

CREATURES

Ilka SCHÖNBEIN - THEATER MESCHUGGE



Photo Marinette Delanné

WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY ILKA SCHÖNBEIN
MUSIC: ALEXANDRA LUPIDI AND SUSKA KANZLER

Opening : September 2017 at the World's Puppetry Festival, Charleville Mézière, France,

Producer: Theater Meschugge. Management : Le K Samka. Co-producer and residencies: FMTM - Festival Mondial des Théâtres de Marionnettes de Charleville-Mézières, France, Scène Nationale of Sète, L'Agora of Billère. Theater FADENSCHEN, Braunschweig, Germany. With the support of the DRAC Ile-de-France.

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CREATURES says the ant to the grasshopper, who in his misery has begged for a crumb of bread.

And so the little grasshopper dances. Maybe she'd touch the ant's heart?

She dances on one leg, she dances on her hands, she dances on her head, she dances for her life, she dances with death. She dances the dance of all creatures. The dance of existence. Everybody dances it in his her its own way. As well, as beautifully, as creatively as he she it possibly can. To please the one or ones who our existence or non-existence in this world depends on. So that they let us live. Us, the creature. Us, the creation.

Another little while at least, or an eternity... a little one...

Another day, thinks the mayfly

Another summer, pleads the grasshopper

Another year, begs the little old lady

Being both creature and creator, I'll let my creations dance one more time. For me, their creator who brings them to life. And for you, dear public, who may give them work and bread and ... your love.

Each one of them will try in his own way to touch your heart with his misery and with his art.

- The little grasshopper surprised by the harsh winter while singing
- The fish floundering in his net
- The little chick born in a battery cage instead of a nest
- The chicken in the stockpot
- The spider that is such a good neighbour to people but gets chased away from any corner.

But also, for example, the snail who doesn't stop hoping that its primitive beauty will, just once, leave more than a slimy trail in our memories.

But also the little old lady with her grace and fragility reminding us that we are already in this world people of both worlds. All of them - and who knows who else - will dance for their life, on the boards that mean the world to them. They'll dance for your mercy's sake. In order to exist.

One more time, one more little while, one more little eternity ...

only one more time, one more time, one more ...

Ilka Schönbein - September 2016

Creative team

Ilka SCHÖNBEIN - Theater Meschugge

Director - Puppet builder - Puppeteer in CREATURES



Sinon je te mange @ Marinette Delanné - 2014

Born in Darmstadt, Ilka learned the eurythmic dance of Rudolf Steiner, who used to advocate the union of soul and movement rather than effort and technique. Then she studied in Stuttgart with puppeteer Albrecht Roser. Once she completed her education, she joined companies on tour for around 10 years and eventually created her own company and took to the road with her own shows.

Metamorphoses was conceived as a street show, aimed at all kinds of audiences. Then, without renouncing the street, Ilka agreed to adapt her initial show for the stage. She added a second character, first played by her German technician Thomas Berg, then by the French actor, Alexandre Haslé, and finally by Mô Bunte, a German puppeteer. Each time Ilka created a new version, and with her last partner, she even did two. Masks and costumes changed, certain scenes and characters vanished to give space for new ones. There were successively five versions of *Metamorphoses*, later *Metamorphoses of Metamorphoses*, all of them moving from caustic humour, so typical of Central Europe, to an intensely black vision of the world, first emphasizing puppet play, then mime and finally dance, resulting in a general balance of all means of expression. No matter how long or how often she presents a certain show, Ilka never considers it to be perfect or finished. She is part of it and it is part of her.

Frog King (Le Roi Grenouille) was for her an opportunity to come back to young audience. The show was created in May 1998, co-produced by the Théâtre d'Ivry- Antoine Vitez, in close cooperation with the Conseil Général du Val de Marne, the Montpellier National Theatre, the festival Mimos of Périgueux and the Théâtre National des Jeunes Spectateurs of Montreuil. There have been two versions of *Frog King*, the first one with Alexandre Haslé, the second one with Mô Bunte. In 2005, Ilka put it back on stage under the title *Frog King III* with the actresses Simone Decloedt and Britta Arste, the accordion player Rudi Meier and countertenor Christian Hilg, then later with countertenor Philipp Kais.

Winter Journey (Voyage d'hiver): opening Autumn 2003 at the Théâtre Gérard Philippe of Frouard (Lorraine) in cooperation with the ABC of Bar-Le-Duc, the Théâtre Romain Rolland of Villejuif, the Prisme of Saint Quentin-en-Yvelines and the Conseil Général du Val de Marne. The play was shown at the World Puppet Festival of Charleville-Mézières, at the Manufacture of Nancy, at the Nouveau Théâtre of Angers CDN, at the Théâtre de la Commune d'Aubervilliers and at many other theatres. The play draws its inspiration from Frantz Schubert's and Wilhelm Müller's work, and was directed by Ute Hallaschka and Ilka Schönbein, who also created the masks and costumes and played the leading role. Christian Hilg interprets Schubert's lieder and Rudi Meier has magnificently transposed the original work for accordion. Simone Decloedt assists him in the role of a harpy. The French text was first recorded, later played on stage first by the actress Paule d'Héria, later by Marie-Laure Crochant. In spite of the immediate success of the play, Ilka decided two weeks after the opening night to get down to

work again. She theatricalised Christian Hilg's interpretation (who took very well to his new part) and added interludes evoking both the endless journey of the character and the atmosphere of funfair.

In 2005, with the help of the US-American artist Mary Sharp, Ilka included in her play the actress Nathalie Pagnac who accompanied this long lyrical song and showed how this feeling of sorrow and perdition could be expressed by body and voice. *My Own Flesh and Blood* (*Chair de ma Chair*) was created in August 2006 at the Théâtre du Grand Parquet, in Paris, thanks to the Métamorphoses Singulières and ARCADY, with the support of the City of Paris, DRAC Ile de France and the Paris 18th district city council. The play is an adaptation from the novel *Why the Child was Cooking in Polenta* by Aglaja Veteranyi, a desperate and wonderfully poetical narration by a little circus girl which evokes alternately the mother and daughter relationship, grief of loss, solitude, frenzy, adversity, nomadism and exile... Ilka worked on the dramaturgy with Mary Sharp and confided the interpretation of the French text to the actress Nathalie Pagnac. The world premiere was in Charleville-Mézières World Puppet Festival. In order to intensify the funfair and circus ambiance, Ilka added a third actress, Bénédicte Holvoete, for a couple of contributions in Italian. There were four language versions of this play: French, Spanish, English and German. The show was on tour in France, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, The Netherlands and Germany.

The Old Lady and the Beast - to my father (La Vieille et la Bête - à mon père)

was first played in October 2009 at the Theatre on the river Bank Vidy Lausanne, Switzerland and then in February 2010 at Grand Parquet in Paris. *The Old Lady and the Beast* is about a little donkey, about death and aging, Ilka meets the musician Alexandra Lupidi who writes and performs the music for this show. They performed in French, German, English, Spanish and Italian and toured in many towns, mostly in France, but also in Germany, Switzerland, Belgium and Spain until May 2013:

At the Forum de Meyrin, Festival Effervescence de Nevers, Théâtre Firmin Gémier d'Antony, Théâtre Romain Roland de Villejuif, L'espai au Mans, ABC Dijon, Festival du Théâtre Pan (Lugano, Switzerland), Les Contes Givrés de Saint Vallier, Champs de la Marionnettes à Saint Germain Les Arpajon, Théâtre de Morsang sur Orge, CDN d'Aubervilliers - Théâtre de la Commune, L'Agora de Billère, Théâtre des 4 saisons à Gradignan, L'Astrobale de La Rochelle, Le Libournia à Libourne, Théâtre de L'Espace ; scène nationale de Besançon, Scène Nationale de Forbach, Centre Pablo Picasso d'Homécourt, ATP des Vosges à Epinal, La Maison du Théâtre d'Amiens, Le Safran d'Amiens, L'arche de Béthencourt, Mainz, Festival Mondial de Charleville-Mézières, Cottbus, Munich, Potsdam, Berlin, La Comédie de Béthune, Saint Barthélémy d'Anjou, le strapontin de Pont Scorff, La paillette de Rennes, Stuttgart, Mannheim, Scène Nationale de Limoges, les sept collines de Tulle, Cusset, Ramonville, Urrugne, Oloron Sainte Marie, L'estive de Foix, Bergerac, Théâtre Edwige Feuillère de Vesoul et Festival Figura de Baden, Festival d'Offenburg, Espace Soutines de Lèves, Centre Culturel de Chef Boutonne, Le Carré @C Les Colonnes de Blanquefort, La scène Nationale de Châteauroux, La Maison du Théâtre de Brest, La Merise de Trappes, Le Centre Malraux de Vandoeuvre-lès-Nancy, Le Centre de la Marionnette de Tournai, Le Théâtre National de Namur, Le Manège de Maubeuge, Festival Titirimundi (Ségovia, Burges, Valladolid, Madrid).

Sinon je te mange... had its premier at **Théâtre de la Marionette** in Paris in autumn 2014.

In addition to her own shows, Ilka works as an artistic director with other puppeteers. In 2006, she collaborated with **Kerstin Wiese** for the creation of *Le loup et les septs chevreaux* (*The Wolf and the seven young kids*) which was performed 300 times on tour. In 2009 she directed *Wolfed down* with **Laurie Cannac** (325 performances), which was nominated for the Molières Jeune Public Prize in 2010, and *Queue de poissonne* (*Fish tail*) in 2013.

Alexandra LUPIDI

Mezzo-soprano - Composer - Instrumentalist (guitar, percussion, double bass, self-built instruments)

My artistic adventure with Ilka started with the creation of *The Old Lady and the Beast* seven years ago, followed soon after by *Sinon je te mange...* (*Or I'll Eat You...*). Seven years during which we shared the stage, the road and the tour. Seven years of artistic discovery and enrichment at her side.

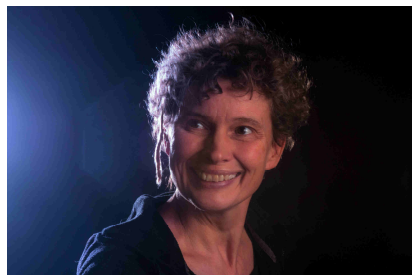


The Old Lady and the Beast/Sinon Je te mange @ Nicolas Piton/Marinette Delanné

Alexandra Lupidi started singing and playing jazz at a young age. Later she discovered classical music and traditional music from Italy and Spain. She has played in various jazz bands, from duos to big bands, with a preference for vocal improvisation (Sunset, Bilboquet, Café Universel). She trained with classical singer **Christiane Eda-Pierre**, then with **Christophe Le Hazif** and sang on stage in a large number of opera choruses (Chatelet, Opera-Comique, Opera of Montpellier, Rennes, Angers). As a soloist, she played *the Child* in *Der Jasager* by Kurt Weill, directed by **Ludovic Lagarde**, and *Candelas* in *L'Amour Sorcier*, by Manuel de Falla, in flamenco version, at the operas of Rouen and Evreux, conducted by **Laurence Equilbey**. Joining a capella quartet **Sanacore**, which performs all around France and abroad, she tied up her Italian origins with traditional music. She sang in the vocal quartet **Les Lunettes** (director **Ludovic Montet**), which improvises on Bach, Juan del Encina, Schütz.

At the same time, she composed, sang and performed in works for theatre and dance, with the companies **Arène-Théâtre**, **Courant d'air**, **Balançoire**, **Théâtre Itinérant de la Cabane**, **Retouramont**. She created the group **Alessandra Lupidi** with her stage partner **Frank Gervais**. As a choir director, she conducted the choir **Pablo Neruda** at Bagnolet. In her work in *The Old Lady and the Beast* and even more so in *Sinon je te mange...* with **Ilka Schönbein** she travels through all her vocal and musical colours. She composed the music for **Laurie Cannac's** production *Fish tail* (directed by **Ilka Schönbein**) as well as for her new production *Blanche-Ebène*.

Anja SCHIMANSKI
assistant director and lighting designer



She discovered her passion for theater lighting and lighting design when she joined the **Women's Circus** during a sabbatical in Australia in 2000.

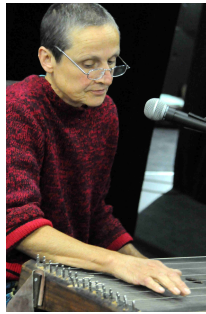
After completing workshops in light, sound and rigging, she worked as a general technician and then lighting technician for *Ghosts* and *Odditorium*, large-scale **Women's Circus** shows involving more than 50 performers.

Returning to Germany, she worked for independent theatre companies, dance festivals and finally for a number of years as a lighting, sound and stage technician for **Rex Theatre in Wuppertal**, Germany, staging shows for visiting international theatre companies.

In 2009 she finished a three-year degree in lighting and technical direction at G+B Academy, Cologne, and started working as a freelance lighting designer and technician for **Wuppertaler Bühnen Theater**, the **Chamber Opera Cologne** and other theatres. She creates lighting concepts for theater and puppetry productions (*edem Chaos wohnt ein Zauber inne*, *Fundevogel*, Theater Kranewit, Berlin), contemporary circus (*Tent à Bulles*), concerts (*Casa Mia*, Sanacore, Paris) and international festivals. In 2015 she worked as the technical director for the show *Wings in my Heart* by **RIGOLO Swiss Nouveau Cirque** in Winterthur, Switzerland. In 2016 she was the sound technician at the festivals **Les Festivalières**, Mont de Marsan, France and **Wilhelmsburg 48h**, Hamburg.

Her close collaboration with **Ilka Schönbein** began in 2009. She created and realised the lighting design for her international tours of *The Old Lady and the Beast* (2009), *Aber der Wolf fand sie alle!* , 2012 (*But the Wolf Found Them All!*) and *Sinon je te mange...* , 2014.

SUSKA KANZLER - Tambura, Voix, conception&réalisation des décors



Since 1995, she has worked as a freelance master carpenter specialising in traditionally crafted wooden furniture. It was by making two harps for her own use that she discovered her love of instrument making. In 2015, she came across the Tambura and now makes Tamburas of all sizes and shapes. She also practises sound massage, using the Tambura to make sounds on the human body for healing purposes. She has travelled with Ilka to churches, monasteries and other acoustic spaces to play, sing and experiment with sound. Since 2015, she has organised the annual puppet festival, "Darmstädter Figurentheatertage", at her collective home Wagenplatz Diogenes. In 2016, she designed and built the set for *Rumpelstiltskin* and *Creatures*.

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