



Photo de répétition © N. C. – Le Birgit Ensemble

The Day to Come

Bientôt le jour

Julie Bertin

Le Birgit Ensemble

Estimated time : 2h15

Conception, writing and directing Julie Bertin / Le Birgit Ensemble

Dramaturgy Guillaume Clayssen and Lucas Samain

Direction assistant Jan Czul

Starring

Caroline Arrouas, Fareen Aslam, Heza Botto, Robin Causse, Morgane Nairaud, Loïc Riewer, Gaia Singer

Scenography James Brandily **assisted by** Céane Jelsch

Set manufacture Ateliers de construction de la Comédie de Caen - CDN

Lights Jérémie Papin **assisted by** Théo Le Menthéour

Sound design Lucas Lelièvre

Costumes Pauline Kieffer

Choreography Lucía García Pullés

Video advice Pierre Nouvel

Stage management Marco Benigno

Light desk Théo Le Menthéour

Sound control Lucas Lelièvre

Traductions Nicole Aistleiner, Fareen Aslam, Heza Botto, Emanuela Pace, Adelaïde Pralon, Heinke Sabine Wagner, Flavia Turci

Administration, production Manon Cardineau, Iris Cottu, Colin Pitrat – Les Indépendances

Booking Florence Bourgeon – Les Indépendances

Production Le Birgit Ensemble

Coproductions Théâtre Gérard Philipe – CDN de Saint-Denis, Théâtre La Passerelle – Scène nationale de Gap, Théâtre+Cinéma – Scène nationale de Narbonne, Le Bateau Feu - Scène nationale de Dunkerque, Le Grand R - Scène nationale La Roche-sur-Yon, MAC - Maison des Arts de Créteil Scène nationale, Comédie de Caen - CDN de Normandie

Residencies Théâtre Gérard Philipe – CDN de Saint-Denis, Théâtre+Cinéma – Scène nationale de Narbonne, Théâtre La Passerelle – Scène nationale de Gap, Le Moulin du Roc – Scène nationale de Niort, MAC - Maison des Arts de Créteil Scène nationale

With the support of Direction Générale de la Création Artistique – DRAC Ile-de-France, La Chartreuse de Villeneuve lez Avignon – Centre national des écritures du spectacle, and SPEDIDAM.

The company Le Birgit Ensemble is subsidised by the Direction Régionale des Affaires Culturelles d'Ile-de-France and is supported by the Conseil départemental du Val-de-Marne.

Julie Bertin and Jade Herbulot are associated artists to the Théâtre Gérard Philipe – Centre Dramatique National de Saint-Denis, and La Passerelle – Scène nationale de Gap.

Soutenu
par



Tour 2026-2027

France

- Septembre 30 to 11, 2026 : Creation / Théâtre Gérard Philipe – CDN de Saint-Denis (93)
- Octobre 15, to 17, 2026 : MAC, Créteil (94)
- Novembre 18 and 19, 2026 : Le Grand R, La Roche-sur-Yon
- January 8, 2027 : La Passerelle - scène nationale de Gap
- January 12, 2027 : ZEF - scène nationale de Marseille
- January 15, 2027 : Théâtre+Cinéma - scène nationale de Narbonne
- January 25 and 26, 2027 : Le Bateau Feu - scène nationale de Dunkerque

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The Day to Come

Bientôt le jour

Summary

What drives a person to change their life, to take a different path, from one moment to the next? With this question in mind, Julie Bertin set out to meet people who had suddenly broken free from a daily life they believed to be unchangeable. Based on testimonies gathered in France and abroad (Italy, Spain, the United States, Austria, India, and Cameroon), the play *The Day to Come* weaves together seven stories from seven countries, told in seven different languages. Each story evokes before our eyes the memory of this intimate upheaval and the political, social, or historical landscape that accompanies it. By creating a dialogue between reality and fiction, the play does more than simply tell stories; it brings to life moments of rupture: when our bodies slip beyond our control and a surge of freedom offers us a glimpse of the possibility of another life.

Since its formation in 2014, the Birgit Ensemble's work has explored the interplay between our individual and collective memories, between the personal and the political.

Whilst the company has always rested on material rooted in reality, in recent years it has also been questioning how reality interacts with fiction, and how these two levels of reality can shed light on one another on a theatre stage.

The company's latest production, *Les Suppliques*, gave centre stage entirely to anonymous figures. Indeed, for the first time, we chose to enter the play through the medium of intimate speech. Today, I wish to explore this path further by taking individual testimonies as the starting point for my writing and unravelling this material in such a way as to trace the thread **from the intimate to the political**.



In front of stupefaction : imagining what is yet to come

Lately, reflecting on our world often comes with a sense of stupefaction. Whilst the ways to access information are multiplying and news reach us across the globe ever more quickly, our relationship with time is becoming increasingly intense. It seems difficult to feel otherwise than paralysed by the prospects before us. Since the horizon appears blocked, what is the point of looking up and imagining something elsewhere, or something after?

Yet, it happens to find the momentum to free ourselves from this state of torpor that feels entirely binding. Sometimes, this momentum leads us towards unknown territories and thus, towards a possible future. But then, where does *this uprising* takes root ? And where can we find the strength to hope for these new territories?

With this work, I aim to paint a portrait of an era by reflecting on what is yet to come, what could happen. In other words, asking myself where does hope lie. How can we think of a future that is not already sealed, finished, or predetermined? Imagination and fiction should be powerful antidotes to this, shouldn't they?

« Ne pourrait-on dire que le soulèvement nous “mène dans l’avenir” »

“Couldn't we say that the uprising is ‘leading us into the future’?”

Georges Didi-Huberman (dir.), « Par les désirs (Fragments sur ce qui nous soulève) », Éd. Gallimard et Jeu de Paume, 2016.

An intimate experience

An uprising is a **defining act** that marks the beginning of a new life. In this sense, what it brings about is irreversible and its consequences are sometimes painful. This act that can be violent, as it tears away from their former life. An uprising also denotes an **irrepressible act**: one breaks away from a situation that has become unbearable. They speak out, they take action, and their life is turned upside down.

Therefore, the aim here won't be to recount popular uprisings whose significance may be immediately political, but rather to give voice to the **intimate upheaval experienced by an individual**. Furthermore, what I focus on in my creative process is not so much the outcome of this act of breaking free as its initial moment. It interrupts the expected course of events; it creates a rupture in the linearity of their story.

At the root of writing: encounters

The writing of this new play takes as its starting point the encounters I had over the course of a year in France and abroad. I sought out people who had experienced an uprising at a deep personal level. In other words, people who had suddenly broken free from their everyday lives and transformed their world. With this new play, I am not seeking to present spectacular stories that have already been covered by the media, but rather everyday life utopias – quiet, sometimes silenced uprisings that took place in the privacy of a kitchen or a dining room. In short, **the extraordinary uprisings of ordinary people**.



« Jeanne Dielman, 23 quai du commerce 1080 Bruxelles », film de Chantal Akerman - Cuisine

Because the notion of an uprising implies a surge of freedom, an escape into the unknown, I had to take on a journey – literally. I had to reach out to others, to step over my own borders, to explore different landscapes and to find myself in foreign territory.

As I listen to these people, I find myself constantly wondering what forces led them, so suddenly, to rise up? Was it a simmering tension that had been building beneath the surface and eventually abruptly erupted? Or was it an unexpected impulse? In any case, it is this pivotal moment that interests me. **That moment when a person's life is turned upside down.**

In his essay *The afterlife of uprising*, Georges Didi-Huberman offers a fascinating account of how an uprising is 'an endless act', the outcome of which cannot be predicted. This attempt may give rise to a rebellion, or even a revolution, or it may lead to nothing at all.

« Parce que les soulèvements surgissent en des temps, en des lieux et à des échelles où on ne les attendait pas. »

"Because uprisings occur at times, in places, and on scales where they are least expected."

« Désirer désobéir », Georges Didi-Huberman, Les Éditions de Minuit, 2019.

For a year, I conducted around a hundred interviews. Firstly in France, mainly in the town of Saint-Denis in the Île-de-France region, but also near Gap in the Hautes-Alpes. I then continued this work of gathering testimonies in Rome, Madrid and Vienna. On each occasion, I collected the words of men and women of all ages and nationalities. During these one-to-one conversations, I found myself face to face with complete strangers who nevertheless came to share fragments of their lives with me.

Each interview starts with this question :

What was it that, one day, made you decide to transform your world?

I then become a 'woman-ear', to borrow Svetlana Alexievich's expression about her own work. It is not so much a matter of asking a series of questions, as an investigative journalist might do, but rather of giving the other person space to bring forth their own story and listening.

The memories shared during the interviews – memories that are sometimes long past – are 'riddled with gaps' caused by the passage of time. They are recounted with omissions or hesitations. Once this two-hour conversation is over, I make it a rule not to ring the person back, not to ask them to fill in these gaps of their memory. Fiction will fill in and thus enable me to find the right distance from the original material.



Photo de répétition © N. C. – Le Birgit Ensemble

Transposing into reality

Testimonies

Having finished collecting the testimonies, I had to make the difficult choice of keeping just one from each country. There will therefore be **seven stories from seven different countries**, all of which will be **performed on stage in French and then in their original language**. Hence, each of the **seven dual-nationality and/or bilingual performers will therefore bring one of the collected stories to life**.

Monika, 45 years-old, Austrian

“My life turned around within two hours.”

Monika lived under her husband’s psychological control for 21 years. One morning, she told him he has two hours to pack his bags and leave the family flat.

Eduardo, 91 years-old, Spanish

“This one, I won’t get over with.”

In the midst of Franco’s dictatorship, Eduardo must hide his homosexuality. Just when he thought he would never know love, he meets Rafaël.

Amadou, 34 years-old, Cameronian

“Cutting-down these large trees is like killing our dead twice.”

Amadou discovers that rosewood, a protected species, is being illegally exported from Cameroon to China. He exposes this trafficking and is forced to flee to Senegal to avoid reprisals.

Anastasia, 27 years-old, American

“ Telling yourself that things are possible—it sounds simple enough, but for me, it’s not at all obvious.” Anastasia broke away from the evangelical community in Los Angeles where she was born and had lived until she was 17. She left everything behind – her family, her language and her country – to go live in Europe.

M., 32 years-old, Indian

“ Because of my name, because of my religion, because of my gender, I’ve always had to keep my head down.”

M. decided to stay anonymous. She and her partner Rohan, both Indian, cannot freely live out their love story because they come from different castes. Then one day, in a matter of minutes, they decide to leave everything behind and start a new life in Italy.

Roberta, 52 years-old, Italian

“ This time, the desire is stronger, and it’s going to consume everything.”

Roberta was married and had a 13-year-old daughter when she decides to set off on her own to live on another continent, in Nigeria.

Maxime, 18 years-old, French

“ Maybe this is going to be my new life. Living with a prepaid phone and going to see the ocean whenever I feel like it.”

Having been shunted from one foster home to the next since the age of six, Maxime was eventually placed in a centre run by the IPJJ – the Judicial Youth Protection. One day, Maxime no longer bears being locked up and decides to run away.



Photo de répétition © N. C. – Le Birgit Ensemble

A multilingual and multicultural play

I want to pursue a global narrative : **we move from one story to another, from one country to another, blending languages as we go.** These languages obviously do not carry the same imaginaries, nor the same political histories.

This blending is at the heart of my approach. **To show that we can speak different languages and still understand one another.** That we can affirm our differences whilst at the same time revealing what connects us all – what constitutes our shared humanity.

A fragmentary writing

Since these narratives recount the unpredictable, the uncontrollable, or sometimes even the chaos into which those who rise up throw themselves, I had to draw a story with broken lines and a swirling structure, in which the writing style rises up itself. Fragmentary writing allows us to hear speech that is disjointed, halting, hesitant, or even impossible. Furthermore, I wanted to interweave the different stories so that they would echo one another. I seek to bring to light in these fragments something of human reality that might have been hidden or buried. In this way, speech becomes a revelation, and we move from “I” to “we.”

Writing Through Reminiscence

In *Bientôt le jour*, I am committed to experimenting with a form of textual and theatrical writing that takes on a unique shape. I explore the potential tension between narration—addressed directly to the audience—and embodiment. As the character tells their story, their past bursts into the present of the narrative, like a flashback. The story is no longer told solely through a controlled narrative; it is also shaped by the emergence of lived memories that appear to us in a detached, dreamlike, even strange form.

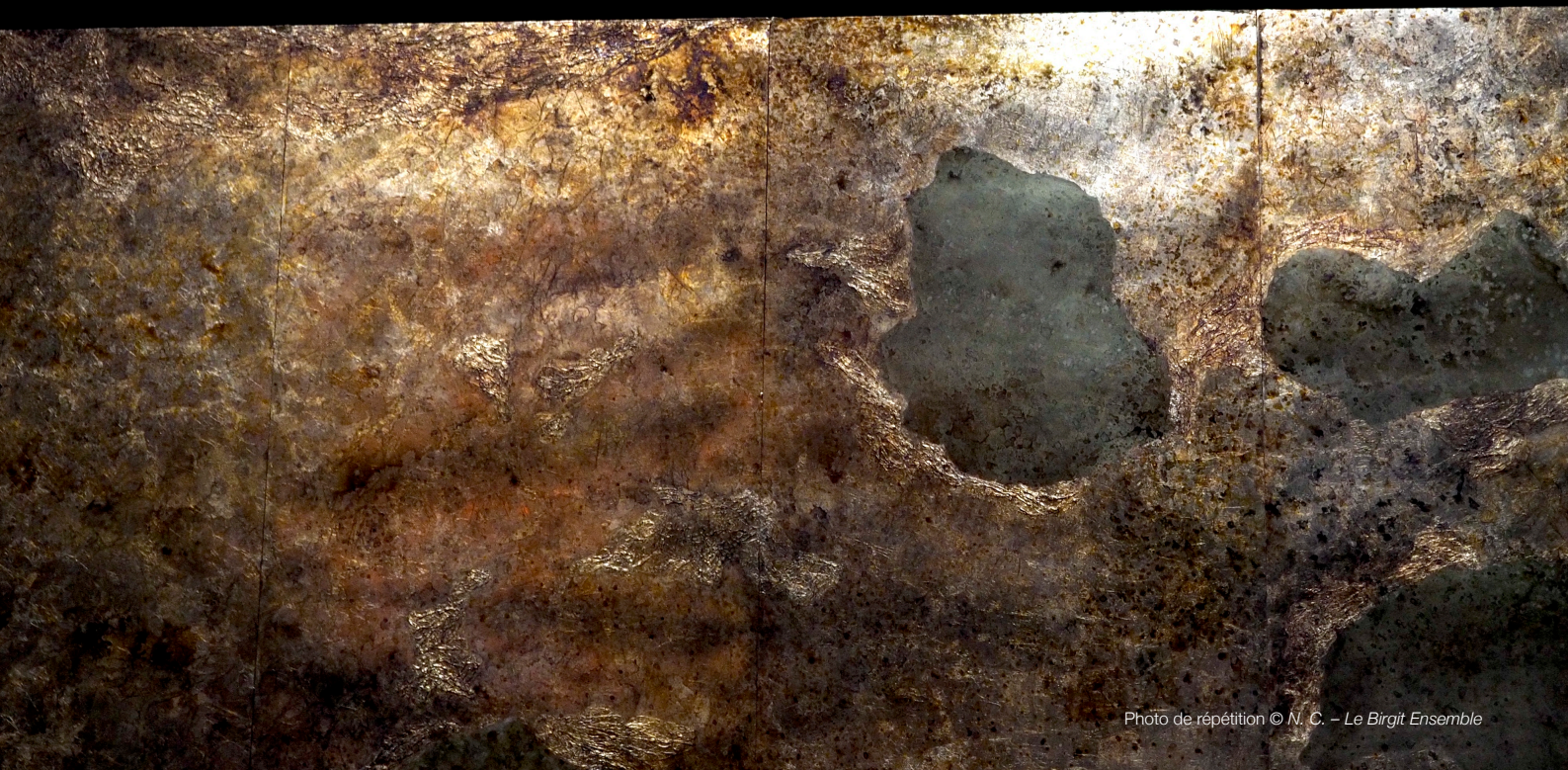
The shift from narration to embodiment is accompanied by **another shift: from French to the original languages of the various stories**. Just as the moment of the past uprising resurfaces, so too does the language of those who rose up.

Between Reality and Fiction

One of the challenges in creating this play is writing from raw material drawn from real life—and thus figuring out how to transpose that material. How can I transform the transcriptions of my audio recordings into **writing that is sensitive, powerful, and theatrical**?

I invite the audience on a resolutely subjective journey through these moments of life. These testimonies are themselves the product of a memory that is fragmented, affected, and therefore selective. By sharing them, my interviewees have necessarily already rewritten part of their story. Thus, the overarching narrative of the play is that of my interviews: I use it as the starting point for the performance before breaking free from it. Fiction is employed to fill in the gaps in memory, to fill the voids left by the testimonies, and to enable us to create theater. It does not betray the story entrusted to us; on the contrary, it helps us convey its depth and complexity. I thus advocate for a writing process that detaches itself from the original material to find its theatrical expression. This distance allows for a necessary detour to **make reality “resonate” by tracing, behind the collected words and the specific experience, the poetic and universal constants**.

Je quitte une famille



Dancing, to tell a story in ways other than with words

Very quickly, I noticed something common to all these accounts: there always comes a moment when the narrator's words falter, when the uprising suddenly becomes impossible to put into words, as if words were no longer enough to convey the upheaval they had experienced. Silence then sets in for a few seconds or a few minutes.

Translate: that is what this is all about. How can I convey, on stage and to the audience, the inner earthquake that an intimate awakening represents? How can I convey those moments of silence – so intense, so full of meaning – that punctuate each of my encounters?

For me, one possible answer lies in another form of language: the language of choreography. To share fears, joys, doubts or moments of despair **in a way other than through words**; in short, **to make the invisible visible**.

So I turned to the dancer and choreographer Lucía García Pullés to collaborate on this choreographic creation.

By exploring the relationship with the performers' dancing bodies, our aim is to uncover the sensitive and poetic dimension that emerges from the very heart of the gestures or movements associated with the uprising.

As I mentioned earlier, what interests us is capturing the moment when this solitary body rises and breaks away from the world. Our work on danced movement will enable us to pinpoint this moment. We will work on transforming movement according to the **principles of repetition, saturation, insistence and overflow**. Through this choreographic design, I hope that the movements associated with the various acts of uprising scenes will leave a lasting impression on the audience's minds and resonate with one another; and that, in this way, **an invisible link will emerge between all these bodies rising up**.

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The play offers no resolution. What ultimately takes shape before our eyes is the possibility of a sudden surge, of a turning point. The uprising, as it appears in these stories, is never guaranteed. It is fragile, even uncertain, but it carries within it a movement. A disruption of equilibrium. It is this movement that I wish to share by making the stage **a place where bodies rise, waver, and transform**—and where, perhaps, something also begins to stir within those who watch them.

I would like to experience a play that explores our shared desire for freedom, even if it remains a distant horizon. May the stage transform these *solitary* bodies, coming from the four corners of the world, into bodies *in solidarity* with one another, moved by shared emotions. In short, may the theater become that other space, that other time, where we can, together, ward off misfortune and envision **the future as a shared territory full of promise**.

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The scenography: a sacred and shared space

James Brandily has been the company's set designer since 2020. For this new production, we took as our starting point the stories I told him about my encounters and my travels. I spoke to him about the shared stories, the mystery surrounding these life-changing events, and the rupture – even the grief – that this entails for those who have been uprooted, for whom a return to their former lives is no longer possible.

We conceive of the stage design as an **open space** capable of accommodating all our stories, serving not only as a venue for storytelling – addressed to an audience freed from the constraints of the fourth wall

– but also as a space of embodiment where scenes featuring dialogue allow certain memories to be re-enacted.

For us, it is also about creating a **plastic world** capable of bringing to life, in turn, the imaginations and landscapes of our various stories. For example, a chaire is brought on stage, and Monika's entire living room is conjured up.

Ever since we began our discussions, I have had a very intuitive vision of a **scene covered in soil**. In this case, it will be coconut shavings which, when lit, create the illusion of soil.

Soil has a dual symbolism that interests me: it is an organic material that immediately evokes life, harbouring an entire underground ecosystem; it is also where we bury our dead.

But beyond these meanings, soil is for me, a way of visualising a shared territory.

Throughout the first act, a simple, understated piece of **stretched cotton fabric** confines the performance space to the foreground. It's impossible to know what lies behind it. Then, during the second act, the fabric falls away, revealing in the distance a wall **composed of patinated brass frames** covered with faux gold leaf. Through its verticality and luminosity, this installation lends a sacred quality to what is unfolding on stage.

We plan to **project the video subtitles** onto two LED screens. We want the languages to take on a tangible presence and have a space of their own. French translations are therefore designed to be an integral part of the stage design. In this way, the space for the subtitles becomes part of the **landscape of our scenes**. The audience can easily see both the performers and the translation at the same time, if they wish to do so.

Julie Bertin



Le Birgit Ensemble

JULIE BERTIN and **JADE HERBULOT**

After twelve years of co-writing and co-directing around twenty performances, Julie Bertin and Jade Herbulot are now offering themselves the opportunity to create works separately as well. While maintaining joint artistic direction of the company, this joyful new direction allows them to express their artistic gesture in a more personal way and to explore a more intimate relationship with writing. This desire is accompanied by an expansion of the company's activities, as they aim to create both large-scale productions in theaters and touring productions in non-traditional venues.



Julie Bertin, *writer, director*

Julie Bertin has been involved in theatre and dance from a very young age. Alongside her theatre training at the conservatoire in Paris's 10th arrondissement, she took intensive courses in contemporary dance at Studio Harmonic. At the age of 20, having completed her bachelor's degree in philosophy, Julie Bertin decided to devote herself entirely to theatre and enrolled at the Studio d'Asnières, before joining the Conservatoire national supérieur d'Art dramatique in 2011. There, she studied under the guidance of Dominique Valadié, Nada Strancar and Georges Lavaudant, and returned to dance in the classes of Caroline Marcadé and Jean-Marc Hoolbecq.

In 2014, she founded **Le Birgit Ensemble** with Jade Herbulot to mark the premiere of the company's first production, *Berliner Mauer: vestiges*. This was followed by *Pour un prélude* in 2015, then *Memories of Sarajevo* and *Dans les ruines d'Athènes*, premiered at the 2017 Avignon Festival, which brought to a close their tetralogy entitled 'Europe, mon amour', exploring the transition from the 20th to the 21st century.

Continuing their exploration of recent history, they presented *Entrée libre (l'Odéon est ouvert)* at the CNSAD in April 2018 – a production that launched a new cycle dedicated to the Fifth French Republic, which they continued at the Comédie-Française with *Les Oubliés* (Algiers–Paris) in 2019, and which they extended in 2021 with *Roman(s) national*, *Douce France*, and finally *Le Birgit Kabarett*, a multidisciplinary form at the crossroads of theatre and music, which adapts in response to current political and social events; six productions have been staged since 2021.

Alongside her work with the Birgit Ensemble, Julie Bertin regularly collaborates with other artists. In 2018, she directed Léa Girardet in *Le syndrome du banc de touche*. In 2019, she created *Dracula*, a jazz opera for young audiences, with the Orchestre National de Jazz, composed by Frédéric Maurin and Grégoire Letouvet. In 2022, she directed *Libre arbitre*, a play co-written with Léa Girardet and inspired by the story of the South African athlete Caster Semenya.

In November 2023, Julie Bertin premiered *Les Suppliques* alongside Jade Herbulot at the Grand R – scène nationale in La Roche-sur-Yon (on tour in 2025–2026 and 2026–2027). They were awarded the Artcena creation grant. From this latest production, a spin-off aimed at younger audiences emerged in the same year: *Les vies de Léon*, conceived as an immersive sound installation.

Le Scarabée et l'océan, a play written by Leïla Anis for pre-teens and directed by Julie Bertin and Jade Herbulot, premiered at the Théâtre Gérard Philipe – CDN in Saint-Denis in April 2025 (on tour in 2025–2026 and 2026–2027).