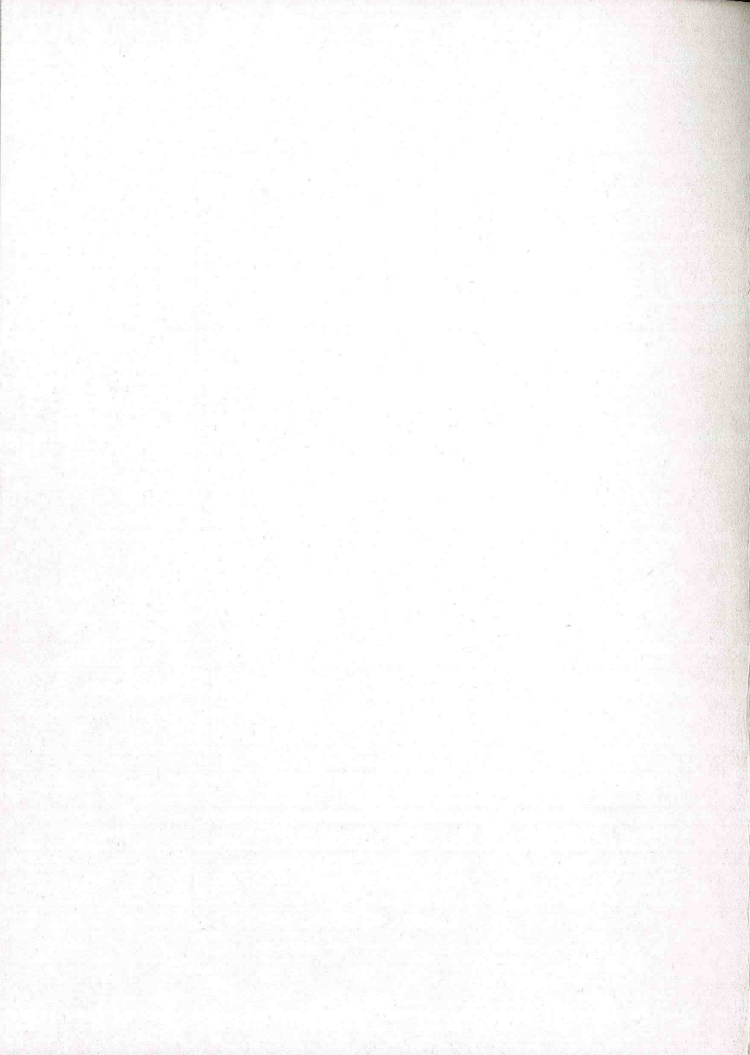


CDDBE
BEAST
IN
THE
JUNGLE







THE BEAST IN THE JUNGLE

The french adaptation by.....MARGUERITE DURAS
of a play by.....JAMES LORD
based on the novel by.....HENRY JAMES

Performed by.....JUTTA JOHANNA WEISS & JEAN-DAMIEN BARBIN
Directed by.....ÉRIC VIGNER

Produced by the CDDB – THÉÂTRE DE LORIENT,
France 2001

THE ARTISTIC TEAM

Direction and set design.....ÉRIC VIGNER
Artistic collaboration.....BRUNO GRAZIANI
Dramatist.....SABINE QUIRICONI
Costumes.....PAUL QUENSON
Lighting.....CHRISTOPHE DELARUE
Sound.....XAVIER JACQUOT
Make-up.....SOIZIC SIDOT

Translation.....JUTTA JOHANNA WEISS & MIKE SENS
Surtitles.....MEDIA WRITERS & TRANSLATORS

With the support of AFAA/Ministry of Foreign Affairs, France.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE BEAST IN THE JUNGLE

JOHN MARCHER AND CATHERINE BERTRAM meet at a reception in Weatherend Castle, not for the first time. The hidden memory of a former encounter will be stirred up by the phantoms of a portrait gallery, where John is contemplating Van Dyck's painting of the 'Fourth Marquis'. The heroes' portrait will awaken in him what Catherine never forgot, the mysterious secret John once confided to her. John and Catherine had met before, a long time ago, in Italy, ten years, precisely. Their reunion at Weatherend Castle will be the first meeting of a long series throughout their lives, bound together by the secret destiny John Marcher feels unable to escape from and which he names 'the beast in the jungle'.

A play of a surprising process to which three famous authors contribute.

ONE PLAY, THREE AUTHORS

In 1903, HENRY JAMES revisits the greek myth of 'Narcissus and Echo' in the form of a novel entitled 'The Beast In The Jungle'. Just like the figures in mythology, John Marcher, his main character, is fascinated by his own image, May Bertram, transformed by the indifference of the being she loves.

In the beginning of the sixties, JAMES LORD, american art chronicler, living in Paris, notably famous for his portrait of Alberto Giacometti, adapts the novel into a stage play. Respecting the narrative structure of the novel, he introduces a new element, painting, by means of the portrait of the 'Fourth Marquis' by Van Dyck. The new dimension proposes a pictorial expression in order to emphasize the mirror effect of John Marcher's contemplation.

In 1961 and 1962, MARGUERITE DURAS signs her first French adaptation of the play in collaboration with James Lord. Unsatisfied, she proposes a second and final adaptation in 1981, elaborated with James Lord and Alfredo Arias - who directs the play in 1982 with Delphine Seyrig and Sami Frey in the parts of Catherine and John - introducing this time major changes. She concentrates on the two main characters, John Marcher and Catherine Bertram, by cutting the role of the governess and placing the entire play in 'Weatherend Castle'. She adds words, phrases, repetitions, centering on the themes dear to the famous writer she is: love, memory, remembrances, secrets, the unsayable... This final version is published in 1982, in Marguerite Duras' theater collection in 'Tome III', by Gallimard. Éric Vigner opens the drawer after twenty years of the plays' absence from the stage.

From the novel of James to the adaptations of Lord and Duras nearly one century passes. Thus 'The Beast In The Jungle' is the fruit of three big signatures in the history of literature, of two literary genres - a novel and a play - and of two languages - American and French.

BACKWARDS AND FORWARDS BETWEEN REALITY AND ILLUSION ERIC VIGNER, AND HOW HIS THEATER MEETS LIFE

IT IS A MATTER OF TIME, memory, secret... Marguerite Duras' latest version of 'The Beast In The Jungle', serves as a blank canvas on which the French director and set designer Éric Vigner unfolds his abundant universe, built on successive layers which come to light one by one. Trained in the visual arts, Éric Vigner is 'writing' in space with the materials of text, language, sound and light.

"The essential engine of my work isn't an ideological or analytical one, it is a poetical one, which appeals to the inexplicable and which lives on 'emotion'. Empty spaces, sterile signs, a social-political, aesthetically poor theater is of no interest to me. I try to invent something which would be the Baroque of the 21st century."

Since his renowned staging of Marguerite Duras' book 'La Pluie d'été' in 1994, which establishes a strong friendship between Éric Vigner and Marguerite Duras during the last years of her life, he doesn't cease exploring space in relation with the representation of theatrical image.

"I am working on the surpassing of images in theater, on creating open works for each spectator to imagine his own story."

After 'La Pluie d'été', nearly ten years pass before Éric Vigner dives again into Marguerite Duras' universe, creating 'The Beast In The Jungle' in 2001. It represents the beginning of a diptych on Duras.

In 2002 he stages one of her masterworks, 'Savannah Bay', at the Comédie-Française, Salle Richelieu, and thus marks the posthumous entrance of Marguerite Duras into the repertory of the Comédie-Française. Catherine Samie, dean of the troupe, recently on tour in the United States with 'The Last Letter', and Catherine Hiegel are interpreting the play.

For 'The Beast In The Jungle' Éric Vigner chooses two actors who have been working with him over the years, Jutta Johanna Weiss and Jean-Damien Barbin. Inspired by the multitude of influences leading up to Marguerite Duras' last adaptation in 'six tableaux', Éric Vigner proposes an insight into his museum of imagination, which takes its roots in the beginning of the 13th century (quattrocento) – the invention of Euclidian perspective – to contemporary art, a series of moving frames. The phantoms of James, Lord and Duras appear through a constant vacillation between flat image and depth of field. A Fragonard landscape, figuring on a bamboo curtain, veils the scene. The eye is being challenged to orient itself and to capture new dimensions in the theater's box of illusion. At a distance, the portraits by Van Dyck become the witnesses of 'Weatherend Castle', a timeless place where John Marcher and Catherine Bertram meet. Catherine and John could belong to the novels of the 19th century, to an opera, to 'Alice In Wonderland', to the characters in the films of The Beatles or simply represent a couple of our time.

Éric Vigner tries to open up all possible interpretations, between reality and illusion, not giving any answers. He invites the audience to look through and transgress the images, in order to listen to their own intimacy.

Catherine:

– "[...] I think the appearance of things is always a mask, but in the long run the masking of things meets reality, becomes their own truth and only this hide-and-seek can really endure living."

MARGUERITE DURAS

THE ACTORS

> JUTTA JOHANNA WEISS was born in Vienna (Austria) in 1969. After having worked under the direction of Otomar Kréjca in the 'Theater an der Josefstadt' in Vienna, she moves to New York City in 1988 to pursue her studies as an actress in English at the 'Neighbourhood Playhouse' with Sanford Meisner, and later with Robert Lewis in his masterclass. Being trilingual, she is invited to continue working in French with Andrei Serban in Avignon in 1994 and with Anatoli Vassiliev in Moscow in 1995. She plays Giraudoux, Ibsen, Lorca, contemporary american and austrian playwrights. In 1998, she joins the CDDB - Théâtre de Lorient to play the title role in 'Marion de Lorme' by Victor Hugo, under the direction of Éric Vigner with whom she continues to work on 'Rhinocéros' by Eugène Ionesco in 2000, 'La Bête dans la jungle' (The Beast In The Jungle) in 2001 and '...Où boivent les vaches.' by Roland Dubillard in 2003.

> JEAN-DAMIEN BARBIN was born in Nantes (France) in 1964. He studies at the Conservatory of Nantes, then at the ENSATT (Superior National School of the Arts and Technics of Theater) and at the Superior Conservatory of Dramatic Art in Paris (with Michel Bouquet and Daniel Mesguich). Since then, he has performed in classical plays (Shakespeare, Racine, Marivaux, Hugo, Flaubert, Dostoïevski, Shaw, Claudel...) as well as in contemporary plays (Eugène Ionesco, Edward Bond, Nathalie Sarraute, Jon Posse, Lars Noren...). His career is marked by an intensive collaboration with directors such as Michel Bouquet, Daniel Mesguich, Alain Milianti, Olivier Py, Jacques Lassalle..., and with Éric Vigner for 'Rhinocéros' in 2000, 'La Bête dans la jungle' (The Beast In The Jungle) in 2001 and '...Où boivent les vaches.' in 2003. He also worked for film and television with Jean-Paul Rappeneau and Francis Girod and, in 2000, directed for the first time a text by Stig Dagerman 'Notre besoin de consolation est impossible à rassasier' at the CDDB - Théâtre de Lorient.

THE DIRECTOR

> ÉRIC VIGNER was born in Rennes (France). Graduated in the visual arts, he then pursues his studies as an actor at the Conservatory of Rennes, at the ENSATT (Superior National School of the Arts and Technics of Theater) and finally at the Superior Conservatory of Dramatic Art in Paris. He performs under the direction of Jean-Pierre Miquel (Comédie-Française) and Brigitte Jaques among others, and shares the adventure of 'Elvire Jouvett 40' together with Philippe Clévenot and Maria De Medeiros, with whom he also works on screen. In 1990 he founds his own compagny SUZANNE M. and stages in 1991 'La Maison d'os' by Roland Dubillard. The play is invited to be presented at the prestigious 'Autumn Festival of Paris' the same year, and Peter Brook invites him to join a research work on directorship.

Ever since Éric Vigner is considered the most inventive director of his generation. In 1993/94 he stages 'La Pluie d'été' by Marguerite Duras. This first work based on her writing will be the foundation of a deep friendship with the author. In 1994 he becomes 'lauréat' for the 'Villa Médicis Hors Les Murs'. Parallel to his work on contemporary playwrights such as Audureau, Motton, Rebotier, Ionesco,... He takes a special interest in the classical French theater and will stage its fundamental authors: Corneille, Molière and Racine.

In 1995, Éric Vigner is nominated to the direction of the Dramatic Center of Brittany by the Ministry of Culture. In 1996, Éric Vigner's 'L'Illusion comique' by Corneille will be nominated at the Molière French Theater Awards. In 1998, he obtains the distinction of 'Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres'. At the Comédie-Française, Éric Vigner directs Racine's 'Bajazet' in 1995, Molière's 'L'École des femmes' in 1999, and Duras' 'Savannah Bay' in 2002. He is invited to direct the baroque operas 'La Didone' (Opera House, Lausanne) in 2000, 'L'Empio Punito' (Bach-Festival, Germany) in 2003. For 2004, he prepares the opera 'Antigona' (Montpellier Opera House and the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris) and Molière's 'Le Bourgeois gentilhomme' (National Theater of Seoul, Korea).

THE CDDB: ERIC VIGNER'S CENTER OF CREATION

> **THE CDDB**, unique Dramatic Center of Brittany, achieved National status in 2002 for his important mission in the contemporary theater creation in France. The Center allows Éric Vigner to develop his own work, to invite young artists such as Arthur Nauzyciel, Éric Ruf, Daniel Jeanneteau... for their first creations, with a focus on contemporary authors such as Remy De Vos, Olivier Cadiot... and to present artistically challenging projects. Over the years artists, such as Peter Brook, Alfredo Arias, Claude Régy, Jérôme Deschamps... will present a part of their work here.

The CDDB becomes the cradle of a multitude of productions and international coproductions. Graphic designers M/M (Paris), known for their work with fashion designers such as Yohji Yamamoto or Calvin Klein, contemporary artists like Pierre Huyghe and Philippe Parreno, and collaboration with popstars such as Björk and more recently Madonna, have also created a unique visual identity through a series of theater posters for the CDDB since its creation in 1996.

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