

FORBIDDEN DI SPORGERSI

Pierre Meunier takes his faithful teammates on a new adventure, in which they land on the banks of the great inner world unfolded by Babouillec in *Algorithme éponyme* (*Eponymous Algorithm*). Called “disoriented” ever since she was a child, this young autistic writer travels other paths than the ones society chooses for us. Her poem, untroubled, like her thinking, by social niceties, gleefully explores the relationship between the freedom of her neurons and the order necessary to any contact with the outside world, with the others and their norms. Struck by the vital energy it contains, Pierre Meunier, working with Marguerite Bordat, chose it to fuel an electric, mechanical, and acrobatic carnival of busted-up engines. Always more likely to find poetry in what’s not quite right rather than in what runs smoothly and fascinated by what in the banal is astonishing, the director bravely defies the interdiction to lean outside the window and to leave the tracks. With *Forbidden di sporgersi*, we might just glimpse the end of the tunnel, and get a better look at what, within ourselves, whirls, boasts, and gallops. Composer, scenographer, dancer, actors, and guitarist all explore this inner cosmos, whose darkness turns out to be illuminating.

Show premiered on 24 February, 2015 at the Comédie de Clermont-Ferrand.

PIERRE MEUNIER

Pierre Meunier began his career by a detour that took him through circus rings, where he first began negotiating with gravity. With lightness in mind, he was already looking for the balance between matter and laughter. Working with the greatest and most demanding clowns and directors, he came to consider the stage as a place to try to reach an active state of dreaming. Once he had the audacity to create his own shows, he therefore decided to increase the number of physical laws with which to play. Those laws of gravity, friction, resilience, order, and disorder change the way we think about other laws, those that preside over the world, our thoughts, and human relationships. Poetic in their rhythm, their action, and the surprises they create, they are at once different and inspired by the expert formulas and experimental processes of the scientific domain, with which Pierre Meunier is as familiar as he is mistrustful of them. Always on the lookout for norms and their dysfunctions, he likes to look at things with fresh eyes and be joyfully surprised by what at first glance seems inert.

MARGUERITE BORDAT

A scenographer as well as a costume, puppet, and mask designer, Marguerite Bordat has worked with Joël Pommerat, Bérangère Vantusso, Éric Lacascade, Pierre-Yves Chapalain, and Lazare. After joining the Belle Meunière for the creation of *Le Tas* in 2001, she has become a precious member of the crew; as the look-out, she warns the others of reefs in their way and points to lanes that will allow for reinvention. She now forms with Pierre Meunier the dreamy duo in charge of the conception of their dramatic adventures.

INTERVIEW WITH PIERRE MEUNIER

How did you meet H el ene Nicolas, also known as Babouillec, autistic and mute, the author of *Algorithme  ponyme (Eponymous Algorithm)*?

Pierre Meunier: I met H el ene in 2011 at the espace Ki thon, a centre for children and autistic persons near Rennes, and when I got there, I was wondering about this world that doesn't speak, or speaks so little. What I discovered there was how difficult it can be to establish a connection with these children using the usual codes. At the espace Ki thon, artistic creation is used as a way to foster development. It's a bridge between the chaos within and the gesture which will allow for communication by trying to express what that chaos feels like. H el ene was part of a group of young adults working there. V eronique Truffert, her mother, who founded the place, showed me her first texts. I was overwhelmed by the power of her poetry, through which she tackles the most essential questions. During that first meeting, we were able to talk, not orally but by writing down what we wanted to say. That was the beginning of our relationship.

What was that awakening you say you went through while reading *Algorithme  ponyme*?

Algorithme  ponyme reminded me of what we put ourselves through in our quest for sociability. Babouillec lives and sings a form of thinking that is free, swift, that exists outside of the limits we create for ourselves. It's a song that comes from deep within her. This desire of Babouillec's to open new pathways is a vital necessity. I took it as a challenge, a sincere challenge that awakened me. Can we meet the challenge of the freedom at the heart of *Algorithme  ponyme*? Can we make it strike a chord in others? And how can we do that with a text so removed from any dramatic intention? I shared those questions first with Marguerite Bordat, before asking them of the team of *Forbidden di sporgersi*.

Babouillec says she sees in the dark, and conceives of writing as a way to "escape the darkness." What is this darkness, and what form do you think her escape takes?

Babouillec acts as a witness to this circulation between her inner world, so immensely vast and free, and the outer world, forever busy trying to box everyone in until nothing stands out. She is more in tune than we are with the inherent anarchism of mental activity, with the indiscipline of neuronal connections that sometimes overwhelm her. Inner chaos can indeed be a source of anxiety and pain, but it can also be a source of happiness and freedom. Babouillec talks a lot about trains and train tracks, about tunnels and darkness. To get closer to the end of the tunnel is also to struggle to put into words what we feel inside. And let others see it. This is what artists do. It's what everyone does, as they search for clarity.

What does the title you've chosen, *Forbidden di sporgersi*, taken from *Algorithme  ponyme*, mean to you?

When Babouillec writes "*Forbidden di sporgersi*," she immediately adds, "we might just glimpse the end of the tunnel," creating an effect of ironic inversion. To be oneself, one has to break the rules, to find one's position in order to

establish one's own relationship to the norm. What Babouillec tells us is that there is always a way out, invites us to break out of this falsely comforting gregariousness. Work constantly forces us to face the contradiction between the need to accept we don't know anything in order to invent our way out of problems and our attraction to tried-and-true solutions. Fear leads to a pathological aversion to risk, increases our need for reassurance. The theatre isn't spared: more and more, we're asked to describe the painting we have in mind before we've even had time to paint it, if you know what I mean. Wandering is, I believe, essential. I don't know where I'm going, and this ignorance is the source of everything.

If Babouillec is happy to have opened a communication channel with the world, she also demands the right not to do what's expected of her. Would you agree?

Babouillec didn't let others format her, she refused to follow the directions she was given. This deliberate avoidance of the trajectory that was chosen for her reminds me strongly of the work of Jean Tinguely. His work as a sculptor and an iconoclast is an attack on the mirage that is consistency. Consistency as the guarantee of a programmed and dependable productivity. He perverts the expected efficiency of the electric motor, and it causes us a grave and deep joy to see that this creates unique movements and poetic forms, encourages us to think for ourselves. We're made to discover another way of working, which echoes our own inner chaos. When the machine jams, it allows us to hear a rhythm that's much closer to the human. Raised in the illusion of a clockwork-like mastery of the world, we can feel worry and repulsion at the sight of everything that can't walk straight. What's too different should be avoided. Otherness becomes a burden rather than something we should wish for. This fear leads to a form of withdrawal, ultimately to groups of people who look like one another and are fine with that reality. The next step is the idea of "the enemy," with all the violence it can lead to and justify.

For *Forbidden di sporgersi*, you've surrounded yourself with people you've worked with for a long time. How did you work on the show?

Along with Marguerite Bordat, we spent several months dreaming up a theatrical form that would fit *Algorithme éponyme*. We read the poem over and over again, took notes in the margins, crossed things out. We looked at a lot of photographs, engineers standing in front of a mass of tubes and cables, wearing lab coats... Everyone on the team knows how we work, how we go through periods of improvisation, of exploration, how we try to find links between things and how we have to try different things, dramatically-speaking. Right from the start, everyone is free to suggest situations, ideas, different ways to play. The stage becomes an overworked brain. We've worked extensively on the invisible connections between those four artists, on the links that tie text and physical experience together. Babouillec came to watch us work several times. Every time, we found her enthusiasm stimulating, were struck by the acuteness of her answers. We asked her if she thought the stage had something to do with freedom, and she said, "Conceivable dream, possible fantasy. Original role of the stage abandoned thanks to the mastery of disciplines."

Interview conducted by Marion Canelas / Translation Gaël Schmidt-Cléach

BABOUILLEC

If H el ene Nicolas chooses to add to her pen name, Babouillec, the title "autistic and wordless," it might be to better highlight just how original her writing is, devoid of words that have already been heard and reused and have thus lost all meaning. Her inner life, which she preciously kept a secret until she turned twenty, manifested itself when Babouillec let slip that she could read and write. Thus began a game between her and the common code that is the alphabet. In her own incredible way, Babouillec expresses the risk and the pleasure the artist feels when a path, and a voice, finally open up...

Algorithme  ponyme de Babouillec is published by  ditions Christophe Chomant.

AND...

MAISON PROFESSIONNELLE

Debate: *Fear in theatres* / Encounter with Pierre Meunier, organised with the ISTS / 18 July at 02:30 pm, Clo tre Saint-Louis, free admittance

CINEMATOGRAPHIC TERRITORIES

Le Cyclop de Jean Tinguely, directed by Arne Steckmest

Screening followed by an encounter with Pierre Meunier

19 July at 11:00 am, Utopia-Manutention

READING

Oracle int rieur by Babouillec, reading directed by Pierre Meunier

23 July at 11:00 pm at the Chartreuse de Villeneuve lez Avignon

TOUR DATES FOR *FORBIDDEN DJ SPORGERS!* AFTER THE FESTIVAL D'AVIGNON

– 2 and 3 November 2015: Festival de Neuch tel

– 18 and 19 November: Culture Commune, Loos-en-Gohelle

– from 25 to 27 November: TJP, Centre dramatique national d'Alsace, Strasbourg

– from 10 to 13 May 2016: Centre dramatique r gional de Tours

#PIERREMEUNIER

69th
EDITION

festival-avignon.com

f t i s #FDA15



In order to bring you this edition, over 1,750 people, artists, technicians, and organisational staff, have worked tirelessly and enthusiastically for months. More than half of them are state-subsidised freelance workers.