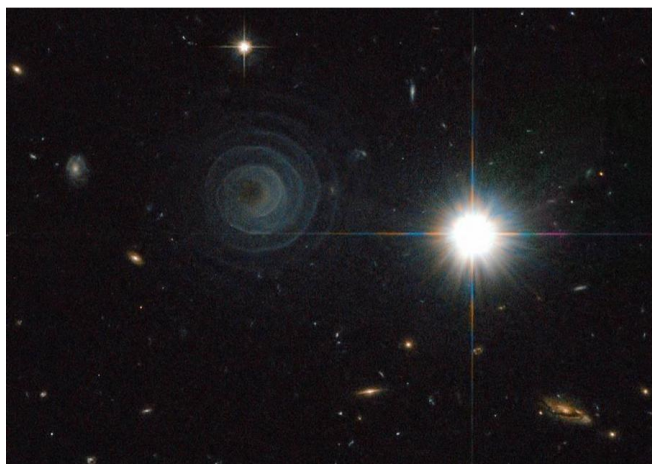


THE DREAM OF A RIDICULOUS MAN



CREATION

Author Fyodor Dostoïevski

Stage Director Olivier Ythier

Associate Director Gilles David, member of the Comédie Française

Adaptation and Performance Jean-Paul Sermadiras

French Translation André Markowicz

Light Director Jean-Luc Chanonat

Sound Director Pascal Salkin

Costumes Designer Cidalia da Costa

Coproduction La Fabrique du PasSage and Les Chercheurs de Lumière

With the support of the General Council of *Hauts de Seine*, of Saint Cloud city and its

Théâtre des 3 Pierrots

Duration 1 hour



SUBJECT

"IF THERE IS NO GOD, THE EVERYTHING IS ALLOWED."

The Dream of a Ridiculous Man, subtitled "a Fantastic Story" is a short story written by [Fyodor Dostoyevsky](#) in 1877.

It chronicles the experiences of a man who decides that there is nothing of any value in the world and is therefore determined to commit suicide. A chance encounter with a young girl, however, begins the man on a journey that re-instills a love for his fellow man. It is an initiatory and mystic experience proposed by Dostoïevski.

This adaptation explores with modernity and subtlety the fine lines between dream and reality.

"I AM A RIDICULOUS MAN. THEY CALL ME MAD NOW. THAT WOULD BE A STEP UP IN RANK, IF I DID NOT STILL REMAIN AS RIDICULOUS TO THEM AS BEFORE. BUT NOW I'M NO LONGER ANGRY, NOW THEY ARE ALL DEAR TO ME, AND EVEN WHEN THEY LAUGH AT ME, I LOVE THEM ALL."



STATEMENT OF INTENT

To give meaning to his life, a man needs transcendence. The narrator with no name is locked up. His prison is determined by how people see him, as a ridiculous man. When he starts to ignore them, he comes to the realization that nothing much matters to him anymore. It is this revelation that leads him to the idea of suicide. On the way home a little girl comes running towards him, asking for help for her mother but he shakes the girl away. Once in his apartment, the narrator hesitates to shoot himself because of a nagging feeling of guilt that has plagued him ever since he shunned the girl. He grapples with internal questions before falling asleep. Awakening from a vivid dream, he is a changed man, thoroughly thankful for life and convinced of man's basic goodness and potential for incredible love. He dedicates his life to teaching the promise of a paradise on earth.

We start with an empty stage illuminated by a low and cold lighting. As the story progresses, we will enter the theatricality and the sound and light will appear along with the dream. The author, despite his hard and painful life, has used it to let a post mortem unique and ever contemporary work.

Jean-Paul Sermadiras

"A DREAM ? WHAT'S A DREAM ?
AND IS OUR LIFE NOT A DREAM ?"

When I first read the story, I was deeply disturbed by the great similarity between the narrative of the dream and the near-death experience, exactly as if the author had experienced it by himself.

A dream which looks like real life, with the same impression of reality as in real life. Among the lines, comes the question about what is called conscience as if our reality was the product of a dark dream, the creation of our sleeping conscience.

This questioning or confrontation between dream and reality will be our main working axis.

Olivier Ythier

THE AUTHOR

FYODOR DOSTOÏEVSKI

The Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoevsky was well known in his country during his life and has since been praised around the world as a writer. He is best known for writing novels that had a great understanding of psychology (the study of how the human mind works), especially the psychology of people who, losing their reason, would become insane or commit murder.

Fyodor Dostoevsky was born in Moscow, Russia, on November 11, 1821, the son of a doctor. His family was very religious, and Dostoevsky was deeply religious all his life.

Dostoevsky began his career writing fiction about poor people in harsh situations. In 1843 he finished his first novel, *Poor Folk*, a social tale about a down-and-out government worker. The novel was praised by a respected critic. In 1847 he joined a somewhat subversive (antigovernment) group called the Petrashevsky Circle. In 1849 the members were arrested. After eight months in prison, Dostoevsky was "sentenced" to death. In reality, though, he was sentenced to four years in prison and six years of forced service in the army in Siberia, Russia.

Dostoevsky's life during the next period was characterized by poor health, poverty, and complicated emotional situations. He traveled outside the country in 1862 and 1863 to get away from the people to whom he owed money and to gamble.

Notes from the Underground is a short novel. In this work Dostoevsky attempts to justify the existence of [individual freedom](#) as a necessary part of humankind. He argues against the view that man is a creature of reason and that society can be organized in a way that guarantees the happiness of humans. He insists that humans desire freedom more than happiness, but he also sees that unchecked freedom is a destructive force, since there is no guarantee that humans will use freedom in a constructive way. Indeed, the evidence of history suggests that humans seek the destruction of others and of themselves.

Dostoevsky's first wife died in 1864, and in the following year he married Anna Grigorievna Snitkina. She was practical and even-tempered. In 1866 Dostoevsky published *Crime and Punishment*, and in 1870 *The Possessed* (also translated as *The Devils*). *The Brothers Karamazov* (1879–1880) is the greatest of Dostoevsky's novels. The psychologist [Sigmund](#) Freud (1856–1939) ranked it as one of the greatest artistic achievements of all time.

Dostoevsky died on January 28, 1881. At the time of his death he was at the height of his career in Russia, and many Russians mourned his death. He had begun to win praise in Europe as well, and interest in him has continued to increase.

THE CREATIVE TEAM



OLIVIER YTHIER,

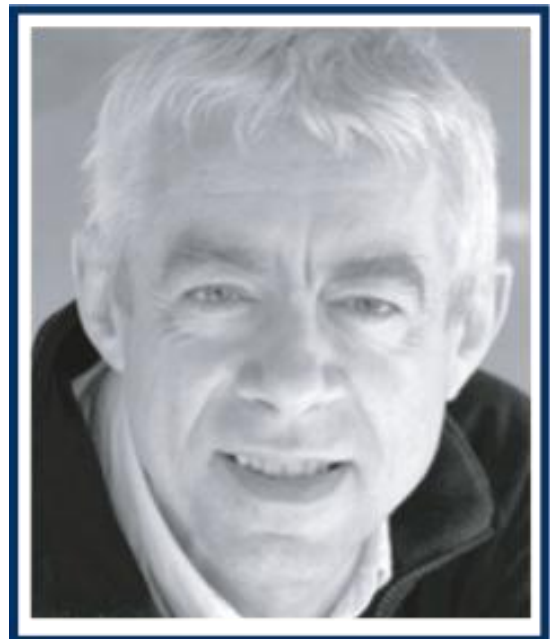
STAGE DIRECTION

Graduate from The Institut National Supérieur des Arts du Spectacle (INSAS, Brussels).

GILLES DAVID,

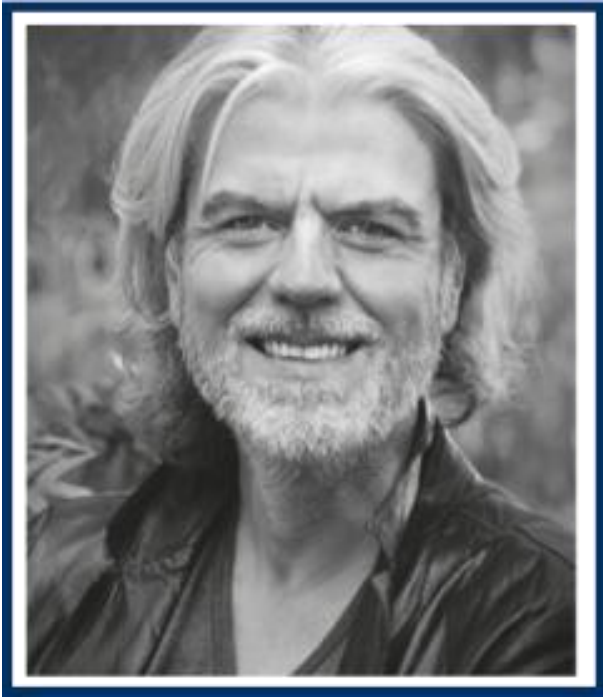
ARTISTIC COLLABORATION

Member of The Comédie Française since 2007.



JEAN-PAUL SERMADIRAS

ADAPTATION AND PERFORMANCE



Jean-Paul Sermadiras is graduated in philosophy and has followed courses in both schools : in « L'Atelier international de Blanche Salant » and « Les Ateliers de l'Ouest » and where he became assistant to Steve Kalfa. He works with Robert Cantarella, Alexander Chéluguine (from GITIS of Moscow), Pierre Pradinas, Yves Adler and Lisa Wurmser.

His first staging of *Mao binbin* with Roshdy Zem took place in 1990 at the Théâtre du Zèbre. In 1995, he created « La Compagnie du Pas Sage ». Passionate of contemporary theater, he staged *Pour un oui ou pour un non*, a play of Nathalie Sarraute, Roucoullades with Jean-Claude Bolle-Redat in 2 theaters in Paris, La Commune and Le Rond-Point and 1 in Marseille, La Criée, As well as *Voix de garage* of Francis Parisot and *L'Absent*.

Then, as the company was resident in the Theater of Neuilly sur Seine, he created a Feydeau performance, *Mais n'te promène donc pas toute nue* which was played in the Festival of Avignon and in International Theater of Frankfurt. His last staging, *La Banalité du Mal* of C. Brückner, created in March 2011 in the « Manufacture des Abbesses » and still goes on to be played.

As a comedian, he has acted in about thirty plays, *L'Ecole des femmes* by Molière and *Feydeau Terminus*, both staged by Didier Bezace ; *Le Misanthrope* of Molière by Dominique Wittorski, *La Mégère apprivoisée* of Shakespeare, *Le Parc* of Botho Strauss staged by Florian Sitbon, *La Soixantième Parallèle* staged by Pierre Strosser in the Théâtre du Châtelet and *Une demande en mariage* of Tchekhov staged by Christopher Buchholz ; *Tais toi et Parle moi* of David Thomas, staged by Hocine Choutri in the Manufacture des Abbesses.

In 2013, he acted *La Mort de Marguerite Duras* (*The Death written Marguerite Duras*) written by E. Pavlovski and staged by Bertrand Marcos in a Parisian Theater : the « Manufacture des Abbesses ». Then, he played it in the famous Lucernaire in Paris and 2013 Avignon Festival as well as in the Belleville Theater in December 2014. It is still played all over France.

He also worked as a TV and movie actor, directed by François Ozon, Édouard Molinaro, Didier Grousset, David Delrieux, Étienne Dahenne, Philippe Triboit, Patrick Jamain..

JEAN-LUC CHANNONAT

LIGHT DIRECTOR



PASCALE SALKIN

SOUND DIRECTOR



CIDALIA DA COSTA

COSTUMES DESIGNER

THE COMPANY

The company « Le PasSage » was created in 1995 by Jean-Paul Sermadiras and is working on contemporary authors : Eugène Ionesco, Jean-Luc Lagarce, Jean-Claude Grumberg, Nathalie Sarraute, Noëlle Renaude, Jacques Rebotier, David Thomas, Xavier Durringer, Nathalie Saugeon, Emmanuel Roblès, Marc Dugovson, Emmanuel Darley, Fellag, Dario Fo, Daniel Keene, Sergi Belbel, Zinnie Harris, Michel Albertini, Margerie Vaury.

During four years in residence at the *Théâtre de Neuilly-sur-Seine* the company created shows for the *Festival d'Avignon*, the *Théâtre du Zèbre* and the *Manufacture des Abbesses* in Paris, the *International Frankfurter theater*.

Since 2002, the company teaches theater. Over 200 persons have trained on acting classes. It receives subsidies from the region and the city.

Since 2012, the company is in residence at the *Théâtre des 3 Pierrots* in Saint-Cloud, closed to Paris.

THE PRESS REVIEW/ CRITIQUE



« a tightly focused artistic team»

« spectacular artists, Jean Luc Chanonat on stage lights and design, Pascale Salkin on sound and Cidalia Da Costa on costume»

« a very carefully prepared work »

« When we hear Jean-Paul Sermadiras, we get to the essence of the character»

« It's a deep, simple moment, a piece of theater which leads to contemplation. But here, and this is the strength of the play, everything comes through a controlled emotion. »

By Armelle Héliot



«The work of the actor and the director works perfectly »

« Showing restrained emotion, Jean-Paul Sermadiras captures the essence of Dostoïevski and his soul-searching. »

By Armelle Héliot



« Jean-Paul Sermadiras subtle performance disturbs and surprises us, and leads us little by little to another world»

By Fabienne Pascaud



« Jean-Paul Sermadiras' performance is riveting. There is something magnetic about his character, which is accentuated by Olivier Ythier's directing. »« a perfect performance ; a journey to the recesses of a tormented man ! »

By Evelynne Trân



LCI Culture column of Christophe Combarieu

« A truly—amazing performance »« The profundity of the text transports you »« Olivier Ythier manages to transport us with simple artifice ; a bench, a soundtrack, a projection of an image »



« A demanding monologue, directed by Olivier Ythier, delivered by Jean-Paul Sermadiras, who personifies with a deep strength the character of this man, more a prophet than a fool. »

By Salsa Bertin

Un Fauteuil pour L'Orchestre

« One is never bored, one is seduced by the haunting voice of Jean-Paul Sermadiras. »

« Thanks to an excellent adaptation of perfect length,

this production changes something within each one of us and which we are desperate to re-visit . »

By Victoria Fourel



« In one brief hour, Jean-Paul Sermadiras solo performance transports the audience to a strangely alive illusion. »

« The use of technology, including videos produces outstanding results. »

« An accomplished story-teller, the actor bewitches the audience and draws us into his mental descent. Despite having been written over a century ago, the text is relevant to the modern day. The audience leaves the performance still mesmerised and like a daydreamer. »

By Justine Reix



« Jean-Paul Sermadiras plays a dream that becomes real, (...), in the name of a recovered and calming fulfillment. »

By Cathia Engelbach

Théâtre passion

« Jean-Paul Sermadiras' performance is undeniably convincing, which draws one into the metaphysical world of the writer. »

By Anne Delaleu



« Jean-Paul Sermadiras, with his beautiful Christ-like face who would have had time to age »

« The audience, is steadily caught up in the this highly significant text, by the as moral as physical commitment of the actor. We will get out of the place

with a mind full of thoughts. »

« The writer credits the intelligence of his readers and the combined talents of André Markowicz and Jean-Paul Sermadiras complete the circle »

"What we see and hear is worth coming for !"

By Simone Alexandre

LA GALERIE DU SPECTACLE

Le magazine du Théâtre et de la Marionnette

«Olivier Ythier's direction allows for the embodiment of the character by the actor, the ridiculous man. »

« A shamanic aura comes from the actor, he has a calm and intense tone. The atmosphere on the stage, video recordings and music in support, and the Jean-Paul Sermadiras's acting are appropriate for the inner conversations of the Ridiculous Man. »

By Leila El Yaakabi



« With his beautiful tone of voice and his sensitive eloquence, Jean-Paul Sermadiras delivers an admirable performance in this production of « The Dream of a Ridiculous Man », directed by Olivier Ythier."



« The ridiculous man succeeds in arousing in us a surprising affection and empathy towards our fellow man."

"His childish innocence is moving, the strength of emotions expressed is surprising and the final metamorphosis leaves the viewer with no option but to look within himself and see the world differently."



« This performance is a theatrical experience in which contemplation is continuously solicited.- »
By Bruno Deslot

This show has been created
In 2014-2015
In the *Théâtre des 3 Pierrots* in Saint-Cloud near Paris.
It has been performed in the *Théâtre de Belleville* for 37 shows
From July 11 to October 5, 2015.
It has been performed in Casablanca, Rabat (Maroc) for 4 shows
From April 19 to April 22, 2016.
It has been performed in the Théâtre Les 3 Pierrots (Saint-Cloud) in May 10, 2016

Coproduction : « Le PasSage » and « Les Chercheurs de Lumière »

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