half months. If things don't change, I should be discharged in mid-July. However, rumour has it that the length of service will be extended, even though the war is "virtually over", as Marshal Juin said, and even though we are in the "last quarter of an hour", as the bureau d'action psychologique has just repeated.

Tlemcen, 5 February 1959

I read *L'affaire des officiers algériens* by Abdelkader Rahmani. It's instructive. The book shows once again that the Algerians want, for psychological reasons, nothing more than independence. They are not at all interested in the economic or social dimensions of the Algerian problem that are the subject of our propaganda. The Algerians and the French are not on the same level. That's why their dialogue is a dialogue of the deaf.



JEAN GENET TEXT

Jean Genet was a French writer, poet and playwright. He was born in Paris in 1910. Orphaned, he was placed with a foster family. Following a series of runaways and minor offences, he had his first experience of prison at the age of 15, before being detained at Mettray Penal Colony until he came of age.

At the age of 18, he joined the army, then deserted in 1936 and left France. For a year, he wandered around Europe with false papers. On his return to France in 1937, he was charged with desertion, vagrancy, forgery and theft over a period of 7 years. During his periods of incarceration, he began writing the novel *Notre-Dame-des-Fleurs*. Arrested for book theft in 1942, he was sentenced to another 8 months in prison. There he wrote his first poem, *Le Condamné à mort*, which he had printed at his own expense. At the end of that year, he completed *Notre-Dame-des-Fleurs*. In 1943, he signed his first author's contract with Paul Morihien, Jean Cocteau's secretary, for 3 novels, a poem and 5 plays.

That same year, he was arrested in Paris for stealing a rare edition of Paul Verlaine's *Fêtes galantes*. Thanks to Cocteau, who described him in court as "the greatest writer of modern times", Genet escaped life imprisonment and was sentenced instead to 3 months in prison. He then wrote *Miracle de la rose*. In 1943, his first writings, deemed pornographic, were censored, but printed clandestinely. In 1944, after carrying out a sentence for a further 4 months in captivity, he was released and never returned to prison.

Between 1945 and 1948, he wrote *Pompes funèbres*, *Querelle de Brest*, and *Journal du voleur*, as well as 3 plays: *Haute Surveillance*, *Les Bonnes*, and *Splendid's*.

In Genet's œuvre, *Splendid's* (1948) holds a special, almost clandestine place, a forgotten manuscript that was published for the first time in 1993. During the late 1940s, Genet conceived and directed his only film, *Un chant d'amour*. Between 1955 and 1961, he wrote and published *Le Balcon*, *Les Nègres*, and *Les Paravents*, placing himself at the forefront of contemporary playwrighting and marking the start of a strong political commitment. Published in 1961, Genet's last major dramatic work, *Les Paravents*, had to wait until 1966 before being presented in Paris, thanks to the intervention of André Malraux, the Minister for Culture.

After the suicide of his companion Abdallah Bentaga in 1964, Genet went through a period of depression. He claims to have destroyed his manuscripts and given up literature.

He undertook a long journey to East Asia. On his return to France, he was surprised by the events of May 1968. He published his first political article in tribute to the student leader Daniel Cohn-Bendit. In 1970, he entered the United States illegally via Canada and on 1 May, in a seminal speech on the campus of Yale New Haven University, he denounced higher education for training society's 'watchdogs'.

He also began writing a book about his time in the Palestinian camps and his involvement with the Black Panthers, which was abandoned and then reworked several times before culminating, 15 years later in 1986, in the publication of *Un captif amoureux*.

In 1982, he was in Beirut when the massacres in the Palestinian camps of Sabra and Shatila took place, leading him to write *Quatre heures à Chatila*.

Suffering from throat cancer since 1979, he died in Paris in 1986.

ARTHUR NAUZYCIEL DIRECTION

Arthur Nauzyciel is a director and actor. He was director of the Centre Dramatique National Orléans from 2007 to 2016, and has been director of the Théâtre National de Bretagne since 2017. After studying visual arts and cinema, in 1987, he enrolled at the Théâtre national de Chaillot school, directed then by Antoine Vitez. After working as an actor under the direction of Jean-Marie Villégier, Alain Françon, Éric Vigner, and Tsai Ming-liang, he directed his first plays, *Le Malade imaginaire ou le silence de Molière*, based on Molière's work and Giovanni Macchia (1999) – recreated in 2023 at the TNB – and *Oh Les Beaux Jours (Happy Days)* by Samuel Beckett (2003).

This was followed in France by *Place des Héros*, marking the entry of Thomas Bernhard into the repertoire of the Comédie-Française (2004); *Ordet (La Parole)* by Kaj Munk, translated and adapted by Marie Darrieussecq for Avignon Festival (2008); *Jan Karski (Mon nom est une fiction)* based on the novel by Yannick Haenel for Avignon Festival (2011, Prix Georges-Lerminier from the Syndicat de la critique); *Faim* by Knut Hamsun (2011); Chekhov's *La Mouette (The Seagull)* in the Cour d'Honneur at Avignon Festival (2012); *Kaddish* by Allen Ginsberg (2013); and *Splendid's* by Jean Genet (2015).

Nauzyciel works regularly in the United States. In Atlanta, he created 2 plays by Bernard-Marie Koltès: *Black Battles with Dogs* (2001) and *Roberto Zucco* (2004). In Boston, for A.R.T., he staged *Abigail's Party* by Mike Leigh (2007) and Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* (2008). He has created a number of shows abroad which have gone on to be performed in France and at festivals around the world: in Dublin, Samuel Beckett's *L'Image* (2006); at the National Theatre of Iceland, Marie Darrieussecq's *Le Musée de la mer* (2009);

at the National Theatre of Norway, *Abigail's Party* by Mike Leigh (2012); and at the Mini teater in Ljubljana, Slovenia, *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* by Fassbinder (2015). In Seoul, at the National Theater Company of Korea (NTCK), he created *L'Empire des lumières* by Kim Young-ha (2016) and *Love's End* (2019), the Korean version of *Clôture de l'amour* by Pascal Rambert. In October 2022, at the National Theatre in Prague, he created Arthur Schnitzler's *La Ronde* with the National Theatre company.

He also works in dance and opera, directing *Red Waters* (2011), an opera by Lady & Bird, *Une tragédie florentine* (2018) by Alexander Zemlinsky, and *Le Papillon Noir* (2018), an opera composed by Yann Robin and Yannick Haenel. Alongside Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, he took part in the creation of *Play* (2010) with dancer Shantala Shivalingappa and *Session* with choreographer Colin Dunne.

Nauzyciel regularly collaborates with other artists: Miroslaw Balka, Colin Dunne, Matt Elliott, Christian Fennesz, Barði Jóhannsson, Damien Jalet, Valérie Mréjen, Pierre-Alain Giraud, José Lévy, Gaspard Yurkievich, Erna Ómarsdóttir, Ensemble Organum, Sjón, Winter Family, Phia Ménard, and Boris Charmatz, for whom he performed in *La Ruée*, which premiered at the 2018 TNB Festival. He was directed by Pascal Rambert in *De mes propres mains* (2015), *L'Art du Théâtre* (2017), and *Architecture* (2019).

Nauzyciel created *La Dame aux camélias* based on the novel by Alexandre Dumas fils at TNB (2018), followed by *Mes frères* by Pascal Rambert. He now opens the 2023-2024 season with Jean Genet's *Les Paravents*, on tour in May and June at the Odéon – Théâtre de l'Europe. Nauzyciel is also director of the TNB Drama School, for which he devised the educational project, and at which he is a regular guest teacher.

DAMIEN JALET

CHOREOGRAPHY

Damien Jalet is a choreographer, dancer and associate artist at TNB who has been awarded as an Officier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres. Jalet has worked for companies including Les ballets C de la B, Sasha Waltz, Chunky Move, Eastman, NYDC, Hessisches Staatsballett, Paris Opera Ballet, Scottish Dance Theatre, and Iceland Dance Company. His works as a choreographer include: *Babel (words)* (2013); *Boléro* (2013); *Inked* (2013); *Les Médusés* (2013); *YAMA* (2014), presented in 2017 at TNB; *Gravity Fatigue* (2015); *Vessel* (2015); *Thr(o)ugh* (2016) and *Skid* (2017), presented for the first time as a double bill at TNB in 2023; *Pelléas et Mélisande* (2018); *Omphalos* (2018), presented in 2019 at TNB; *Brise-lames* (2020) for the Paris Opera Ballet with visual artist JR, pianist Koki Nakano, and dancer Airmilios Arapoglou; *Planet [wanderer]* (2021) in collaboration with Kohei Nawa; and *Kites* (2022) for the GöteborgsOperans Danskompani.

He also choreographed several sequences for Madonna's Madame X tour. In film, he collaborated with director Gilles Delmas to create *The Ferryman* in 2016, with the participation of Marina Abramović and Ryuichi Sakamoto (Venice Biennale in 2017), and created the film *Mist* for NDT1 (2021). Jalet also choreographed Luca Guadagnino's remake *Suspiria* (2018), Paul Thomas Anderson's *Anima* (2019 – Best Choreography at the UKMVAs) with Thom Yorke, and Émilía Perez (2023), the first musical by Jacques Audiard.

He has worked with Arthur Nauzyciel on a number of shows, including *L'Image*, *Julius Caesar*, *Ordet (La Parole)*, *Red Waters*, *Jan Karski (mon nom est une fiction)*, *La Mouette*, *Splendid's*, *La Dame aux camélias*, *Mes frères*, and *Les Paravents*.

LEILA ADHAM

DRAMATURGY

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Leila Adham is a dramaturg and lecturer in theatre studies. She wrote her thesis on the figure of the ghost in *Hamlet*, and is the author of numerous articles on contemporary theatre. Since 2008, Adham has accompanied a number of artists in their creative projects: Zakariya Gouram (*Médée* at the Théâtre des Amandiers), Nathalie Béasse (*Roses* at the Théâtre de la Bastille), Olivia Corsini (*Les Vitamines du bonheur* at the Théâtre du Rond-Point), Marie Payen (*Je brûle, Perdre le nord, Ils se jettent*, and *La nuit c'est comme ça* at the Théâtre Gérard Philipe), Cyril Teste (*Hamlet* and *Fidelio* at the Opéra-Comique, *La Mouette* and *Platonov* at Bonlieu – Scène nationale Annecy).

For Arthur Nauzyciel, she worked on productions of *Jan Karski (Mon nom est une fiction)*, *La Mouette* for Avignon Festival, and *Les Paravents*.

SCOTT ZIELINSKI LIGHTING DESIGN

Scott Zielinski is a lighting designer for theatre, dance and opera. A graduate of Yale University School of Drama, he has worked with American and international directors including Richard Foreman, Robert Wilson, Tony Kushner, Hal Hartley, and Krystian Lupa. In New York, he works regularly on Broadway, including on the production of *Topdog/Underdog* by Suzan-Lori Parks, and for the Lincoln Center and The Public Theater.

He has designed lighting for shows created in cities across North American and the world, working with directors and choreographers such as Neil Bartlett, Chen Shi-Zheng, Daniel Fish, Tina Landau, Diane Paulus, Anna Deavere Smith, Twyla Tharp, and George C. Wolfe. He recently designed the lighting for Judith Weir's *Miss Fortune* at the Royal Opera House in London. In 2019, he designed the lighting for *Oklahoma!* by Daniel Fish, a major Broadway success and the winner of a Tony Award.

For Arthur Nauzyciel, he created the lighting for *Julius Caesar*, *Le Musée de la mer*, *Jan Karski* (*Mon nom est une fiction*), *Red Waters*, *Abigail's Party*, *La Mouette*, *Splendid's*, *Les Larmes amères de Petra von Kant*, *Love's End*, *La Dame aux camélias*, *Mes frères*, *La Ronde*, and *Les Paravents*.

RICCARDO HERNÁNDEZ SET DESIGN

Riccardo Hernández is a set designer. He grew up in Buenos Aires and studied at the Yale School of Drama in the United States, where he is now Associate Professor Adjunct and Co-chair of Design and Set Design Advisor at Yale Repertory Theatre. His work on Broadway has won numerous awards: *Caroline or Change* (Best New Musical 2006) and *Parade* (Tony Award and Drama Desk nominee 2007), *Topdog/Underdog* (Pulitzer Prize 2002), *The People in the Picture* (2011), *The Gershwins' Porgy and Bess* (Tony Awards 2012), *The Gin Game*, *Indecent* (Tony Award nomination 2017). For opera, his designs include the sets of *Appomattox* by Philip Glass in 2007, *Lost Highway* directed by Diane Paulus (2008), and *Il Postino*, directed by Ron Daniels (2011). In theatre, he has worked with George C. Wolfe, Tony Kushner, Brian Kulik, Mary Zimmerman, Ron Daniels, Liz Diamond, Rebecca Taichman, and notably Robert Woodruff, Ethan Coen, John Turturro, and Steven Soderbergh. Recently, he designed the set for George Brant's *Grounded*, directed by Julie Taymor with Anne Hathaway at the Public Theater in New York, *The White Card* and *Jagged Little Pill* (music by Alanis Morissette, choreography by Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui) directed by Diane Paulus for the American Repertory Theater, and the opera *Florencia en el Amazonas*, directed by Mary Zimmerman for the Metropolitan, with a world premiere in November 2023.

For Arthur Nauzyciel, he created the sets for *Julius Caesar*, *Jan Karski* (*Mon nom est une fiction*), *Red Waters*, *Abigail's Party*, *La Mouette*, *Splendid's*, *Les Larmes amères de Petra von Kant*, *L'Empire des lumières*, *La Dame aux camélias*, *Mes frères*, *La Ronde*, and *Les Paravents*.

JOSÉ LÉVY

COSTUMES, MAKE-UP, HAIRSTYLES

José Lévy is a Parisian artist and traveller who navigates between fashion, decorative arts, design, and museum installations with skill and a whimsical poetry. Trained as a fashion designer, his work is multifaceted but remains faithful to the human as a principal starting point and driving force for all his projects.

A purveyor of unique, intimate objects, Lévy weaves links between his creations and their eventual recipients, recreating memories (both his own and borrowed) to enliven each object with a characteristic imagination and rigour. Lévy draws inspiration from the cultures he has visited and the skills he has acquired on his many travels, comparing them with those of his Parisian roots. A Villa Kujoyama laureate, and a recipient of the Grand Prix de la Ville de Paris and the Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres, Lévy also works with art and design galleries and publishers such as Astier de Villatte, Carpenters Workshop Gallery, Cristalleries Saint-Louis, Diptyque, Hermès, Manufacture de Sèvres, and Perrotin. He has also mounted solo exhibitions in museums such as the Musée Guimet and the Musée de la Chasse in Paris, and collaborates with the Petit Palais, the Palais de Tokyo, and the Villa Kujoyama in Kyoto.

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XAVIER JACQUOT

SOUND

Xavier Jacquot is a sound designer.

He studied at the École Supérieure d'Art Dramatique at the Théâtre National de Strasbourg (TNS), and works regularly with directors such as Stéphane Braunschweig, Christophe Rauck, Marc Paquien, Éric Vigner, Balázs Gera, Jean-Damien Barbin, Macha Makeïeff, and Agnès Jaoui. He has also worked on short and feature-length films for the cinema, as well as dramas and documentaries for television.

Since joining the teaching team at the École du TNS, he has been a regular part of the sound training course in the production department.

Jacquot has worked with Arthur Nauzyciel since his first show, *Le Malade imaginaire ou le silence de Molière*, as well as on *Black Battles with Dogs*, *Oh les beaux jours*, *Ordet (La Parole)*, *Jan Karski (Mon nom est une fiction)*, *Faim*, *La Mouette*, *Splendid's*, *L'Empire des lumières*, *La Dame aux camélias*, *Mes frères*, *La Ronde*, and *Les Paravents*.

Working with Arthur Nauzyciel, he has extended his creative process to the theatre, taking on characters from *Ordet (La Parole)*, *Jan Karski (Mon nom est une fiction)*, *La Mouette*, *Splendid's*, *La Dame aux camélias*, *Mes frères*, and *Les Paravents*, reflecting their personalities in a comprehensive approach that incorporates costumes, hairstyles and make-up. For *Les Paravents*, he also produced a unique visual artwork by painting the djellabas for the cast.

HINDA ABDELAOUI LEÏLA

Hinda Abdelaoui is an actress. After studying at Sciences Po Paris, during which she spent a year on exchange at Vassar College in New York, a liberal arts institution where she studied theatre, drawing and dance, she returned to France and trained at 1er Acte (season 4), then, from 2018 to 2021, at the TNB Drama School (10th class).

Her theatre work includes roles in *Hamlet* by Olivier Py (2018), *Sur vos fronts brûlants* by Romain Gy (2021), *À la carabine* by Anne Théron (2022), and several shows created at the TNB: *La Ruée* by Boris Charmatz (2018), *Juste la fin du monde* by Julie Duclos (2019), *Opérette* by Madeleine Louarn and Jean-François Auguste (2020), *Dreamers* by Pascal Rambert (2021), *Mes parents* by Mohamed El Khatib (2021), *Rewind*, a radio drama based on *Médecine générale* by Olivier Cadiot (2021), and *Fiction Friction* by Phia Ménard (2022).

For Arthur Nauzyciel, she has played in *Le Malade imaginaire ou le silence de Molière* (2022) and now *Les Paravents*.

ZBEIDA BELHAJAMOR THE BROTHEL SERVANT NEJMA (A CRYING WOMAN) THE VOICE DJEMILA (A PROSTITUTE)

A Tunisian actress, Zbeida Belhajamor discovered theatre at the age of 12 in Tunis, and went on to follow a professional training programme at the École du Jeu.

She made her screen debut at the age of 16 in the short film *Noces d'épines* by Mirvet Médini Kammoun. There she was spotted by Leyla Bouzid, who offered her the female lead in her film *Une histoire d'amour et de désir*, which was presented at the Cannes Festival in 2021 as part of the Critics' Week. Since then, she has appeared in Thierry Klifa's latest feature, *Les Rois de la Piste*, and has begun shooting Marta Bergman's *L'Enfant Bélîer*, in which she takes the lead role.

Les Paravents is her first collaboration with Arthur Nauzyciel.

MOHAMED BOUADLA

AHMED

NESTOR (LEGIONNAIRE)

A GUARD

Mohamed Bouadla is a writer, director and actor. He took his first theatre workshops at the age of 13, going on to train at the ENSAD in Montpellier, from which he graduated in 2016. Since then, he has worked with directors including Alain Françon, Robert Cantarella, Jean-Pierre Baro, Gildas Milin, Éric Lacascade, Pascal Kirsch, and Wajdi Mouawad. He is currently writing his first show, *PIRATE(S)*, for production in 2024-2025.

Les Paravents is his first collaboration with Arthur Nauzyciel.

AYMEN BOUCHOU SAÏD

Aymen Bouchou is an actor. He trained at the TNB Drama School (10th class) from 2018 to 2021. He has acted in *Hamlet* by Olivier Py (2018), *L'Assignment* by Stéphane Foenkinos and Tania de Montaigne (2021), and in several shows created at the TNB: *La Ruée* by Boris Charmatz (2018), *J'ai menti* by Yves-Noël Genod (2019), *Opérette* by Madeleine Louarn and Jean-François Auguste (2020), *Dreamers* by Pascal Rambert (2021), *Mes parents* by Mohamed El Khatib (2021), and *Fiction Friction* by Phia Ménard (2022).

For Arthur Nauzyciel, he has played in *Le Malade imaginaire ou le silence de Molière* (2022) and now *Les Paravents*.

OCÉANE CAÏRATY

MALIKA

A CRYING WOMAN

PRESTON (LEGIONNAIRE)

Océane Caïraty is a former professional footballer turned actor. She trained at the Conservatoire du 18^e arrondissement in Paris, then at the 1er Acte workshop, before joining the École du Théâtre national de Strasbourg. She made her stage debut in 2017 under the direction of Stéphane Braunschweig in *Soudain l'été dernier*, at the Odéon – Théâtre de l'Europe. From there, she quickly went on to work with renowned directors such as Pascal Rambert (*Mont Vérité*) and Stanislas Nordey (*Ce qu'il faut dire*). In 2021, she played the role of Varia in *La Cerisaie*, directed by Tiago Rodrigues, first performed during the Avignon Festival 'In' programme, then at the Odéon. In 2024, she will work with Rodrigues again for *Chœur des amants*. In film, she appeared in *Les Olympiades* by Jacques Audiard, selected in the official competition at the Cannes Festival in 2021. Last March, Caïraty starred in Pascal Rambert's new creation, *Mon absente*, which will be revived this autumn at the MC93 in Bobigny.

After appearing in *La Dame aux camélias*, she reunites with Arthur Nauzyciel for *Les Paravents*.

MARIE-SOPHIE FERDANE

THE MOTHER

Marie-Sophie Ferdane is an actor. She was a member of the Comédie-Française from 2007 to 2013. Her other theatre work includes collaborations with Marc Lainé for *Vanishing Point* (2014) with the band Moriarty, and *Hunter* (2018) with musician Superpoze, with Pascal Rambert for the creation of *Argument* (2016), in which she appeared alongside Laurent Poitrenaux, and for *Architecture*, presented in 2019 at Avignon Festival and as a season opener at TNB. She played the role of Masha in Christian Benedetti's staging of Chekhov's *The Three Sisters*, and appeared in Claudine Galea's *La 7e vie* de Patti Smith, directed by Benoît Bradel and revived for the 2018 TNB Festival.

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In film and television, Ferdane has worked with Nina Companeez on an adaptation of Marcel Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu* (2011), and with Philippe Harel on *Les Heures souterraines* (2015) for Arte, for which she received the Best Actress award at Luchon Film Festival; under the direction of Éléonore Pourriat in *Je ne suis pas un homme facile* (2017) for Netflix; in the fourth season of the series *Killing Eve* on BBC America alongside Jodie Comer and Sandra Oh; and in the lead role in the series *Philharmonia* (2018) by Louis Choquette for France 2. In 2024, she will be at TNB in January for Sara Stridsberg's *Dissection d'une chute de neige*, directed by Christophe Rauck, and in March will appear at the Théâtre du Rond-Point alongside Bertrand Belin for *En travers de sa gorge* by Marc Lainé.

For Arthur Nauzyciel, she played Nina in *La Mouette*, presented in the Cour d'Honneur at Avignon Festival in 2012, Marguerite Gautier in *La Dame aux camélias* (premiered at the TNB in 2018), the Servant in *Mes frères* (2020), and the Mother in *Les Paravents* (2023).

XAVIER GALLAIS

MADANI VOICE OF DEATH THE LIEUTENANT THE ACADEMICIAN

Xavier Gallais is an actor and director, trained at the Conservatoire National Supérieur d'Art Dramatique. Moving from classical texts to more contemporary works, in 2004 he won a Molière for his role in *Roberto Zucco* by Bernard-Marie Koltès, performed at the Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord and directed by Philippe Calvario. In 2011, Xavier Gallais asked Arthur Nauzyciel to direct the monologue *Faim* by Knut Hamsun, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1920.

In 2014, 60 years after Gérard Philipe, he played the title role in *The Prince of Homburg*, staged by Giorgio Barberio Corsetti in the Cour d'honneur du Palais des papes for the opening of Avignon Festival. In 2008, with playwright Florient Azoulay, he founded Compagnie KGA, where the two explore the links between literature and theatre, repertory and new writing. Gallais also teaches at the CNSAD and is a regular guest teacher at the TNB Drama School. In 2018, in collaboration with Élisabeth Bouchaud and Florient Azoulay, he opened the *Salle Blanche*, an innovative theatrical research and training laboratory in Paris. Gallais has been seen on the silver screen in films including *Pitchipoi* by Charles Najman, *Une brasse sur la neige* and *Bula* by Boris Baum, and *Requiem pour une tueuse* by Jérôme Le Gris.

Gallais began his collaboration with Arthur Nauzyciel with *Ordet (La Parole)* (2008), and has continued by acting for him in *Faim* (2011), *La Mouette* presented in the Cour d'honneur at Avignon Festival in 2012, *Splendid's* by Jean Genet (2015), and *Les Paravents*.

HAMMOU GRAÏA

MR BLANKENSEE
THE DIGNITARY
SI SLIMANE
THE MISSIONARY

Hammou Graïa is a French actor who trained at the Conservatoire National Supérieur d'Art Dramatique in Paris. He began his film career with a role in *Bâton rouge* by Rachid Bouchareb and went on to appear in films including Bertrand Blier's *Les Côtelettes* and Fred Cavayé's *Pour elle*. More recently, he played one of the main parts in Abdel Raouf Dafri's series *Alger confidentiel*. In theatre, he made his debut appearing in several plays directed by Patrice Chéreau at the Théâtre Nanterre-Amandiers, including *Les Paravents* by Jean Genet and *Quai Ouest* by Bernard-Marie Koltès. He has featured in several other productions at Théâtre Nanterre-Amandiers directed by Jean-Louis Martinelli, including *Les Coloniaux* by Aziz Chouaki and *Phèdre* by Jean Racine. More recently, he reunited with Jean-Louis Martinelli in Aziz Chouaki's *Nenese* and Molière's *L'Amour médecin*.

Les Paravents is his first collaboration with Arthur Nauzyciel.

ROMAIN GY

THE PRISON GUARD
SOLDIER 1840
SON OF SIR HAROLD
ROGER (LEGIONNAIRE)
THE THIEF

Romain Gy is an actor. After training at the Conservatoire régional de Nantes, he entered the TNB Drama School in 2018 (10th class), where he was exposed to the artistic approaches of Gisèle Vienne, Laurent Poitrenaux, Arthur Nauzyciel, Adèle Haenel, Damien Jalet, and Guillaume Vincent, among others, and performed in several shows created at TNB: *La Ruée* by Boris Charmatz (2018), Jean-Luc Lagarce's *Juste la fin du monde* directed by Julie Duclos, *Opérette* by Madeleine Louarn and Jean-François Auguste (2020), *Dreamers* by Pascal Rambert (2021), *Mes parents* by Mohamed El Khatib (2021), *Rewind*, a radio drama based on *Médecine générale* by Olivier Cadiot (2021), and *Fiction Friction* by Phia Ménard (2022).

In 2021, he will join the young artistic ensemble of the CDN de Tours to play in *Grammaire des Mammifères* by Jacques Vincey and *La Vie dure* by Camille Dagen and Eddy d'Aranjo, followed by *Les Forces vives* by Camille Dagen, including for performances at the Odéon – Théâtre de l'Europe in 2024/25.

Les Paravents is his first collaboration with Arthur Nauzyciel.

JAN HAMMENECKER

SIR HAROLD
MME BLANKENSEE
JOJO (LEGIONNAIRE)

Jan Hammenecker is a Flemish actor, known to French-speaking audiences for his role in Frédéric Fonteyne's *Max et Bobo*. In theatre, he works on either side of the border: on the Belgian side with Charlie Degotte, Ingrid von Wantoch Rekowski, Jean Michel D'Hoop, Ensemble Leporello, Arne Sierens, and the company Transquinquennial; on the French side with Frédéric Béliet-Garcia, Dominique Pitoiset, and Christophe Rauck. He is part of the cast of *La Mouche* by Valérie Lesort and Christian Hecq, which is still on tour.

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His film credits include *Rois et Reine* by Arnaud Desplechin, *Quand la mer monte* by Yolande Moreau and Gilles Porte, *Où va la nuit* by Martin Provost, *Mr. Nobody* by Jaco Van Dormael, *Saint Jacques... La Mecque* by Coline Serreau, *Malavita* by Luc Besson, and *Alabama Monroe* by Felix van Groeningen. At the 2021 Ensor Awards for Flemish Belgian films, he was nominated for Best Actor for his role in Willem Wallyn's *All Of Us*. More recently, he starred alongside Marina Foïs in *Ils sont vivants* by Jérémie Elkaim.

Hammenecker appears alongside Juliette Binoche and Benoît Magimel in the film *La Passion de Dodin Bouffant* by Tran Anh Hung (winner of the directing prize at the last Cannes Film Festival), which will be released in November. He has also been seen on television in *Beau Séjour* on Arte, *Engrenages*, *Pigalle*, *la nuit*, *Signature*, and in two seasons of the series *Les Témoins* and *Jeux d'influence*.

Les Paravents is his first collaboration with Arthur Nauzyciel.

BRAHIM KOUTARI BACHIR PIERRE (LEGIONNAIRE)

Brahim Koutari is an actor. He began his career playing the role of the beaten child in Chantal Morel's *Don Quichotte*. In 2013, he returned to Cervantes' work, this time directed by Ariane Mnouchkine at La Cartoucherie. Koutari has performed his own show at the Jamel Comedy Club and in various Parisian café-théâtres. In 2017, he joined the École de la Comédie de Saint-Étienne (29th class). He played in *Huit heures ne font pas un jour*, directed by Julie Deliquet, which was performed at the Théâtre Gérard Philipe and on tour throughout France. He will soon be appearing in the feature film *2 ou 3 jours... pas plus*, directed by Julie Navarro.

Les Paravents is his first collaboration with Arthur Nauzyciel.

BENICIA MAKENGELE KADIDJA

Benicia Makengele is an actor. Originally from the Democratic Republic of Congo, she arrived in France at the age of 19. At the age of 22 curiosity drove her to take a theatre course, which led her to join the preparatory class at the Comédie de Saint-Étienne, under the direction of Arnaud Meunier, in 2017. The following year she was admitted to the Conservatoire National Supérieur d'Art Dramatique de Paris, where she studied acting with Valérie Dréville, Nada Strancar, Lazare, Nathalie Becue, and Robin Renucci.

Between 2020 and 2023, she worked with Anne Monfort and Isabelle Lafon on the final year performances. She then joined the tour of *Désobéir* by Julie Bérès and *Une jeunesse en été* created at the CNSAD and directed by Simon Roth. This season she will be appearing in *1200 Tours* directed by Aurélie Van Der Daele.

Les Paravents is her first collaboration with Arthur Nauzyciel.

MOUNIR MARGOUM HABIB THE GENDARME THE GENERAL SALEM THE COMBATANT

Mounir Margoum is an actor and a graduate of the Conservatoire National Supérieur d'Art Dramatique. In the theatre, he has worked under the direction of Franck Castorf (*Bajazet*), Nicolas Stemann (*Contre-enquêtes*), Cécile Pauthe (*Antoine et Cléopâtre*) and Pauline Bureau (*Féminines*). He has been directed by Jean-Louis Martinelli in *Une virée*, *Phèdre*, and *J'aurais voulu être égyptien*.

He has worked between classical and contemporary repertoires with various directors: Mathieu Bauer (*Alta Villa*), Laurent Fréchuret (*À portée de crachat*), Frédéric Sonntag (*NEJA*), Justine Heynemann (*Le Torticolis de la girafe*). On screen, he can be seen in anglophone productions such as *Rendition* by Gavin Hood (Oscar for Best Foreign Film 2006), *House of Saddam*, produced by the BBC and HBO, or *The Spy* (Netflix). In France, he appeared in *Divines* by Uda Benyamina, which won a Caméra d'Or at the 2016 Cannes Film Festival, *Par accident* by Camille Fontaine, *Timgad* by Fabrice Benchaouche, *Trois mondes* by Catherine Corsini, and *L'Ombre des Femmes* by Philippe Garrel.

A regular in Arthur Nauzyciel's productions, he played in *La Mouette*, presented in the Cour d'honneur at Avignon Festival in 2012, *La Dame aux camélias* (2018), and *Les Paravents*.

FARIDA RAHOUDJ WARDA A CRYING WOMAN

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Farida Rahouadj is an actor, singer and director who began her artistic career in a punk rock band before turning to theatre. After studying with Antoine Vitez, Farida Rahouadj landed a role in Jean Genet's *Les Paravents*, directed by Patrice Chéreau at the Théâtre Nanterre-Amandiers. It was there that she met the tragic actor Maria Casarès, with whom she forged a strong bond both in life and on stage. After appearing in plays by Pirandello and Euripides, they met again in 1995 for what was to be Casarès' last role, in Michael Ondaatje's *Les Œuvres complètes* de Billy the Kid, directed by Frank Hoffmann. Farida Rahouadj landed her first film role in 1991 in Gabriel Aghion's *Rue du Bac*. Her screen appearances soon multiplied, bringing roles in Maroun Bagdadi's *La Fille de l'air*, Nicolas Klotz's *La Nuit sacrée*, and Alain Berbériani's *Paparazzi*. In 2003, she starred in *Les Côtelettes*, which marked the beginning of a collaboration with Bertrand Blier that extended through *Combien tu m'aimes ?*, *Le Bruit des glaçons*, and finally in 2019, *Convoi exceptionnel*, in which she played the female lead alongside the actors Christian Clavier and Gérard Depardieu. In 2017, she also moved into directing with the show *L'autre Proust*, for which she sings accompanied on piano by Vincent Leterme.

On television, she starred in the series *Les Sauvages*, which in 2019 broke the streaming record for Canal+ original productions. In 2020, Rahouadj won the Best Supporting Actress award at the Festival Jean Carmet for the film *Gagarine* by Fanny Liatard and Jérémy Trouilh. She was also seen in *Viens je t'emmène* by Alain Guiraudie, which opened the Panorama selection of the 2022 Berlinale. More recently, she has appeared in *Mince alors ! La rechute* by Charlotte de Turckheim, and *Vous n'aurez pas ma haine* by Kilian Riedhof. She will next be seen in *Reine Mère* by Manele Labidi.

Les Paravents is her first collaboration with Arthur Nauzyciel.

MAXIME THÉBAULT

THE SERGEANT
THE PHOTOGRAPHER

Maxime Thébault is an actor. He had his first theatrical experiences at the age of 19, when he was studying landscape architecture and business. In 2018, he entered the TNB Drama School and performed in several shows created at TNB: *La Ruée* by Boris Charmatz (2018), *Juste la fin du monde* by Julie Duclos (2019), *Opérette* by Madeleine Louarn and Jean-François Auguste (2020), *Dreamers* by Pascal Rambert (2021), *Mes parents* by Mohamed El Khatib (2021), *Rewind*, a radio drama based on *Médecine générale* by Olivier Cadiot (2021) and *Fiction Friction* by Phia Ménard (2022).

On graduating in 2021, he acted for Julie Duclos in *Kliniken*, presented at the Odéon-Théâtre de l'Europe and TNB. A meeting with Steven Cohen gave birth to *Small Boy*, a one-man show, after which the visual artist Théo Mercier asked Thébault to be part of his creation *Outremonde*, and then *Skinless*, which will be presented at TNB in March 2024.

Les Paravents is his first collaboration with Arthur Nauzyciel.

CATHERINE VUILLEZ

THE VAMP
OMMOU

Catherine Vuillez is an actor. She trained at the Cours Florent and later at the Conservatoire National Supérieur d'Art Dramatique, in classes with Denise Bonal, Daniel Mesguich, and Gérard Desarthe. Her theatre credits include work with Jean-Pierre Vincent (*Le Mariage de Figaro*, *Le Chant du départ*), Jean-Pierre Miquel (*L'Épreuve*), Klaus-Mickaël Grüber (*La Mort de Danton*), Éric Vigner (*La Maison d'os*), Roger Planchon (*Le Radeau de la méduse*, *La Dame de chez Maxim*, *Les Démons*), Manuel Rebjock (*Le Misanthrope*, *Il faut qu'une porte soit ouverte ou fermée*, *Entonnoir trafic*), and Nathalie Bensard (*Sacré silence*, *Dans ma maison de papier*, *j'ai des poèmes sur le feu*, *Sur les pas d'Imelda*). Catherine Vuillez works regularly with director Jean-Michel Rivinoff, including on *L'Événement* by Annie Ernaux (2010), *Être Humain* by Emmanuel Darley (2013), *Mer* by Tino Caspanello (2015) and *Temps moderne*, based on two texts by Philippe Malone (2019).

She has been an actor for Arthur Nauzyciel since his first creation, *Le Malade imaginaire ou le silence de Molière*, staged in 1999 and recreated in 2023, also appearing in *Ordet (La Parole)* (2008), *La Mouette* at Avignon Festival's Cour d'honneur in 2012, and now *Les Paravents*.



PRESS

"The grande salle of the TNB in Rennes is like a great shadowy mouth, swallowing you into a time beyond time. It is a night full of ghosts: those of Jean Genet, the Algerian war, Roger Blin, Maria Casarès and Patrice Chéreau."

– Le Monde

"A grand poetic gesture of absolute beauty, gracefully acted and danced by sixteen actors on an immaculate staircase."

– Les Échos

"A poetic and protean song, violent and irreverent. Terribly topical."

– L'Humanité

"A grand convocation of the living and the dead across the centuries."

– Webtheatre

Production: Théâtre National de Bretagne, Rennes. Co-production: Maison de la Culture d'Amiens. With the artistic participation of the Jeune Théâtre National and with the insertion programme of the École du Nord, supported by the Région Hauts-de-France and the ministère de la Culture and with the support of the École de la Comédie de Saint-Etienne / DIÈSE # Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes.



Video extracts from *Défilés et gorges d'Algérie*. Produced by Les Actualités Françaises, cinematography by Jean Hudelot, edited by Suzanne Gaveau, first broadcast on 01/01/1949, source INA. Magazine des Armées n°101. *Renforts pour l'Algérie* © Jean-Claude Dorothe / ECPAD / SCA / 1956 / Défense *Manifestations du 21 août 1956*. © Unknown director / ECPAD / SCA Algérie / 1956 / Défense

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