

Wolfed Down !

Directed by Ilka Schönbein

Concept and interpretation: Laurie Cannac – Set design: Serge Lucas

A « one-woman show » for an actress and a whole world of puppets
For a general audience, suitable for children 8 years old and up



Photo Serge Lucas

Production :

Grand Parquet and Compagnie Graine de vie

Coproduction :

Theater Meschugge, Arcadi, Théâtre de l'Espace - Scène Nationale Besançon

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Adapted from the Brothers Grimm's *Little Red Riding Hood*
A « one-woman show » for an actress and a whole world of puppets
For a general audience, suitable for children 8 years old and up

Direction : Ilka Schönbein
Design, interpretation and puppets manipulation : Laurie Cannac
Puppets : Laurie Cannac, Ilka Schönbein and Serge Lucas
Stage designer and stage manager : Serge Lucas
Sound: François Olivier, Guy Pothier and Claire Moutarde
Lights : Luc Mesnier-Pierroutet, Sebastien Choriol
Assistant director : Nathalie Pagnac
Clown work : Céline Chatelain
Voices off: Laurie Cannac, Isabelle Guyot, Nicolas Dufour
Music : Serge Lucas

Preview at the Théâtre de l'Espace Scène Nationale of Besançon

Creation at the Grand Parquet, March - April 2009

On Tour : La Maison de l'art et de la communication de Sallaumines, Festival Marionnettes en jardin de Charleville Mézières, Festival de marionnettes de Dives-sur-Mer, Festival Marionnettes en Campagne du Théâtre du Gros Bonhomme, Théâtre du Fon du loup de Carves, l'Odyssée de Périgueux, Théâtre de Perpignan, La Grande Ourse à Villeneuve lès Maguelone, Festival Contes Givrés en bourgogne, L'Arche de Béthoncourt, le Théâtre du Fon de Loup de Carves, l'Agora de Pau, Théâtre d'Oloron Sainte Marie, Théâtre de Guingamp, Théâtre Athéna d'Auray, Maison du Théâtre de Brest, le Quai d'Angers, Théâtres en Dracénie de Draguignan, Théâtre d'Istres, Saison Jeune Public de Nanterre, Centre Culturel de Persan, ABC Dijon et CDN de Dijon, Espace 600 de Grenoble, Scène Nationale de Fecamp, Centre Culturel de Massy, Centre Culturel de Sevrans, Espace Jean Vilar de Ifs, Théâtre d'Amiens, Centre Pablo Picasso d'Homécourt, Scène Nationale de Grasse, Salle Notre Dame de Salins les Bains, Le strapontin de Pont-Scorff, Festival du Val d'Oise (Taverny, Vauréal, Herblay, Corneilles en Parisis, Saint-Gratien), Centre Culturel d'Urrugne, Carré des Jalles de Blanquefort, Théâtre d'Arles, Dyonyssos de Cahors, Cinéma Georges Boyer de Figeac, Odyssud de Blagnac, Théâtre de Laval et de Craon, Scène Nationale de Gap, Théâtre de Veulin à Bourgoin-Jallieu, Festival de la marionnette à Grenoble, Théâtre de Corbeil-Essonnes, Le Salmanazar d'Épernay, Théâtre Jean-Arp de Clamart, Le Samovar de Bagnolet, Le Carré Amelot de La Rochelle, Le Forum du Blanc Mesnil, Le Point d'eau d'Ostwald, Le Cheval Blanc de Schiltigheim. Copenhagen au Danemark, Festival Idéklic, Festival de Mirepoix, L'espace Malraux de Joué-lès-Tours, Le mail de Soissons, Séoul en Corée du Sud, Théâtre de Langres, Théâtre Jean Vilar de Champigny sur Marne, Salle Jean Carmé d'Allonnes, Le Fanal de Saint-Nazaire, Le moulin du roc de Niort, Les treize arches de Brive, Le Château rouge d'Annemasse, Helsinki en Finlande, Kaposvar en Hongrie, Festival de Phalsbourg, Festival Confluences d'Avoine, La Comédie de Saint Etienne, Centre Culturel de Ramonville, Théâtre Royal de Copenhague, Grand T de Nantes, Musée d'Orsay.

At the beginning, I thought I was alone. But all around me, there was already a wide world of puppets with a body, a clown in the middle of a tale about seclusion and first steps...

At the beginning... I hadn't met her yet. I didn't know. But Ilka was already here. This track, this path of exploration, had been opened by her!

At that time, the project was called *Moth!* A tale which was still looking for its own origin.

Outside of my cocoon, by pure coincidence, I met Ilka Schönbein... And we found it! This famous tale was the story of... *Little Red Riding Hood*. Then the age old narration brought an insatiable yearning for creation, research, reading and rewriting, brought countless puppets made for trying out.

Ilka Schönbein had the Grandmother's experience and knowledge, Serge Lucas the Hunter's sharp eye and mastery and I had the Riding Hood's energy and ingenuousness! And it's with pleasure that the three of us let ourselves be *wolfed down*.

At the end of this adventure, we hope to share with our audience the pleasure we had of discovering the dreamlike and mysterious visions sprung out of the story, to share the surprising meanings which arose, the strange inner feelings that it causes, and laughter too, for this Riding Hood is never far away from a clownish character!

To share what this tale has always been : a dream of the collective unconscious.

Laurie Cannac
Compagnie Graine de Vie

Little Red Riding Hood ! Everybody knows it... or rather thinks he knows it.

Instead of the versions by Perrault or Grimm, it's their illustrated substitutes we usually think of. But who could remember the oral versions, these age old narrations which contain real original treasures?

The Grimm Brothers have showed us the way, in terms of revealing the power of the tale, but let's remember Perrault's boldness and the sharpness of the oral versions.

It's from those versions that our show draws its inspiration, from those Riding Hoods who talk to us about the child out of the mother's lap, taking necessary risks, about disobeying, about dangerous banks where ingenuousness could sink, about handing on from generation to generation...

So, it's a tale about transformation, transformation of the child turning into adult, transformation of the evolving being, of all those who question their own life... So, to the questions asked by our tale : "Where are you going?", "By which way?", "Who's here?" answers are full of overtones.

Our Riding Hood is all white. She's a modern little girl, a naive clown who absorbs herself keenly in the story of Red Riding Hood, in order to get away from the superficiality she's hemmed in. By leaving the way of comfortable and stifling conventionality, she gives herself the chance to open new colours : red as danger, red as rebellion, black as despair and death, red as love... As rich palette to draw one's own destiny.

When entering this wonderful and terrifying world, the little girl merges into the tale - and the tale merges into her, in a hand-to-hand fight with the puppets. Then all characters reveal the conflicting forces which clash in early adolescence.

A cruel tale, a naive one, a tale made of wisdom, initiation, transformation, made of dream or nightmare? *Wolfed Down!* is all that combined.

Born in Darmstadt, Ilka learned the eurythmic dance of Rudolph 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 stage. She added a second character, first played by her German technician Thomas Berg, then by a French actor, Alexandre Haslé, and finally by Mò Bunte, a German puppeteer.

Each time Ilka created a new version, and with her last partner, she even did two. Masks and costumes change, certain scenes and characters vanish, others appear instead. 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, emphasizing alternatively puppet play, mime and dance, resulting in a general balance of all means of expression.

As long as she puts on a play, Ilka never considers it to be perfect: She is part of them and they are part of her.

King Frog 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 *King Frog*, the first one with Alexandre Haslé, the second one with Mò Bunte.

In 2005, Ilka put it back on stage under the title *King Frog III* with the actress Simone Decloedt and Britta Arste, the accordion player Rudi Meier and the countertenor Christian Hilg, then later with the countertenor Philipp Kais.

Winter Journey :Production 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 Franz 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, cast as a harpy, assists him. The French text was recorded - and then played on stage - successively by the actresses Paule d'Héria and 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 dramatised 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 the funfair.

In 2005, with the help of the American artist Mary Sharp, Ilka included in her play actress Nathalie Pagnac who accompanied this long lyrical song and showed how this feelings of sorrow and perdition could be expressed by a body and a voice.

My Own Flesh and Blood 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 a novel by Aglaja Veteranyi, *Why the Child was Cooked in Polenta*, a desperate and wonderfully poetical narration by a little girl under the big top, which evokes alternately the mother and daughter relationship, grief of loss, solitude, frenzy, adversity, nomadism and exile...

Ilka worked on drama with Mary Sharp and entrusted to Nathalie Pagnac the interpretation of French text. The world premiere was in Charleville-Mézières 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 are now four versions available, in French, Spanish, English and German. The show has been already on tour in Spain, Italy, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Germany.

Design, interpretation and manipulation : Laurie Cannac

Laurie Cannac is a puppeteer. First trained in the art of drama, especially at the Théâtre-Ecole du Passage, directed by Nils Arestrup and Alexandre Del Perugia, she learned puppet theatre just playing in the street. In 1997 she founded her Company Graine de Vie (Live seed) and produced her first official show : *L'Homme de la Manche* (The Man of La Mancha), an highly personal adaptation of *Don Quixote*, directed by Alexandre Picard. Very quickly the show was discovered by the Théâtre d la Marionnette à Paris. The tale of Dulcinea, travelling from town to town and trying to bring back to life the remains of Don Quixote, became then a reality for Laurie, until today. Again in 2006 she decided to work on the play, with Romuald Collinet and Estelle Charlier, and it's still on tour. Touring gives her networking and learning opportunities. She has worked as a puppeteer in companies such as Käfig, the Pudding Théâtre, the Chercheurs d'air, La Pendue... From puppets on a city scale to miniature string marionettes, from directing manipulation for international Hip Hop dancers, to founding a street theatre radio during Ideklic Festival, from problems with glue during monsoon weather in Korea, to the discovery of possibilities of aleatory movement in manipulation, her curiosity has never had so much fun! In 2004, she created *Petits Rêves Faits Main* (little hand-made dreams), and found in the spirit of puppet manipulation an ode to destitution. For years she travelled with her suitcase and little puppet theatre, as far as Iran, where she performed in *hedjab* and coat de rigueur! Then, in 2007, during Momix, Ilka Schönbein discovered her, while acting in this play. A clown-puppeteer was born! First meeting for *Wolfed Down!*

Company Graine de Vie

Graine de Vie, a company of the region Franche-Comté was founded as a structure for Laurie Cannac's work. Since 1997, it stands for a popular and particular form of puppet theatre, favouring emotion and pluralistic interpretation.

The productions of the company, whether street shows or theatre productions, technically eclectic, are all attempts to forge a connexion between the puppet and actor's body, they are all exploring its animistic power, and combine successfully poetry and sense of humour:

Agur etTiziri, la lune et le clair de lune (Moon and Moonlight), 1997; *L'Homme de la Manche*, 1998; *Graine*, 2000; *Ramasse tes Miettes* (Collect Your Crumbs!), 2004.

Stage designer and manager : Serge Lucas

Serge Lucas, trained in an impressive range of subjects and techniques. He works today chiefly as a stage designer. Quite eclectic, he created monumental sculptures, plastic installations, stage sets for the Festspielhaus of Bregens (Austria), in collaboration with Daniel Chotard. His first puppet show, produced with Mungo Company, won an award immediately in Le Grand Bornand Festival. A talented photographer, he also produced fascinating slide shows and video projections, that cross several genres.

Clown work : Céline Chatelain

Céline Chatelain, trained and graduated in Besançon university (theatre studies). She is an actress and a clown. Directed by Vincent Rouche, she created *Embarquez-les* (Pull Them In!), an international success from 1992 to 1999. She also turned her hand to the interpretation of contemporary texts, with Jean-Louis Wuillermoz and Les Spectacles de l'Atlantique, among others. For 10 years, she kept developing her inner clown, through teaching (she's a trainer for school children, amateur and professional actors), and through productions in various companies, most notably in Finland as the Unga Theatre in Helsinki, directed by Dan Söderholm. At the moment, she is in *Elu* (Elected) with the Théâtre Group, (street theatre) and works on tour in Anika Company's *Tous les mots du monde* (All the words of the world), a clownish double-act about books and the literary world, directed by Murielle Henry.

Nathalie Pagnac worked as an amateur actress for many years in her youth. At the age of 29, she got through the barrier and turned professional. A compulsive worker as many autodidacts are, she entered in 1997 the company Théâtre du Pavé of Toulouse. She stayed there until 2000 and was in every production by Paul Berger and Eric Sanjou - who were equally attracted by classical and contemporary theatre : *Matricule/Phèdre*, adapted from Racine, *Georges Dandin* by Molière, *Quai ouest*, by Koltès, *La vie est un songe* (Life is a Dream) by Calderon, *Cadmos ou les Métamorphoses d'Oedipe*, adapted from Sophocles, *L'Augmentation*, by Perec, *Fool for love*, by Shepard.

Between 2000 and 2002 she follows Eric Sanjou and his Arène Théâtre: *Cabaret Minute*, a collective creation, *Les Rois* (Kings) by Cortazar, *Soie* (Silk) by Barrico. In 2001, together with nine actors and technicians, she bought a big top and they founded a company, the Théâtre Itinérant de la Cabane. She went on tour with the company (*Du Vent dans les Branches de Sassafras* by Obaldia, *Les Combustibles* by Amélie Nothomb), took an active part in children's workshops, reading sessions, etc. Between 2003 and 2004 she worked as well with other directors : *Histoires minimales* by Javier Tomeo, *Le Cardinal* by Eduardo Pavlovsky, *Je me tiens devant toi nue* by Joyce Carol Oates. In November 2004, as she was playing *Histoires minimales* in Toulouse during Marionnettissimo Festival, she met Ilka Schönbein, who, at that time was looking for an actress for *Winter Journey*. Then started an intense artistic adventure. Ilka taught her how to work without respite on every single word, single movement. She became the French voice, the angelic and diabolical body of *Winter Journey*. Then started the tours in a trailer, a life on the road, and the tireless and fascinating redrafting of the play. In August 2006 Ilka offered her to be in *My Own Flesh and Blood*, created in Charleville-Mézières and performed at the Grand Parquet. While Ilka was watching her, mixing strictness and sense of humour, Nathalie endeavoured to manipulate her body and voice like puppets. Later, the play developed a lot and a third character joined the others. *My Own Flesh and Blood* went on tour in France, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, Germany (Bochum, Mainz, Magdeburg) and Holland (Dordrecht) and played in French, German, English, Spanish versions...

The Company Graine de Vie

History and values of the company

The Company Graine de Vie (The Seed of Life) was created in 1997, when puppeteer Laurie CANNAC decided to start a personal exploration in the art of puppetry.

At first, the company geared itself towards handmade puppet theatre, intended for street performances. The point was to create quality shows that met a wide range of audiences and places. The company has always wished to keep in line with the historical vocation of puppet theatre as popular theatre, expressing both direct feelings, through its presentation, and spiritual depth.

As far as form is concerned, the Company Graine de Vie never assumed any special strategy or singled out any specific technique of puppet theatre. The shows we imagined have always used the most appropriate technique for the dramatic intention. With each production, we enriched our dramatic vocabulary, discovering skills we could use later to create new stage languages.

In 2005 our artistic team became all the richer for the help of a desk of volunteers from the cultural and artistic background: François Rabbe, (CPFC, Opéra-Théâtre of Besançon), Anne Baroni (Les Chercheurs d'Air), Claire Moutarde (Festival Why Note, Radio France). Thanks to their involvement, the Company took on a new lease of life, a new shape, to the carrying out of its artistic projects.

Main productions

L'HOMME DE LA MANCHE - 1997- (The man of La Mancha) - *harness puppets* - from *Don Quixote* by Cervantes. Directed by Alexandre Picard, worked again in 2004 with the help of R. Colinet and E. Charlier. Young

Puppet Festival in Ljubliana, Slovenia, 1998 - Théâtre de la Marionnette de Paris, as part of "Scènes insolites", 1999 - Festival International de Marionnette de Mirepoix, 2000 - Festival mon Mouton est un Lion, 2001 - Festival Rencontres Jeune Création, 2005 - Festival de Marionnette de Grenoble, 2006, 2007.

GRAINE - 2000 - (Seed) - *Table puppets* - For children. Directed by Laurie Cannac. Created as part of Rencontres Jeune Creation, Besançon.

RAMASSE TES MIETTES - 2003 - (Collect your crumbs) - *all techniques of puppet* - Concept and direction: Ghislain Montiel. Festival de la Marionnette, Charleville-Mézières 2003 - Part of Théâtre de la Marionnette à Paris, as a research work.

PETITS RÊVES FAITS MAIN - 2004 - (Little handmade Dreams) - *Bare hand puppets* - for a general audience and every place. Direction: Laurie Cannac. Festival Mobarak, Iran, 2004 - Rencontres Jeune Creation, 2004 - Théâtre de l'Espace, Besançon 2005 - Festival de Marionnette de Grenoble 2005 - Festival du Gros Bonhomme, 2005, 2006 - Festival "Fameux Voisins", Arche de Bethoncourt, 2006 - Saison Culturelle du Doubs, 2006 - Momix, 2006

PRESS

L'Ardennais (16 March 2009)

ILKA SCHÖNBEIN- ALWAYS READY TO "WOLF DOWN"

Did you know fairy tales could be quite horrible if you get down to the details?... You could even meet wild beasts on the way, with long sharp fangs.

Yes, of course, you were aware of it... The Brothers Grimm are experts on the topic. Gothic! It's their version of Red Riding Hood that two puppeteers have drawn on, in order to create "*Wolfed Down!*", a wild tale of initiation which was created in its final form just two days ago in the dark and secret atmosphere of the Théâtre de la Marionnette.

One of them is on stage: Laurie Cannac. The other one off-stage, in the wings, pulling the strings: Ilka Schönbein.

The two women came across each other in 2007, a kind of necessary meeting which must happen: As says Laurie Cannac, one of them brought to the project the energy and naivety of the Riding Hood, while the other, as a grandmother, had decades of experience.

The first one is a young puppeteer, a little bit clownish, from Besançon. She used to live for several years in Charleville but never entered the ESNAM (International Puppet School).

The second one is a great German puppeteer whose productions, often deeply moving, are well known, along with skill in illusionary art, using masks and her expressionist aesthetic. We could mention *King Frog*, *Metamorphoses*, *Winter Journey*, *My Own Flesh and Blood*... A group of kids from the Centre Dhôtel and very few adults were lucky enough to be at a final rehearsal, just before the production of the show, at the Grand Parquet - which is co-producer with Laurie Cannac's company Graine de Vie.

Lucky them, to be admitted in the laboratory of the great alchemist Ilka Schönbein!

When lights came back on, the children (all over 8 years old) asked questions about the links between the various characters successively embodied by the very physical Laurie Cannac.

If the logical link between the scenes escaped them sometimes, they were really enthralled by the visions created by this politically incorrect tale, and they reacted and laughed more than ever. *Wolfed Down!* is, above all, about infringement and breaking of taboos : The spaghetti and ketchup scene is a pure piece of anthology : What you mustn't do when you're a child! Next July the show will be in the programme of the festival Marionnettes en Jardin in Charleville-Mézière

PatrickFlaschgo

La Terrasse (April 2009)

A CRITICAL PATCH

Ilka Schönbein transforms the Red Riding Hood's initiatory journey into a remarkably moving adventure made of flesh and blood, at the limit of the unconscious. Laurie Cannac interprets the tale.

Red Riding Hood, poppy red, little house made of red flesh and blood, dream about a vast forest to cross... A little girl, looking like a clown, snug in the quilt of her white bed, then determined to go out. A wolf as an absolute threat, a sexual predator. When Ilka Schönbein re-interprets a tale by the Brothers Grimm, she ventures out deep into the instable territories between conscious and unconscious, and gives rise to images which are emotionally so powerful that both adults and children (from 8 years old) are enthralled. For this show, it's not Ilka Schönbein who is on stage, But Laurie Cannac, of the Company Graine de Vie, who met her in 2007. Mask, puppet of the Riding Hood, body and voices make a living and gripping drama, the evoking power of which tells alarms and wishes of the child, along a dangerous initiatory journey. Thanks to an extraordinary skill for shortcut and diversion, to a devastating sense of humour, to remarkably present masks and to an inventive and almost expressionist treatment of the body in space, the journey of the little girl becomes here an original and intense experience, even if the character of the Riding Hood is one of the most famous of the tradition, with so many versions in folk and oral tradition as well as in literature.

The plot - which keeps here the character of the Hunter - is subtly brought up to today life, and the figure of the domineering mother, tailing her daughter by telephone, ordering her to "go back quickly on the rails" not to come to a bad end like her grandmother, that "old degenerate crazy woman", is highly comic. The vegetables meal she recommends is transformed into an orgiastic dish of spaghetti with ketchup, a very funny and quite safe infringement for the child! For it's definitely the wish of the child for infringement, for breaking, which is at work in this show, the wish to cross the limit between childhood and adolescence, a step both physical and mental. The point is to discover an unknown outside world: a deafening urban din or the silent of a forest, as you like it... We can recognize in this show the recurrent themes of Ilka Schönbein, the mother/daughter relationship, as well as the exceptional adventure of birth, the "funny celebration out of the womb" just before the fearsome and tremendous discovery of the world. A work of art, properly, which everybody can luckily enter with his imagination. Just go and see it!

Agnès Santi

KSAMKA

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