

PRODUCTION DOSSIER

La Boutique Obscure presents

HUNTER



Written, conceived and directed by **Marc Lainé**
Music **Gabriel Legeleux (aka Superpoze)**

Theatre – Live Music – Live Images

World premiere November 14, 2017
Running time: 1 hr 30 mn – For audiences 15 years and older

Touring : Clémence Huckel, +33 (0)1 43 38 23 71 / production@lesindependances.com
<http://lesindependances.com/>



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THE PIECE

Hunter is about an everyday couple attacked by a creature which is half-woman half-animal; it is unclear whether this creature is real or merely a fantasy projected by the two characters.

Alternately attracted and repulsed, the couple's life is turned upside down by the actions of this mysterious creature: fantastic, gory, unpredictable.

Continuing along the lines of his earlier work *Vanishing Point*, overlaying elements of theatre, live music and film in a road-movie inspired piece, Marc Lainé takes on the horror film genre with *Hunter*.

Using a number of special FX developed for the genre, but openly shown / performed for us as part of a live shooting set-up and situation, Marc Lainé cleverly reveals the symbolic dimension of metamorphosis. Deliberately eschewing realism, *Hunter* channels a radical pop contemporary story, focusing on the destruction and sometimes monstrous choices inspired by physical desire. After Bertrand Belin and Moriarty, it is now Gabriel Legeleux, aka Superpoze, who is asked to enter the intriguing musical universe of Marc Lainé.

CAST

Text, direction and set design **Marc Lainé**
Original music **Gabriel Legeleux** (aka Superpoze)

Father	Geoffrey Carey
Claire	Bénédicte Cerutti
Irina	Marie-Sophie Ferdane
Tommy	Gabriel Legeleux
David	David Migeot

Artistic collaboration **Tünde Deak**
Collaboration on set design **Stephan Zimmerli**
Lighting and production direction **Kevin Briard**
Video **Baptiste Klein / Yann Philippe** (alternating)
Sound **Morgan Conan-Guez**
Stage management **Farid Laroussi/ Sébastien Jouen** (alternating)
Creation of makeup and prostheses **Cécile Kretschmar**
Live make up **Noï Karuna**
Costumes **Marie-Cécile Viault**
Administration, Production **Les Indépendances - Colin Pitrat and Clémence Huckel**
Touring (France) **Les Indépendances - Florence Bourgeon**
Set construction **Ateliers de la Comédie de Saint-Etienne**
With photographs from the series *Porosités de passage* by Vincent Fillon
Thanks to Aurélie Lemaigen, Benoît Simon, Emilie Lechevalier, as well as the staff of Astérios and Grand Music Management.
In memory of Jacques Mollon.

PRODUCTION

La Boutique Obscure

Coproduction and residencies: Centre Dramatique National de Normandie-Rouen / Chaillot -Théâtre National de la Danse / Scène nationale 61 / Les Subsistances 15/17 / Comédie de Saint-Etienne - Centre dramatique national / La Ferme du Buisson, Scène nationale de Marne-La-Vallée / Maison des Arts de Créteil
With support from the French Ministry of Culture – DRAC Normandie, Région Normandie, the General Council of Orne, the Fonds SACD Théâtre, from SPEDIDAM and with the participation of DICRÉAM (CNC).

The text of the piece has been published in French by Editions Actes Sud.

Supertitles in English are available for this piece ; please consult us.



SACD

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LES DROITS DES ARTISTES-INTERPRETES



L'ORNE
Conseil Général

RÉGION NORMANDIE



CREATOR'S NOTE

A unique universe filled with heterogenous references

As a writer, director and plastician, I conceive pieces which intercut theatre, film and live music, transdisciplinarily. I hope to create a unique universe, both plastic and literary.

But this transdisciplinary practice I advocate is above all directed toward improving the story and the piece.

As a writer, I am convinced that in any act of theatrical creation there is an archaic, primal necessity to tell a story.

The stories I tell are always in the genres usually covered in film and literature. My previous work *Vanishing Point* was inspired by road movies, revisiting the codes of the genre onstage in a theatre. I will continue this approach by exploring the horror film genre in its widest sense, ranging from terror to gore. In *Hunter*, I explore the theme of metamorphosis and in particular lycanthropes or werewolves.

But the most important thing is to re-examine the genre in terms of theatrical representation, shaping an open, original form which layers story, register and multiple references.

Fiction and reality

In *Hunter* we are introduced to a reclusive couple in a private house, attacked by a monstrous creature – however we don't know if it is real or a fantasy projection by the other characters.

As in most of my other works, I am seeking in *Hunter* the blurring of the limits between fiction, dreams and reality, to the point where they may be completely confused in the last section.

The character of Irina, who bursts into Claire and David's home at the beginning of the story, begins by haunting the couple in certain dream sequences, then moves into attacking them inside their house, bringing their nightmares to life.

This mysterious character, half-woman half-animal, comes from the bestiary of gothic literature and horror film. One might say it is in the incarnation of desire in its rawest form, desire represented in its most monstrous form. *Hunter* also deals frankly with the idea of amorous cannibalism and the fantasy of devouring.

But Irina is first and foremost a fantasy creature, a dream figure imagined by the other characters, by her father who has told her since childhood that she is a monster and that she would transform into a wild beast the minute she feels sexual desire. We learn how this tale drummed into Irina by her father will have terrifying consequences on her psyche and then on her reality.

Until the end the spectator will wonder about the reality of this metamorphosis, about the existence of this monster, and may ask him- or herself if the story told is not instead a new dream being dreamed by one of the characters. This interrogation will be resolved in the final scene of the piece.

The logic of dreams

To write *Hunter*, I followed two forms of construction.

First was the horror film, the genre, which allowed me to build a reference canvas – the first part of the piece explains how the fantasy figure enters the house of this couple. The second part shows us the house affected by the dream-like apparitions of this character. And finally, the last part of the piece shows us the house being attacked by the monstrous creature. In theory the construction of *Hunter* follows the rules of the genre.

But my overriding thought was to let myself be guided by “dream logic,” placing the spectator in a position of doubt and permanent confusion. The ordering of my scenes, which is obviously influenced by the process of film editing, borrows from the dream structure its power of association and the blurred line between dream and reality to stymie any effort to definitely interpret the material.

In the same vein, I chose to alternate fantasy and burlesque moments, or scenes with nervous, stylized dialogue with more enigmatic, literary monologues ...

This ambiguity in interpretation forces the spectator to be more active, aware of the fictional fabric he or she is part of. My principal objective as a writer and director is that the spectator be in charge of putting together the story fragments which I offer him or her – creating his or her own story.

A variety of interpretations

My set design and my direction also facilitate this intent of multiplying the possible interpretations, notably with the use of live filmed images:

When cinema took on the figure of the werewolf, it focused on the spectacular rather than the signifier, fascination over reflection. It was about grabbing the spectator’s attention as opposed to troubling him or her, in the most primal sense – the spectator is asked to look at and believe in the transformation of a character into an animal instead of questioning the symbolic nature and the significance of this transformation. What is essential is to make the metamorphosis as realistic as possible, the special FX should be nearly invisible. They take place out of frame or between takes, or in post-production.

However, in *Hunter*, the metamorphosis takes place onstage in a DIY “home-made” fashion, applying makeup or prosthetics to the actress, on a film set in which live scenes are projected onto a giant screen ... The different images which originate in horror films (apparitions, metamorphoses, mutilations, etc.) are performed in full view of the audience. The spectator is free to choose what he or she looks at: the fabrication of an image onstage or its synthesized image projected on the screen. This choice, in the space between theatre and film engendered by the processes of thought and analysis, offer a supplementary complexity to the story which is being told.

By choosing to not use tricks or effects, I affirm the revelation – not without a certain humor, of the symbolic, fantastic dimension of this metamorphosis, and opening up even further possible interpretations ...

Deliberately eschewing realism, *Hunter* is a contemporary tale, radically pop, drawing from its cinematographic references and focusing on desire, in its most destructive and monstrous manifestations.

Marc Lainé, September 2017

THE BEGINNING

David and Claire live in a small house. One evening, the young couple discovers a woman hiding in their garden. She is clearly lost and scared, and seems oddly aggressive. When David tries to bring her into the house, she bites him on the hand. Suddenly a man shows up, saying he is the young woman's father. She seems reassured when she sees him, and they leave together, offering no explanation.

However, this mysterious young woman has thrown a serious wrench into the life of the young couple. David is convinced she is being held against her will by the man claiming to be her father, and he begins to obsess about her. And Claire begins having nightmares about this woman, in which she is skulking around the house. The two of them begin fighting constantly, becoming more and more violent; the roughness spills over into their sex life as well.

David's obsession is now driving him toward madness. He is now having terrifying visions of the young woman calling for help.

Little by little the house is being literally haunted by the woman.

At the same time, in a kind of "freak show" performed in the cave where she is being held, the young woman tells us the story of her life: to protect her from herself, her father has held her since her adolescence, claiming that she has a mysterious disease which makes her transform into a wild animal the minute she feels sexual desire for a man.

Elsewhere in the house, her young brother Tommy lives like a hermit in his room. All he does is compose music – which is the only thing which calms the lycanthropic woman and helps her channel her cannibalistic urges into a fantastic kind of singing.



EXCERPT

— prologue —

Deep in these dark woods
Your eye is like a wick
Let me light it
And we will dance in the inferno

By hunting my own shadow
I have shot all my arrows
But now I am the prey
I am waiting for you, trembling.

Invisible animal
Your breath is a caress
Which makes me shake with fear
Alone in the blooming clearing

Feeling your terrible kisses
Now there is no hurry
I let myself be devoured
Waiting for death and the morning dew

— 1. now it is really dark out —

In the shadows. We hear Irina's voice.

IRINA. Papa turned off the light and said: "Now it is really dark out. Now I can tell you the story." I opened my eyes wide, the widest I could, but it was still so dark. The walls of my room had disappeared. The roof too, in fact the whole house had disappeared. I was scared so I closed my eyes again. I told myself I would think of a memory full of light, but it didn't work. Inside my head everything was dark, as dark as my room. I couldn't remember anything. Papa said: "This is a story which is hard to believe, so I am going to tell it to you again and again until you believe it. I will tell you the story as many times as it takes until you believe it" I wanted to put my fingers in my ears, but Papa grabbed my hands and held them tight. And then he began telling me the story, for the first time. And after that, he never stopped...

— 2. a beast hunted in a suburban neighborhood —

A suburban neighborhood, at night. Irina is running in the middle of a deserted street. Rows of identical houses line each side of the street. Irina is wearing only a nightgown, her hair is very long and dirty. Her bare feet twist on the asphalt. She keeps glancing behind her, terrified, as if she is being pursued by an invisible aggressor. Far off, we can hear a dog barking furiously.

— 3. intrusion —

Night, in the living room of a house. Claire is lying on the couch reading a book. David is sitting at a table working on his laptop computer. Outside a dog is barking.

DAVID. What's with the dog? He keeps barking.

CLAIRE (*not looking up from her book*). Yes. It's annoying.

DAVID. I don't know how you manage to read, it's impossible to concentrate.

CLAIRE. Put some music on...

DAVID. We should talk to the neighbor. He could lock that dog up at night.

CLAIRE. It's a watchdog, supposed to guard the house.

DAVID. Fine, I'll finish this tomorrow. (*He closes the laptop. He looks at Claire.*) Is that book any good?

CLAIRE. Uh... yes, not bad.

David gets up and goes to sit next to Claire.

DAVID. Looks interesting.

He kisses her on the neck.

CLAIRE. What are you doing?

DAVID. What do you think?

CLAIRE. David...

DAVID. What? Don't you feel like it?

Claire looks at him, puts down her book.

CLAIRE. Could you close the curtains, at least?

DAVID. Why?

He kisses her, she lets him do it. He begins undressing her. Behind the bay window which overlooks the garden, the silhouette of Irina appears, barely visible in the darkness. She presses her face against the window and watches them for a moment. Suddenly Claire sees her and cries out. Irina disappears.

CLAIRE. David!

DAVID. What?

CLAIRE. There! By the bay window!

DAVID. What?

CLAIRE. Someone was there.

DAVID. In the garden?

CLAIRE. Yes, a woman. Go look.

DAVID. You're sure?

CLAIRE. Go look, please.

David gets up and opens the bay window, peering into the garden in the darkness.

DAVID. There's no one there.

CLAIRE. I am telling you, there was a girl behind the window. She was watching us.

DAVID. Claire...

CLAIRE. David, I know what I saw!

DAVID. OK, OK. Don't get upset ... I'm going to look, wait for me here.

CLAIRE. No, I'm coming with you.

They leave the house and go deep into the shadows in the garden.



THE SET

The set opposes the domestic universe of the couple and the fantastical universe associated with the monster. The project is about showing how the fantasy universe gradually overruns the domestic one, blurring the lines between real and imaginary.

The interior of the house in which the couple lives is represented by an enclosed film set filmed live by four motorized cameras. The film that is shot is projected live on a screen hung above the set. The spectators have a direct, if fragmented and reframed view of the interior of the house through the different openings in the set, but they can also see all of it as projected on the screen.

Around the set in the raw stage space we developed the “animal space.” It looks a bit like a dressing room and the wings of a theatre, where we make in plain view the various manifestations of the monster in the filmed domestic universe, in the nightmares of the woman or the erotic visions of the man. These images are created with prostheses, costume elements and specialized makeup. The flat made of raw wood is an evocation of the cave where the woman/lycanthrope lives as a prisoner, from which she tells us her story.

Two aesthetics confront each other and then blur together in this space: an aesthetic of stylized, glacial realism in the domestic universe and another more cobbled together, home-made and detached for the fantasy universe.

THE MUSIC

In horror films, music is absolutely essential. Ever since Bernard Herrmann and his famous soundtrack for Alfred Hitchcock’s *Psycho*, it’s often because of the music that the suspense and the terror reach their peak.

For *Hunter*, I called on the electronic musician Gabriel Legeleux (aka Superpoze) to create and perform live the soundtrack of the film which is being shot in front of us.

I also want the character of the woman/lycanthrope to sing, it is partly with her singing she will attract the character of David.

The *Hunter* project came from the idea of hijacking the genre of horror films and the introduction of a form of musical, creating a change in wavelength which is both humorous and appreciable.

Gabriel Legeleux (aka Superpoze) will also perform the role of the beast’s brother in the fable and will compose the “freak show” song sung by the woman/lycanthrope, a new approach for this young musician who is part of the French electro musical scene.

In *Hunter*, the music will have two roles: it is both extradiegetic (exterior to the plotline of the piece) for the instrumental parts which are part of the soundtrack and intradiegetic (an integral part of the plot) for the “freak show” songs.

MARC LAINÉ

Writer, Director, Set designer

Marc Lainé started as a set designer in 2000. For the theatre he has created more than fifty set designs with, among others, Marcial Di Fonzo Bo, Richard Brunel, Arnaud Meunier, Pierre Maillet and Madeleine Louarn. He collaborated with Richard Brunel on *Albert Herring* at the Opéra-Comique, *The Elixir of Love* at the Opéra in Lille, *The Kaiser Von Atlantis* at the Lyon Opéra and with David Bobée on the creation of *The Rake's Progress* at the Théâtre de Caen.

Since 2008, he has been directing his own works.

With British author Mike Kenny, he created *La Nuit Electrique (Electric Darkness)*, nominated for the 2009 Molière awards and *Un Rêve Féroce (A Ferocious Dream)* which was performed in 2009 at the Théâtre du Rond-Point in Paris.

In 2010, he began a cycle of pieces on important figures in pop culture: *Norman Bates est-il?*, a Pirandellian variation on the cult figure from the film *Psycho*; *Break Your Leg!*, shown at the Théâtre National de Chaillot in 2012; *Just For One Day!* which offered a group of amateurs of all ages the chance to be self-created super heroes, and *Memories From The Missing Room*, created in 2012 and revived at the Théâtre de la Bastille, which was inspired by an album by the folk-rock group Moriarty; they played the soundtrack live onstage.

In 2014, Marc Lainé wrote and directed *Spleenorama*, a musical and fantasy theatre piece inspired by "Rock Mythology" at the CDDB, Théâtre de Lorient. The music was composed and performed by Bertrand Belin and won the 2014 award for original creation for a play from the Chambre syndicale de l'édition musicale (CSEM). The piece toured all over France and was performed at the Théâtre de la Bastille.

In 2015, he created *Vanishing Point* at the Théâtre National de Chaillot and then took the piece to the Espace Go in Montréal for a month of performances. The piece won the Prix de la Critique 2015 (in the category of Best creation of a piece in French).

In February 2016, he created at the Comédie de Saint-Etienne *Et tâchons d'épuiser la mort dans un baiser*, a musical piece based on the correspondence and an unfinished opera by Claude Debussy, produced by the International Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, where it was presented in June. That fall the work was revived for two months on tour by the Comédie Itinérante, a section of the Comédie de Valence.

The texts of *Vanishing Point*, *Spleenorama* and *Hunter* have all been published by Actes Sud.

Marc Lainé was an Associated Artist at the CDDB – Théâtre de Lorient between 2009 and 2015, and at the CDN de Normandie-Rouen from 2014 to 2016. His company La Boutique Obscure is in residency at the Scène Nationale 61. It receives support from the Région Normandie.

Current Projects

La Chambre désaccordée, a YA musical theatre piece/ conception, text and direction Marc Lainé
17 to 24th of October 2018, **Théâtre de la Ville**, Paris

To Build a Fire, adaptation of the short story by Jack London, premiere at the Studio of the **Comédie-Française**, September 2018