



MC93

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maison de la culture
de Seine-Saint-Denis
Bobigny

Les chats ou ceux qui frappent et ceux qui sont frappés

6 - 19 September 2024 | Bobigny, France

An animal fable, a modern jazz ballet or a Kabuki operetta, Les chats (Ou Ceux qui frappent et ceux qui sont frappés) brings together performers from the musical Cats who have decided to flee society, as the future of the planet seemed so compromised, and to question their human condition by starting to live like cats. Filled with memories of the iconic Broadway shows of the 1980s, these hybrid creatures form an isolated community, safe from the catastrophe. So that even the smallest kitten, in this cold darkness under the stars, can contribute to a better future, they will discuss, sing and dance their concerns, fears, doubts and hopes, carried away by the sound of the shô, the Japanese mouth organ. Will they become a reflection of what they had fled? Will they eventually get out? Is there anywhere else? Where is real life? Does this world still make sense? Are there other worlds? Are they still alive?

Date of the show: From April 10 to 12, 2025.

JONATHAN DRILLET - AUTHOR AND STAGE DIRECTOR

Jonathan Drillet studied drama at the Conservatoire du 20e arrondissement in Paris, then worked as a performer with Christophe Honoré in Les Débutantes and Beautiful Guys, at the Théâtre Dijon-Bourgogne in 2004, and with the Lumière d'août company. He has also worked with the German choreographer Raimund Hoghe, in Young People Old Voices, with Hubert Colas in Une mouette et autres cas d'espèces, with Sanja Mitrovic in My revolution is better than yours, with Gerard & Kelly in several performances, and with Julien Prévieux in Of balls, books and hats.

In 2008, he and Marlène Saldana formed the company The United Patriotic Squadrons of Blessed Diana. They went on to write several shows including Fuyons sous la spirale de l'escalier profond (Ménagerie de Verre, Paris, 2013) and Le Sacre du Printemps Arabe (Centre National de la Danse, Pantin, 2017). In 2020 they presented a triptych with choreographers Gaëlle Bourges and Mickaël Phelippeau, 22 castors front contre front.

The piece Showgirl, a personal variation inspired by Verhoeven's film Showgirls, was written in collaboration with singer and composer Rebeka Warrior.

As a playwright, artistic collaborator and author, Jonathan Drillet has worked with Jonathan Capdevielle, notably on the plays Saga, A nous deux maintenant and Rémi, and with the artist Théo Mercier, notably on the plays Outremonde and Affordable solution for better living and with Phia Ménard.

MARLÈNE SALDANA - AUTHOR AND CHOREOGRAPHER

Marlène Saldana made a living out of small-scale theatrical engagements and children's shows, before meeting Hugo Lagomarsino, an Argentinian specialist in puppet theatre. She went on to work with Yves-Noël Genod and the Compagnie du Zerep (Sophie Perez and Xavier Boussiron), and went on to collaborate with Daniel Jeanneteau, Jonathan Capdevielle, Théo Mercier, Gaëlle Bourges, Élise Vigier and Marcial Di Fonzo Bo. She has also danced with Boris Charmatz and Jérôme Bel. Since 2010 she has been collaborating with Jonathan Drillet in their collective 'The United Patriotic Squadrons of Blessed Diana', and with Jeanne Balibar on film.

Her film career has been marked by numerous roles with Christophe Honoré, who also directed her in Les Idoles at the Théâtre de l'Odéon in 2019, in which she played the role of Jacques Demy, a role that was particularly acclaimed by the critics. In 2022, Christophe Honoré again directed her in Le Ciel de Nantes, an autofiction play in which she played the role of the director's grandmother, Odette (known as 'Kiki').

THE RESIDENCY

*Our pieces have often taken the form of animal fables (the alligators in *Dormir Sommeil Profond*, l'Aube d'une Odyssée, the beavers in our latest dance piece for a group of young performers from Poitou, the cows in *Reflets de France* etc).*

*Somewhere between musical comedy, fable, operetta, ballet, modern jazz and kabuki, Les Chats adopts the point of view of the performers in *Cats*, the play first performed in London in 1981. We imagine finding these singer-dancers as if they had fled society in the 1980s to take refuge in their litter box, so compromised did they feel the future of the planet to be (Meadows report, oil shocks, pollution, famines, the race for permanent growth): did they withdraw from the world voluntarily, did they suffer the consequences of a catastrophe?*

***Option A (pre-apocalyptic voluntary isolation) :** Having decided to flee society in the 1980s, our performers have formed a community of their own, isolated, in the hope of bringing about a new world. The situation soon became untenable, resources ran out and the option of getting out was no longer an option: they were no longer at all suited to the world as it had become. Was withdrawal a good solution? Where is real life? Does this world still make sense? Are there other worlds? Are they dead, are they alive? Without realising it, like Schrödinger's cat, they are gradually being transformed into beings neither dead nor alive, without conscience, without reason. Like zombies, they become a reflection of what they had fled, this necrotic post-industrial society that devours itself.*

***Option B (constrained post-apocalyptic isolation):** Taking refuge in their bunker-litter after a nuclear winter, a widespread food shortage, or a major climatic event, believing they are escaping the catastrophe, hoping for a new and harmonious world, will they end up reproducing the same way of life, the same hierarchical and class relationships, the same passions as in the world before? Will they end up leaving? Will they find salvation in the litter box? Subjected themselves to the laws of the market and globalisation (the carbon footprint of a domestic cat approaches that of a combustion-powered car), evolving in a dirty, decaying atmosphere around a dilapidated cat tree, they sing of their doubts and hopes as the rot begins to gain ground on the litter box.*

UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS) LINKED TO THE WORKSHOP

