



Ahmed comes back words & music

AHMED COMES BACK, WORDS & MUSIC

Ahmed comes back, words & music is a project that involves the intersection of several disciplines: theater, music, philosophy, and politics. The work begins with an exploration of both textual and musical writing.

The central subject of the project will be the philosophical question of racism, conveyed through humor and the mechanics of laughter. The challenge will be to observe how an insular culture like that of Japan might consider such an endeavor.

Libretto Didier Galas (from the text of Alain Badiou, translated by Joseph Litvak)

Music Makoto Nomura

Mask Erhard Stiefel

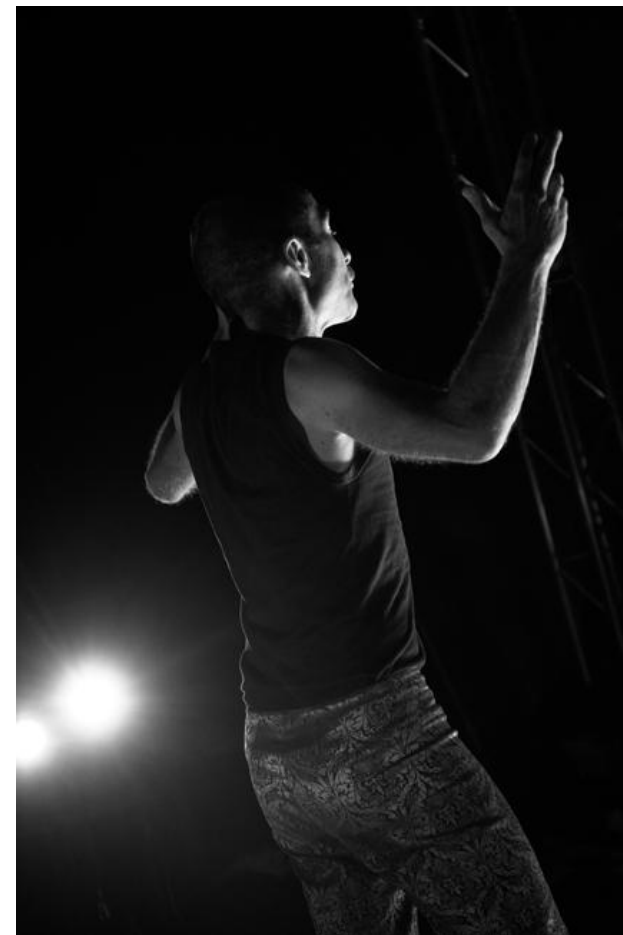
Scenography (props) Jean-François Guillon

Costume Catherine Sardi

Lights Japanese staff

Stage manager Japanese staff

With Didier Galas and Makoto Nomura



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GENESIS OF THE PROJECT

Didier Galas, Alain Badiou, and Ahmed: a long-lasting relationship

"The project begins with the creation of the libretto for *Ahmed comes back, words & music*, a new step in the saga of the character Ahmed, invented in the last century by the philosopher Alain Badiou in response to several racist events of the time. After the creation of *Ahmed the Subtle* in 1994, three other shows followed, and this 20th-century tetralogy was completed in 1997. It was in 2018 that the author and the actor reunited to create *Ahmed comes back* at the Avignon Festival (see Alain Badiou's texts in the annex)."

Didier Galas, Makoto Nomura, Ahmed and the music: a new relationship for a new settlement

Since then, a new path has been forged, and this endeavor is the subject of a textual and musical exploration in collaboration with Makoto Nomura. Together, they will blend melodica, piano, percussion, and vocals (song, rap, or slam). In addition to the music being performed live on stage and the incorporation of rap and slam alongside songs and narratives, this version will be performed in French, Japanese, or English - the universal language of our time - to fully embody Ahmed's self-presentation as the *"universal representative of true humanity"*.

CREATION IN JAPAN

Since its inception, the fundamental lever of the character Ahmed has been to address the issue of racism through mockery. And to philosophize through this lens is also a significant aspect of his existence.

In our current exploration, Ahmed will return "*in music*", meaning that the libretto will be the site of a plural invention based on a new artistic dialogue. The lightness of the song will allow access to the liberation of laughter and the journey of thought, while intersecting idioms.

With the presentation of ***Ahmed comes back, words & music*** in Japan, the entire Ahmed project gains its full power, exporting itself beyond the borders of France. Japan is a country facing an economic evolution that brings about an increasingly significant immigration. This phenomenon increasingly fuels racism, turning it into a real societal issue that is growing. This time, the main subject of the piece will no longer be exclusively carried by the text and dramatic action; it will be amplified by the transcendent qualities of music, and the theatrical ritual will be shaken to deliver laughter through a decidedly poetic element, music.

To imagine Ahmed as an opera is to invent a new dialogue and intertwine slam, rap, song, anger, and laughter.

A RESEARCH LABORATORY IN KYŌTO

Makoto Nomura is a musician with whom I have already collaborated on **ことばのはじまり** (*kotobanohajimari*), a production I directed in Japan. I then invited him to lead a research workshop on speech as a musical element with actors from ERACM, in Marseille. He is open to all forms of music and always seeks to break the barriers of habit to surprise himself and others, far from any conformism. For our research, Makoto plays the melodica and various percussion instruments from around the world.

For me, as an actor, I naturally use the mask of Ahmed, which is the very signature of my theatrical performance. Some parts of the text involve dance movements. I also develop my rhythmic abilities by working with the cajón and singing, both in a slam or rap style and melodically.

The first part of our research is the creation of the libretto. To this end, I begin by transforming numerous parts of the original text of ***Ahmed comes back*** through versification; then we verify the coherence of these transformations with the music. At other times, it will be mainly the need for a rhythmic slam that will lead me to write new parts following the music already composed by Makoto. There will be a constant movement from the table to the stage, and from the stage to the table, between text and music.

ANNEX 1

“I have always thought that, in the theater, comedy is the genre closest to the real. In particular, it is the closest to those groups who have been dispossessed, to the working class. The hero of ancient Greek and Roman comedies is a slave. The hero of classical Italian and French comedies is a servant, a valet. So who should be the hero of a modern comedy in a country like France? The answer is obvious: an immigrant who arrives there, after a dangerous and difficult trip, sometimes from very far away, hoping, sometimes against daunting odds, to find a place where he can do hard work for little pay. Because he must at all costs try to survive and support his family back home. This hero, for example, is the Algerian Ahmed.

In ancient and classical theater, the comic hero presides over complicated intrigues, creates strange and amusing situations, and supervises the victory of love and of free minds over conservatism and oppression. In order to do these things, he may assume disguises and play all the roles of the social comedy.

This is also what Ahmed does, in very different situations, which are those of the four plays from the tetralogy of the 1980s: Ahmed the Subtle, directly inspired by Molière’s play, The Trickeries of Scapin; Ahmed Gets Angry; Ahmed the Philosopher; and, finally, The Pumpkins [Les Citrouilles], directly inspired by Aristophanes’s play, The Frogs [Les Grenouilles].”

Alain Badiou

ANNEX 2

“Ours is a period of crisis for an oppressive and exhausted capitalist society. Foreigners are treated with suspicion, arrested, deported. They die by thousands trying to cross seas in fragile and overloaded boats. Ahmed came back with them, and, from his solitude and his clandestine condition, he observes, he narrates, and he comments.

All the aspects of the everyday lives of foreigners without papers are reviewed, commented on, and sometimes raised to the level of a philosophy of the present. Ahmed, who is in a sense everybody, but also nobody, creates a universal spectacle out of language itself.

He speaks about the history of the poor, about strange and scorned proper names, about xenophobic secularism, about fights, about the status of women, about nighttime searches of people’s houses by the police, about the sudden event and the endless wait, about the social need to go forward masked. And he does all this while keeping a fierce distance, a passionate conviction devoid of all dogmatism. He speaks at the level of the real, but also with the force of great Ideas.

Ahmed, this proud “migrant,” this clandestine passenger of the actor Didier Galas, is finally coming back to us, behind the mask that makes him heir to the slave, the servant, and the Algerian worker. But this mask also makes him become, in the brilliance of his hidden power, this “anybody,” this “nobody” in particular, who is the hero of a future humanity without borders, or walls, or races or nations--a humanity that will bring out, in each of us, its demand to be constituted by women and men practicing the elementary duty of equality everywhere.”

Alain Badiou

AHMED COMES BACK (PREVIOUS PERFORMANCES IN FRANCE AND INDIA)



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AHMED COMES BACK ON TOUR (PREVIOUS PERFORMANCES)

First performed in July 2018, as an itinerant show at the Avignon Festival, ***Ahmed comes back*** has also been presented in the following places:

2018 : La FabricA - Avignon ; La Passerelle, Scène Nationale - Saint-Brieuc ; Théâtre Jacques Brel - Pantin (in collaboration with La Commune CDN - Aubervilliers)

2019 : Le Théâtre - Rungis ; La Comédie de Reims, CDN - Reims ; Collège des Bernardins - Paris ; Théâtre du Grand Marché, St-Denis de La Réunion - CDN de l'Océan Indien ; Festival - Théâtre de Pfalzbau (Allemagne)

2020 : Le Parvis, scène nationale - Tarbes ; L'Agora, scène nationale - Evry ; English creation of Ahmed comes back : Kalabhumi theater - Auroville (India) ; Indianostrum theater - Pondicherry (India)

2021 : Les Passerelles - Pontault-Combault ; Le 23 - Nantes

2023 : Journées d'été de PROMETRA, Aiguebonne - Lanuéjols ; Festival Les Romanesques - Saint-Roman de Codières

Coproducers : Festival d'Avignon, Théâtre du Fil de l'Eau (Pantin), Théâtre de Rungis.

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Residence at la FabricA du Festival d'Avignon

BIOGRAPHY

Didier Galas

A former student at the Conservatoire National Supérieur d'Art Dramatique in Paris, Didier Galas received his training from, among others, Claude Régy, Mario Gonzales, and Bernard Dort. For the next several years, he acted under the direction of Philippe Clévenot, Aurélien Recoing, Jacques Rivette, Claude Régy, Christian Schiaretti, and Patricia Allio. A few years later, after the beginning of an actor career, he realized his first creation as a director in South America, then he continued his education, studying No theater with Udaka Michishige in Kyoto (Japan) and Beijing opera with Li Guang in Beijing (China).



His contact with Eastern theater would have a particular influence on his work as a director. This is how he created *Monnaie de singes* ("Money Business"), the meeting of Tarô-Kaja, Sun Wukong and Harlequin, at the Avignon Festival, in 2000). Later he starts into explorations of the figure of the comic servant: *Le petit (H)arlequin* ("The Little [H]arlequin") (2001) and its Chinese version (2005) and Japanese one ("Harurukan no Tengu dearu", (2010), followed by *Trickster* (2010), and *ailòviou* (2013). He has also adapted and directed *Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes (2005), *3 cailloux* ("3 stones" (2008) and *La Flèche et le moineau* ("The Arrow and the sparrow" (2009) by Witold Gombrowicz and *Paroles horribles et dragées perlées* ("Horrific Words and Sugar Pearls,") (2007), *Parlaparole* ("By Way of Speech," (2012) by François Rabelais. He creates a choreographic piece *Kotoba no Hajimari* ("The Invention of the Word") in September 2014. In 2015, he collaborated on the celebration of the thirtieth anniversary of the Fondation Cartier, and directed Alain Badiou's *Plato's "Republic"* at the Avignon Festival. Then he created *La Vérité sur Pinocchio* which was performed at the Auditorium of the Louvre and at the Théâtre National Populaire. Between 2014 and 2020, he performed three plays on the work of Rabelais: *Rabelais versus Nostradamus*, *La Vertu Héroïque*, *Rien ne va plus*.

In 2018, in close partnership with Alain Badiou, Didier came back at the Avignon Festival with *Ahmed revient*. In March 2020, *Ahmed Comes Back* was presented in India (Auroville and Pondicherry). During the confinement, he wrote *Sur le champ*, an original adaptation of the Bhagavad Gita. From 2021 to 2023, he developed the project *L'Escroc divin, celui qui (se) joue des tours*, ("The Divine Crook, Who Plays Tricks [on Himself]," musical trio based on Winnebago stories). In November 2023, Didier created *M.M* ("Mask.Molière", performance on Masks, Molière, and cultural tradition). During the year 2024, he will lead *Les Nomades font le monde* (Nomads make the world) a program of many classes and performances with refugees in the South of France.

Didier Galas was laureate of Villa Kujoyama (Kyoto). He teaches Yoga Iyengar® and acting (with or without) masks at the École Régionale d'Acteur of Cannes and Marseille and in the Conservatory of Montpellier. He frequently helps organize masterclasses on improvisation throughout the world.

BIOGRAPHY

Makoto Nomura, born in Nagoya in 1968, is one of the most active Japanese composers. He has worked not only in the field of music but also in the fields of visual art, performing arts, community arts, and whatever he likes. His works are also diverse, such as concert music, exhibition, site-specific project, theatre piece, historical research, etc. He loves collaborations and has collaborated with animals, children, dancers, vegetables. He is the director of creative participation for Japan Century Symphony Orchestra, the director of Senju Pun-filled Music Festival, and co-founder of Japan Association of Composers for Sumo Hearing Arts.

His works have been performed by Japan Century Symphony Orchestra, Bochumer Symfoniker, Tokyo City Philharmonic Orchestra, Tomoko Mukaiyama, Yuji Takahashi, Mie Miki, Aki Takahashi, Tomomi Ota, Grzegorz Stopa, Mari Fujiwara, Katsuya Matsubara, Yoshiko Kanda, Kenichi Nakagawa, Enrico Bertelli, Yusuke Kataoka in a number of countries including UK, Germany, France, Italy, USA, Russia, Bulgaria, Korea, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Belgium, Netherland, Malaysia. He has played with Charles Hayward, Otomo Yoshihide, Makoto Yoshimori, Kazutoki Umezu, Hugh Nankivell, Anant Narkkong etc.

He is also known as the pioneer of melodica performance.



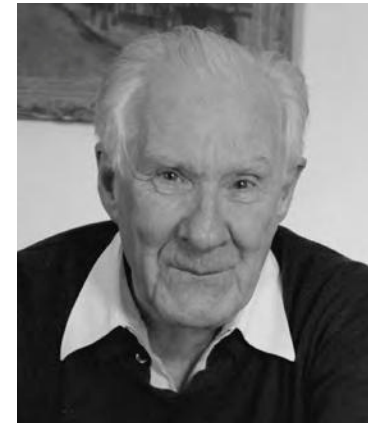
BIOGRAPHY

Alain Badiou

Born in 1937, in Rabat, Morocco, Alain Badiou studied philosophy at the École normale supérieure, and graduated at the head of his class in 1960. At the ENS, he met Althusser, Canguilhem, and Lacan. He also became involved in the opposition to the war in Algeria. Appointed Professor of Philosophy in Reims, then at the experimental university of Vincennes (Paris 8) from its founding in May 1968, he devoted himself to the Maoist project into the 1980s. During this period, as a fellow traveler of the director Antoine Vitez, Alain Badiou focused on writing for the theater (his plays include *L'Écharpe rouge* ("The Red Scarf"), among others).

In 1988, he published a philosophical summa, *L'Être et l'événement* (English translation: *Being and Event*, 2005); its sequel, *Logiques des mondes* (English translation: *Logics of Worlds*, 2009) appeared in 2006. He was named Professor at the École normale supérieure in 1999, and Professor Emeritus in 2004. His work is vast and diverse, comprising novels, plays, philosophical essays (*La République de Platon*, 2012; English translation: *Plato's Republic*, 2013), books on politics (*De quoi Sarkozy est-il le nom?*, 2007; English translation: *The Meaning of Sarkozy*, 2010), and on mathematics (*Éloge des mathématiques*, 2015; English translation: *In Praise of Mathematics*, 2016).

A towering figure in the French intellectual landscape, Alain Badiou is also renowned throughout the world.



PARTNER THEATERS OF THE HAUTS PARLEURS

The Hauts Parleurs worked with:

Théâtre Jean Vilar - Montpellier (2023) ; Le Parvis - Scène nationale - Tarbes (2023) ; Théâtre de Pau (2023) ; Théâtre Albarède - Ganges (2020) ; La Devinière - Musée Rabelais (2020) ; Les Passerelles - Pontault Combault (2020) ; La Comédie de Reims, CDN - Reims (2019) ; La Passerelle - Scène nationale - Saint-Brieuc (2019) ; Théâtre du Fil de l'eau - Pantin (2019) ; Festival d'Avignon (2018, 2015, 2010, 2008, 2000) ; TNBA, CDN - Bordeaux (2017) ; Le Théâtre - Scène Nationale - Mâcon (2017), l'Agora - Scène nationale - Evry (2017), Agora Théâtre - Tokyo (2016) ; Scène Wateau - Nogent sur Marne (2016) ; le TNP, CDN - Villeurbanne (2015) ; La Nef - Manufactures d'utopies - Pantin (2015) ; Auditorium du Louvre (2014 et 2015) ; Louvre Lens (2012 et 2016) ; Festival Rayon Frais à Tours (2014) ; Atelier Gekken - Kyoto (2014, 2010) ; Bird Theater - Tottori, au Japon (2014, 2012) ; Shizuoka Performing Art Center (2010) ; TNB - Rennes (where Didier Galas was an associate artist from 2010 to 2013) ; Le Bateau Feu - Scène nationale - Dunkerque (where Didier Galas was an associate artist from 2007 to 2012) ; Institut Français (African tour in 2011) ; Fondazione Teatro Piemonte Europa de Turin (2011) ; les Spectacles Vivants au Centre Pompidou à Paris ; Théâtre de la Cité Internationale - Paris (2011) ; Fondation Cartier - Paris (2014) ; Théâtre de la Coupe d'Or - Rochefort (2012) ; Bonlieu - Scène nationale - Annecy (2012) ; Théâtre Molière - Scène nationale - Sète (2012) ; La Passerelle/Gap - Scène nationale - Gap (2010, 2009, 2008) ; Le Phénix - Scène nationale - Valenciennes (2009)...

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