

THÉÂTRE
DES BOUFFES
DU NORD

THE MALADY OF DEATH



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Freely adapted after the story by **Marguerite Duras**
Direction **Katie Mitchell**
Adaptation **Alice Birch**

To be premiered on January 16, 2018 at Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord

On tour from February to May 2018, and during 2018/2019 season

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THE MALADY OF DEATH

Freely adapted after the story by Marguerite Duras

Direction Katie Mitchell

Adaptation Alice Birch

Associate Director Lily McLeish

Video direction Grant Gee

Set and costume design Alex Eales

Composer Paul Clark

Sound Design Donato Wharton

Video Design Ingi Bekk

Collaboration Video Design Ellie Thompson

Lighting Design Anthony Doran

With

The Woman Laetitia Dosch

The Man Nick Fletcher

Narrator Jasmine Trinca

Assistant director Bérénice Collet

Technical Manager John Carroll

Deputy Stage manager Lisa Hurst

Video Programmer / Operator Caitlyn Russell

Camera operators Nadja Krüger, Sebastian Pircher / Christin Wilke

Trouble Shooter Matthew Evans

Sound Programmer / Operator Harry Johnson

Boom Operator Joshua Trepte

Lighting Programmer / Operator Sébastien Combes

Assistant Stage Manager Elodie Huré

Stage manager Marinette Jullien

Fight director RC-Annie

Intern directors Joanna Pidcock and Florence Mato

Thanks to Jerry Brooks, Isaure Buot de l'Épine, Bérénice Collet and Christophe Jumel
for the prerecorded footages

To be premiered on January 16, 2018 at Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord

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Duration: 1h

Not recommended for audience less than 18 years old

Production C.I.C.T. - Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord

Associated Coproducers Les Théâtres de la Ville de Luxembourg

Théâtre de la Ville - Paris ; Le Théâtre de Liège

Coproduction MC2:Grenoble ; Edinburgh International Festival ;

Barbican / London ; Stadsschouwburg Amsterdam ; Teatro di Roma-Teatro Nazionale ;

Teatro Stabile di Torino - Teatro Nazionale ; Emilia Romagna Teatro Fondazione ;

Fondazione Teatro Metastasio - Prato ; TANDEM scène nationale

In collaboration with Mayhem

Thanks to the Comédie-Française

In a hotel room by the sea, a Man waits.

She comes at night. She only ever comes at night. She's not to speak. She's not to resist. Anything he wants, she must do. The cost doesn't matter - he wants to learn how to love, what it is to experience Feeling again. This is not about Her. It is about Him.

Duras explores her conviction about the impossibility of authentic emotional or sexual intimacy between men and women. Katie Mitchell's live cinema adaptation interrogates this central question, through a deep exploration of intimacy, gender, pornography and sex.

Alice Birch, December 2017



© Stephen Cummiskey

When she adapts Marguerite Duras' *La Maladie de la mort*, Katie Mitchell goes beyond just signing her French debut as theatre director, she offers an original reading of this text based on an inventive visual system that reveals the turmoil and the erotic force of this cruel and enigmatic confrontation between a man and a woman.

It is often said that she is the most European of British directors. It is true that Katie Mitchell, whilst she does live in London, regularly directs shows – be it in theatre or in opera – in Germany, Holland, Poland or France. This does not prevent her from staging productions in her own country, even if her vision of theatre contrasts sharply with the current tradition in force across the Channel, where the role of the director is reduced to the strict minimum of serving the text. With no disrespect to this approach, Katie Mitchell sees a work as material that needs to be analysed in depth in order to retrieve from it the smallest significant detail. This obsession is illustrated by an anecdote told by the British dramaturge Simon Stephen. In 2012, before she even started the rehearsals of his piece *Wastwater*, Katie Mitchell sent him 225 questions about the text. She obviously could not do the same with Marguerite Duras whose *Maladie de la mort* she directs today – her first theatre direction in French, after staging Debussy's *Pelléas and Mélisande* at Festival d'Aix-en-Provence in 2016. « *When I was asked to stage a French text, I took quite a while to chose among my three favourite authors in that language: Simone de Beauvoir, Marguerite Yourcenar and Marguerite Duras, until I finally opted for Duras. Her books have accompanied me for a long time, even though I read them in English, beautifully translated by Barbara Bray, who, incidentally, was Samuel Beckett's lover*» explains Katie.

And obviously, rather than chose a theatre piece, her preference went to a story that she could adapt. « *Two things attracted me immediately to *Maladie de la mort* - on the one hand the fact that this text speaks about gender, and on the other that Marguerite Duras keeps a mysterious dimension till the very end, an enigmatic aspect that resists all explanation. If I were asked to resume in one word the general atmosphere of this book, I would speak of despair. But there is also another important aspect that lead me to this choice and to the way that I approached this story – it is the exceptionally intense dimension of a psychological thriller.* »

The fact that Marguerite Duras not only wrote books, but also made several films, has certainly influenced Katie Mitchell's choice. When she approached *La Maladie de la mort*, she immediately imagined the kind of visual support that would lend itself to conveying the story of a man who pays a woman to fulfil all his desires. Over several nights a woman meets the man in a hotel room. Each time the man watches her sleep. By means of three cameras that simultaneously film the actors, the audience sees through the eyes of the man, as if it were inside his head. They do not speak.

The text is said by a narrator played by Jasmine Trinca, the woman is played by Lætitia Dosch and the man by Nick Fletcher.

« What looms over this troubling relationship centred on masculine domination and voyeurism – apart from the permanent threat due to the fact that we ignore what could happen – is the impossibility of loving. There could be sex, but not love. Nothing can bridge the gap that separates the man and the woman. They are irreconcilable. That is the maladie de la mort of which Marguerite Duras speaks. »

Katie Mitchell has been using cameras in her theatre for quite some time. This sophisticated and astute procedure is a means of entering directly into the subjectivity of the characters, but also of exposing the tricks behind the cameras by showing the audience nuts and bolts of film-making. *« I began to work with cameras in 2006 when I adapted for theatre Virginia Woolf's book The Waves. The nature of this text consisting of interior monologs was the antithesis of what can be shown on stage. Live filming, coupled with sound design, allowed us to overcome this difficulty. At the same time, I find it essential that the whole process be done in plain view, in front of the audience's eyes, in order to show just how much of all this is a make-believe, because inventing things is what theatre is made of. »*

From an interview by Hugues Le Tanneur for Théâtre de la Ville.

Press quotes

« The displayed nudity of Laetitia Dosch and Nick Fletcher gives evidence of the complete commitment of the two fighters who face each other on equal terms on the sensual front. The sumptuous black and white image of their “corps à corps” bears witness of a violent ceremonial that raises this encounter to the mythical heights. »

Les Inrockuptibles

« The singularity of this show lies in the fact that the audience simultaneously watches the film and the shooting of it. This most atypical staging is of extreme precision and brilliant craftsmanship. »

Les affiches de Grenoble



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TOUR

2017 / 2018 Season

January 16 to February 3, 2018 : Théâtre des bouffes du nord

March 16 and 17, 2018 : Grand Théâtre / Les Théâtres de la Ville de Luxembourg

March 21 to 23, 2018 : Stadsschouwburg Amsterdam – BrandhaArden Festival / holland

March 28 to 31, 2018 : MC2: Grenoble / FRance

April 4 to 6, 2018 : TANDEM Scène nationale (DOUAI) / FRance

April 20 and 21, 2018 : Théâtre Forum Meyrin / Genève / Switzerland

May 15 to 17, 2018 : Théâtre du Gymnase / Marseille / FRANCE

August 16 to 19, 2018 : Edinburgh international festival / UK

October 3 to 6, 2018 : Barbican Center / London / UK

October 10 to 13, 2018 : Théâtre de Liège / Belgium

November 3 to 4, 2018 : Teatro Stabile di Torino / Italy

November 8 to 9, 2018 : Teatro Argentina / Roma / Italy

November 13 to 16, 2018 : Arena del Sole / Bologna / Italy

November 20 to 23, 2018 : Fabbricone / Prato / Italy



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BIOGRAPHIES

KATIE MITCHELL **stage director**

Recent theatre includes: *Shadows (Eurydice Speaks)* (Schaubühne, Berlin); *Cleansed* (National Theatre); *Ophelia's Room* (Schaubühne, Berlin/ Royal Court); *Reisende auf einem Bein* (Schauspielhaus, Hamburg); *Happy Days* (Schauspielhaus, Hamburg); Brandstichter Festival: a remounting of five previous productions of Katie's work (Stadschouwburg Amsterdam); *2071* (Royal Court); *The Cherry Orchard* (Young Vic); *The Forbidden Zone* (Salzburg Festival & Schaubühne, Berlin); *A Sorrow Beyond Dreams* (Vienna Burgtheater); *Lungs, The Yellow Wallpaper* (Schaubühne, Berlin); *Everything Else You Know from the Movies* (Schauspielhaus, Hamburg); *Say it with Flowers, The Trial of Ubu* (Hampstead Theatre); *Night Train* (Schauspiel, Cologne & Avignon Festival & Theater Treffen), *Ten Billion* (Royal Court & Avignon Festival); *Rings of Saturn, Waves* (Schauspiel, Cologne) and *Hansel & Gretel, A Woman Killed with Kindness* (National Theatre).



© Lucy Rybin

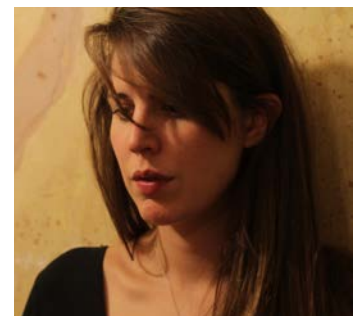
Recent Opera includes: *Pelleas et Melisande* (Aix en Provence Festival); *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Royal Opera House); *Alcina* (Aix en Provence Festival); *The Way Back Home* (ENO/Young Vic); *Trauernacht* and *The House Taken Over* (Aix en Provence Festival); *Le Vin Herbe* (Staatsoper, Berlin); *Written on Skin* (Aix en Provence Festival & Royal Opera House); *Al Gran Sole Carico D'Amore* (Staatsoper, Berlin & Salzburg Festival); *Orest* (De Nederlandse Opera) and *Clemency* (Royal Opera House).

Film and television includes: *Untitled Short Film* (Warp/ Film4); *The Widowing of Mrs Holroyd*, *Jenufa*, *Rough for Theatre 2* and *The Turn of the Screw*.

Katie has been an Associate Director at the RSC, National Theatre and The Royal Court Theatre. She was awarded an OBE in 2009 for services to drama and has recently been appointed as the Visiting Chair in Opera Studies at Oxford University for 2016-2017.

ALICE BIRCH **adaptation**

Other collaborations with Katie Mitchell: *Schatten* (Schaubühne) and *Ophelia's Zimmer* (Royal Court/ Schaubühne). Other theatre includes: *Anatomy Of A Suicide* (Royal Court); *Revolt She Said*, *Revolt Again*. (Soho Rep NYC; RSC); *We Want You to Watch* (Rash



© Georgina Ower

Dash/National); *Little Light* (Orange Tree); *Little On The Inside* (Almeida/Clean Break); *So Much Once* (Old Vic); *Salt* (Comedie de Valence), *Many Moons* (Theatre503).

Film includes: *Lady Macbeth*.

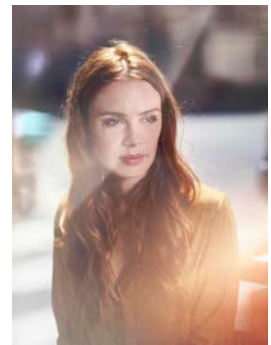
Radio includes: *Flying the Nest*.

Awards include: George Devine Award for Most Promising Playwright (*Revolt She Said. Revolt Again.*); Arts Foundation Award for Playwriting; Finalist for Susan Smith Blackburn Prize (2012 and 2015); Winner International Critic's Prize (FIPRESCI Prize) at San Sebastian International Film Festival 2016 and Winner Critic's Choice Award for Best First Feature at Zurich Film Festival 2016 (*Lady Macbeth*).

LAETITIA DOSCH **actress**

Laetitia Dosch holds a degree in translation for English Literature, and in acting from Ecole Florent in Paris and from the Manufacture - conservatoire national de Suisse Romande.

In cinema, she performed in several short films directed by Marie Elsa Sgualdo (of which *Bam tchak* won prizes in Angers and Lausanne). She has extensively collaborated with Justine Triet, as actress and co-writer for *Naughty Girl Bad boy* (*Vilaine Fille Mauvais Garçon*), and in 2013 as the main female role in her first feature film, *The Battle of Solferino* (*La Bataille de Solferino*). With Emmanuelle Devos she plays in Frédéric Mermoud's *Complices* (2010). She recently played in films under the direction of Christophe Honoré (*Les Malheurs de Sophie*), Catherine Corsini (*La Belle Saison*), Maïwenn (*Mon Roi*), de Guillaume Senez (*Keeper*), Antony Cordier (*Gaspard va au mariage*), Léonor Serraille (*Jeune femme*), Whitney Horn, Gabriel Abrantes.



© Olivier Metzger

For television she holds a role in Season 2 of *Ainsi soient-ils*, broadcast on Arte.

It is for the Manufacture in Lausanne that she wrote her first play *The Sand-box* (*Le Bac à Sable*), in collaboration with the actors, and it is there that she met Marco Berrettini and La Ribot, with whom she collaborated as co-writer for several plays.

In theatre, alongside Eric Ruf, she performed the main feminine role in Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*. She has also collaborated with the 2B Company for the September Spring Festival, and Chiens de Navarre Company for the Festival les Urbaines. In 2015 she performed in Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew* at the Théâtre National de Bretagne under the direction of Mélanie Leray, and then renewed her complicity with Yves-Noël Genod for his *Théâtre Permanent* at Théâtre du Point du Jour in Lyon.

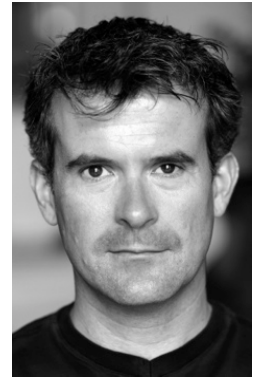
In parallel she develops her own work. In 2014, within the Etrange Cargo Festival at the Ménagerie de Verre in Paris she first presented *Laetitia fait péter...* and then *Klein* with Patrick Laffont. In 2015, in collaboration with Yuval Rozman at the Théâtre de l'Arsec she

conceived *An Album*, inspired by the Swiss entertainer Zouc, currently on tour. In 2016, she was invited by Festival d'Avignon and the French Society of Dramatic Writers and Composers (SACD) to collaborate with Jonathan Capdevielle for *Les Corvidés*, a show they wrote and performed within the Sujets à Vif series.

Laetitia Dosch also writes for the Standard and les Cahiers du Cinéma.

NICK FLETCHER **actor**

Nick Fletcher trained at the Webber Douglas Academy of Dramatic Art in London. At the National Theatre, in London, he played in *The Deep Blue Sea*, *Treasure Island*, *A Woman Killed with Kindness* (his first collaboration with Katie Mitchell in 2011), *The White Guard*, *The Overwhelming*, *Playing with Fire*, *Once in a Lifetime*, and *The UN Inspector*. In London's West End, he worked on *A Doll's House*, *Rattle of a Simple Man*, *Star Quality*.



© Walter Van Dyk

Other recent theatre includes *For Services Rendered*, *The Shawl*, *A Doll's House* (at the Harvey Lichtenstein Theatre, New York in Carrie Cracknell's Young Vic production), *Public Enemy*, *The Country Wife*, *Twisted Tales* (Lyric Hammersmith), *Dial M for Murder*, *Thyestes*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *King Lear* (Old Vic), *Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Slight Witch*, *All's Well That Ends Well* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater), *Silence*, *A Difficult Age*, *Henry V* (at Shakespeare's Globe), *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, *Burdalane*, *A Wife Without a Smile*, *The House Amongst the Stars*, *Court in the Act*, *The Way of the World*, *The Last Thrash*, *The Cassilis Engagement*

For TV, he worked on *Outlander*, *Silk*, *Midsomer Murders*, *Mutual Friends*, *Whitechapel*, *Harley Street*, *New Tricks*, *True Dare Kiss*, *Rough Treatment*, *After the War*, *Grange Hill*.

Recently for cinema, he worked with Glenn Close and Jonathan Pryce in *The Wife* (Björn Runge)

JASMINE TRINCA **narrator**

Chosen in her high school at the age of 18 by Nanni Moretti for *The Son's Room*, Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival in 2001, Jasmine Trinca had until that moment wanted to become an archaeologist. For this film, as for the next, Marco Tullio Giordana's *The Best of Youth* (winner of the Un Certain Regard section at Cannes 2003), she received numerous awards.



©DR

In 2005 she played Roberta in *Romanzo Criminale* directed by Michele Placido, who also chose her for the lead role in *The Big Dream*, for which she won the Mastroianni Award at the 66th Venice Film Festival. Nanni Moretti called on Jasmine again to play the part of a young film director in *The Caiman*, entered at Cannes in 2006.

The following year she was on the jury of *Un Certain Regard* and in 2010, in Venice, on the jury of the Luigi De Laurentiis Award.

The year 2013 was one of important meetings and marks of recognition: Jasmine was the star of Valeria Golino's first movie, *Miele* (presented in the *Un Certain Regard* section at Cannes), and Giorgio Diritti's *There Will Come a Day*, which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival.

The seal of international approval was set on her career at Cannes in 2011 with *House of Tolerance (L'Apollonide: Souvenirs de la maison close)* by Bertrand Bonello, a director with whom she also worked in *Saint Laurent* (2014), while in 2015 she performed alongside Sean Penn and Javier Bardem in Pierre Morel's *The Gunman*.

Also in 2015 came her encounter with the Taviani brothers in *Wondrous Boccaccio* and with Sergio Castellitto in *You Can't Save Yourself Alone*, a director who two years later chose her as the star of *Fortunata*, the film with which Jasmine won the award for best performance in the *Un Certain Regard* section at Cannes 2017. For the same role she received "Nastro d'Argento for the Best Actress 2017" from Italian National Syndicate of Film Journalists and the David di Donatello Award for the Best Actress 2018.

She was on the jury of Official Competition at 74th Venice Film Festival. In 2018 Jasmine Trinca will be on screen in the movie *Sulla mia pelle*, directed by Alessio Cremonini, where she will play Ilaria Cucchi, and in *Euforia* (selected in *Un Certain Regard* section 2018), Valeria Golino's second movie, with whom works again after *Miele*.