

# RUMPELSTILTSKIN

**Ilka SCHÖNBEIN - THEATER MESCHUGGE**



Photo : Marinette Delanné

## RUMPELSTILTSKIN

**DIRECTED BY Ilka SCHÖNBEIN**  
**MUSIC COMPOSED BY Alexandra LUPIDI**  
**PERFORMANCE AND PUPPETRY: Pauline DRÜNERT**  
**PERFORMANCE AND MUSIC: Alexandra LUPIDI**  
**PUPPETRY BUILT BY Ilka SCHÖNBEIN**  
**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Anja SCHIMANSKI**  
**LIGHTING DESIGN AND LIGHTING TECHNICIAN: Anja SCHIMANSKI**  
**SET : 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 FADENSCHNEIN, Braunschweig, Germany. With the support of the DRAC Ile-de-France.

*KSAMKA*

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## Director's notes

"Spin straw into gold? That is an art which pleases me well", says the king. "

Something alive is dearer to me than all the treasures in the world." says the little man. These are the two essential sentences of this fairytale. Between them unfolds the whole story. These words have sounded in my ears for a long time and two years ago I decided to turn them into a little show. It took me only three weeks to build the puppets and get the show down on paper... a work that usually takes about one to two years. Shortly after this, I had a breakdown, a complete physical and psychological crisis. This was not because of the work on Rumpelstiltskin. That was only the straw that broke the camel's back. I had to cancel our tour of "Sinon je te mange..." And I haven't touched puppets since (almost).

Is there life after puppets?

I've been searching for it, this life without puppets, and I still search for it - so I can live, survive. Something alive is dearer to me than all the puppets in the world.

### Why do I want to tell this fairy tale?

Why am I telling you this very personal story?

The tale talks about art. Maybe about all forms of art, because every true artist transforms straw into gold. But I also think that every true artist is carried by a little (or big) demon. And this demon wants to be paid. And what it likes best, this type of demon, is really something alive. So one pays with one's living soul, with one's living body, with one's living future (the child in the tale).

Why is one ready to pay such a high price?

Because every true artist feels like she or he is in the same situation as the miller's daughter, imprisoned in a room full of straw that absolutely needs to be transformed into gold. The door won't be opened unless the work is accomplished. When the door opens, it opens to life. What bliss! But it lasts only a few moments, and then one finds oneself in another room, always bigger, full of straw... Which means for the artist: after the creation is always before the creation. And nobody will convince the true artist that there is a real life outside his golden cage.

They are strange creatures, these artists, aren't they?

From time to time, the little demons feel sorry for the poor desperate artists and give them a chance to escape. In order to get the chance to escape, they have to discover the demon's name, which means its real nature, its origins, its roots, where it is from... Not easy. I'm still searching for my demon's name. I've suggested a lot of names to the demon, but every time he breaks out laughing and answers: "No, no, that is not my name." In the meantime, the little demon in the form of a puppet observes me from its suitcase and a little while ago, it started to make quite a racket.

It was singing and dancing, mainly at night:

"Today I bake, tomorrow brew  
the next I'll have the young queen's child.

Ha, glad am I that no one knew  
that Rumpelstiltskin I am styled."

I can't sleep any more...

And if I gave this suitcase to someone else without opening it?  
Maybe to some other puppeteer?

Much younger than I, full of life and passion, someone who is richer than I and can pay the demon with necklaces and rings instead of something alive ...  
What do you think?

And what if she makes the little demon dance on stage? And what if I just look from a good distance, giving advice and keeping the fire alive to make the little demon dance around it?

We wouldn't tell anybody how powerful this little man is and how angry he can get if you don't pay him correctly for his magic and precious services.

We wouldn't tell people, so they wouldn't be worried, and instead they'll all come running to see the show.



Photo : Marinette Delanné

## Synopsis

Once there was a poor miller, who had a beautiful daughter. One day, in order to make himself important, he told the king that his daughter could spin straw into gold. The king called for the girl, led her to a room filled with straw and demanded she spin the straw into gold by morning or she must die. He himself locked up the room. So there sat the poor miller's daughter, and for the life of her she did not know what to do. She had no idea how straw could be spun into gold, and so she began to weep. Suddenly, the door opened and in came a little man. He offered to transform the straw into gold in return for her necklace. When the king entered the room early the next morning and saw all the gold, he was delighted. He took the girl to a much larger room filled with straw to repeat the feat. As he had the night before, the little man came to spin for the girl, who this time paid him with her ring. On the third day, the king took the girl to an even larger room. He told her that if she could once again spin all the straw into gold he would make her his wife. When the little man came, the girl had nothing left to pay him. So he made her promise to give him her firstborn child.

A year later, the queen brought a beautiful child into the world. The little man appeared to claim his payment. She offered him all the riches of the kingdom, but he insisted: "No, something alive is dearer to me than all the treasures in the world." The queen began weeping so hard that the little man pitied her and gave her three days. If she could find out his name within this time, she could keep her child. So she sent a messenger all over the country to inquire for any names that there might be. On the third day, the messenger reported to the queen that he had seen a little man dance around a fire singing:

"Today I bake, tomorrow brew,  
the next I'll have the young queen's child.  
Ha, glad am I that no one knew  
that Rumpelstiltskin I am styled."

When the little man came in and she told him his real name, in his rage he tore himself in two, a happy end (at least for the queen and her child).



Photo : Marinette Delanné

## Creative team

**Ilka SCHÖNBEIN - Theater Meschugge**  
Director - Puppet builder



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 ARCADIA, 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'espal 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 Béthoncourt, 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).

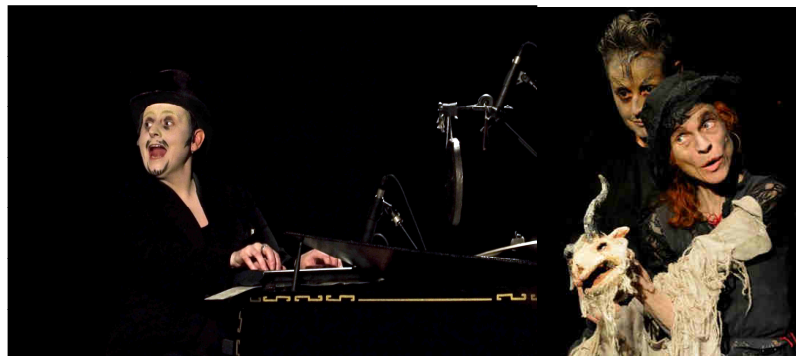
***Sinon je te mange...*** had its premier at **Théâtre de la Marionnette** in Paris in autumn 2014.

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 Ill 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*.

## Pauline DRÜNERT Puppeteer

Born in 1982 in Bad Oldesloe, Germany. She studied puppetry at the University for Music and Arts in Stuttgart, Germany and got her diploma in 2015. For a couple of years, also during her studies, she has worked freelance as a puppeteer and puppet builder with her own shows as well as in cooperation with others.



Productions (selection):

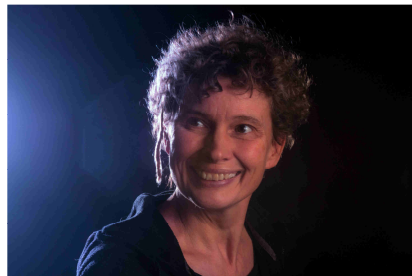
In 2009 she collaborated as puppet builder and puppeteer in the animated film *Rabenjunge (Raven Boy)* by **Andrea Deppert**, which was shown at the 61st Berlin Biennale and at the Trickfilmfestival in Stuttgart. In 2010 debuted her portable miniature show *Weißer Nacht (White Night)* which she performed at the International Puppet Festival in Erlangen, at Fitz Theatre in Stuttgart, at Westflügel in Leipzig, at the Backstreet Festival in Alexandria/Egypt and many other places.

In 2011 she performed in the show *Ghostcity* (**Marius Kob**, Mentor: **Nils Torpus**), which was played e.g. at the Treibstoff-Festival in Basle/Switzerland and at the Puppet Festival Blickwechsel in Magdeburg/Germany. She contributed to the children's concert *Die Bremer Stadtmusikanten (The Town Musicians of Bremen)* which was produced in cooperation with the Stuttgart Philharmonic Orchestra. In 2012 she played in the puppetry play *Nebenarm des dahinströmenden Lebens*, directed by **Joachim Fleischer**, a free interpretation of the audio drama "Under Milkwood" written by Dylan Thomas. In 2013 she cooperated again with the Stuttgart Philharmonic Orchestra to produce the children's concert *Peter und der Wolf (Peter and the Wolf)*. In November 2016 the opening of the children's opera *Odysseus* took place at Radialsystem Berlin, produced in cooperation with the Taschenoper Lübeck, Lübeck Theatre and Lautten Compagny Berlin, directed by **Sascha Mink**.



Pauline Drünert began her collaboration with **Etta Streicher** in 2011, producing the play *Ob sie warten - ein observates Experiment*, directed by **Stefan Wenzel**. In 2014 they founded the theatre and performance company **Crabs&Creatures**. Their first production *Spinnlein, Spinnlein an der Wand* (*silently spiderly spindle spinning spider*), a puppetry play for children and adults 5 years and over, directed by **Ilka Schönbein**, music composed and played by **Tina Speidel**, debuted in 2015 at Fitz in Stuttgart. The opening of the next collaboration with Etta Streicher *Rabe. Chronik eines Halunken* (*Raven*), directed by **Jonas Klinkenberg** and **Janne Weirup** will take place in January 2017 at Westflügel in Leipzig.

**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*, *Funde vogel*, 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.

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