

AND...

NAVE OF IMAGES (screenings)
Mademoiselle Julie, Strindberg, by Frédéric Fisbach with Juliette Binoche
 (2011), July 24 at 14:30, Église des Célestins

TOUR DATES AFTER THE FESTIVAL

- July 29 2017, Festival Castel de Peralada, Spain
- October 8, Théâtre Anne de Bretagne, Vannes
- October 9, L'Onde Théâtre Centre d'art de Vélizy-Villacoublay
- October 10-11, Anthéa-Antipolis Théâtre d'Antibes
- October 15, Philharmonie de Paris
- October 17, Théâtre de l'Archipel Scène nationale de Perpignan
- October 22, Le Quai CDN Angers Pays de la Loire
- October 23, TAP Théâtre et auditorium de Poitiers
- October 25, Grand Théâtre de Provence, Aix en Provence
- October 27, Auditorium Maurice Ravel, Lyon
- October 28, L' Octogone, Pully (Switzerland)
- October 30, Festival National du Théâtre, Bucarest (Romania)

Il était un piano noir..., *Mémoires interrompus* by Barbara is published by Editions Fayard, collection Le Livre de poche.

TO LIVE SOMEHOW (BARBARA)

"All those times I hit rock bottom, I always managed to bounce back. Sure, I had to love life a lot..."

In *Il était un piano noir*, her unfinished autobiography published in 1997, a year after her death, the singer Barbara tells with modesty and poetry of her childhood stolen by incest and by the occupation, of her bohemian years in Belgium, and of her early career in Parisian cabarets. She writes about the dream that haunted her throughout her life: to sing, write, compose, and be onstage with an audience, her *"most beautiful love story."* Those pages, among other sources, are at the heart of the story for voice and piano imagined by Juliette Binoche and Alexandre Tharaud. The singer's writings mix with the performers' memories of her, using the texts and songs, from the most famous to the most secret, to create a sensorial landscape. A pen and a piano that celebrate life, love, pain, anger, but above all else hope, which, even at its darkest and most desperate, forever remained the vibrant engine driving this icon, who Juliette Binoche says was able to turn *"her shadows into light, her dark velvets into suns."*

JULIETTE BINOCHÉ

Born in a family of artists (her father was a sculptor and her mother an actress), Juliette Binoche is an actress, a dancer, and a painter. She came to fame in the 1980s thanks to her performance in films by André Téchiné, Jean-Luc Godard, Philip Kaufman, or Leos Carax. Since then, she has inspired the greatest French and international directors, from Claire Denis to David Cronenberg and Abbas Kiarostami. She is one of only a handful of French actresses to have won an Oscar, and the first actress to have won an acting award in the three greatest film festivals: Cannes, Venice, and Berlin. Her performance in Krzysztof Kieslowski's *Three Colours: Blue* won her the César for best actress. On the stage, she has received acclaim for her performances in shows by Ivo van Hove, Andrei Konchalovsky, Akram Khan, or Frédéric Fisbach, with whom she appeared during the 65th edition of the Festival d'Avignon.

ALEXANDRE THARAUD

Alexandre Tharaud started leaning the piano at age 5, at the conservatory of the 14th arrondissement in Paris, where he trained with Carmen Taccon-Devenat, who taught him to *"breathe with his instrument."* An internationally renowned pianist, he has recorded works from wildly different eras (Couperin, Bach, Chopin, Ravel, Satie, Thierry Pécou). In 2009, the Minister for Culture named him Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres. His passionate eclecticism has led him to work with various other great artists, such as director Bartabas, actor François Morel, or filmmaker Michael Haneka. In 2017, he published his first book, *Montrez-moi vos mains (Show Me Your Hands)*.

71st
EDITION

In order to bring you this edition, over 1,750 people, artists, technicians, and organisational staff, have worked tirelessly and enthusiastically for months. More than half of them are state-subsidised freelance workers.



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INTERVIEW WITH JULIETTE BINOCHÉ AND ALEXANDRE THARAUD

How do you remember Barbara?

Juliette Binoché: The stage was a place of communion with Barbara, a strange operation she'd mastered with unrivaled subtlety. After one show, I remember, we'd waited in a long line for maybe an hour to say hello to her, and when I got to her dressing room, she dashed towards me like a butterfly and wrapped her arms around me. She was free, direct, in love with life, always in motion. Later, I wrote her a short letter a few months before her death, I wanted to be sure she knew how much her voice, her songs, her presence had accompanied and moved me. She wrote back, I've kept her postcard like a talisman.

Alexandre Tharaud: Until I turned seventeen, I would listen to her for hours, at night, on my teenager's walkman. I finally saw her in 1987, at the Théâtre du Châtelet. The way she came onstage, in profile, the movement of her neck like a lightning bolt, and her dark, piercing eyes. It was like getting struck by lightning. She came towards us, towards me, touched me down there, at the bottom of my gut, and stayed there forever. Such a presence, even from the stage, can change a life, I'm proof of it. I went back so many times, at the Châtelet, at the Théâtre Mogador, on tour. It was always a lesson. A pianist will spend his entire life trying to get as close as possible to the human voice, to imitate it with its mechanical instrument made of felt, wood, and metal. Singers are our masters. Barbara taught me how to handle a musical phrase, to experience the stage fully, to protect myself all the better to offer myself to the audience. During her final years, she was losing her voice slowly. Yet she would circumvent obstacles, go over or under them, as if there was no such thing as tessitura. She was tired, but she remained whole. That might be her most beautiful legacy. To hide nothing, to put it all on the table, down to her skin. Our cracks are also part of our identity, they are an opportunity.

How was this project born?

J.B.: It was all Alexandre's desire. His intuition. His ear. Now, our encounter has become its roots. We don't know yet where it will go, but we know where its bonds come from; it was born where Barbara left us. We all have a privileged and personal relationship to her work. There aren't just two Barbaras, there are thousands of her.

A.T.: I met producer Olivier Gluzman while working on my tribute album to Barbara—of whom he is also a fan and admirer. As we talked, I mentioned the idea of having someone read her texts. At first I didn't think about being a part of it, or of having a piano there. His enthusiasm convinced me to embark on this fascinating adventure.

How did you meet Alexandre Tharaud? What kind of musician do you think he is?

J.B.: He has the humility of the great. He lets himself be guided by the work and its sensitivity. He knows how to put himself at the service of the transparency Barbara speaks of so well. I feel like I've met my brother.

How did you meet Juliette Binoché? What kind of actress do you think she is?

A.T.: We discovered each other when talking about this project, our respective history with Barbara echoed each other, and friendship was born. It seemed

obvious. Patiently, we went through all her texts—songs, memoirs, programmes, interviews. We took our time, but paid close attention to everything. Sharing this experience naturally brought us closer, just like our missing Barbara had done. In this intimate context, the texts of the songs took on a loftiness I couldn't have imagined. Juliette embodies them with disarming simplicity. Beyond the immensely talented actress, there is in her a dizzying dimension, made of both insolence and attentive generosity, which immediately echoes Barbara's extreme sensitivity.

How did you choose the texts and music for this show? What stories will you tell with them?

J.B.: There are those you can't do without, but there are a lot of them... There are the lover's songs, the childhood songs, the songs of hopeless hope, the flighty songs, they're all true. Barbara was a living contrast, in the lights, in her moods. I'm no singer, neither is Alexandre, but she brought us together. The absence of her voice will be part of the show.

A.T.: We'll tell our own story. On 24 November 1997, Barbara left us in a long silence. This show was born of this silence. The texts and music we feel closest to were obvious picks. I remember her funeral, on 27 November. After the stars and the cameras had left, we stayed by her grave, just us fans, and we spent a large part of the day singing. "Dis, quand reviendras-tu ?", "Une petite cantate"... There was no sadness, but it left us all deeply moved. That day, I realised just how much Barbara would from then on live in our hearts and our voices.

What does the music on which Barbara's songs were created inspire in you? How will you adapt and orchestrate them?

A.T.: Barbara would sometimes work on a piece of music for years before recording it. Her songs seem simple, but if you study them more closely, you'll see they are intricate works of art. I often play them, without the words, and with only three notes they can create an entire world. In this case, I don't believe in orchestrations, they're too heavy-handed. Barbara was accompanied by a small number of musicians, in an economy of sound to focus fully on meaning. I think of what Miles Davis said: "Why play so many notes instead of just choosing the most beautiful?" For *To live somehow*, I chose minimalism, because it is in those conditions that Barbara gives herself the best. With restraint...

The title of the show comes from the song "Le Mal de vivre". What do you think it tells us of Barbara, or of our time?

J.B.: The final words of Gérard Depardieu's last show this past winter, in which he thanked Barbara for "her consoling words," made me realise how she managed to bare all, to help us live thanks to this brave face to face she had with herself. When, at the end of her unfinished book, *Il était un piano noir* [Once there was a black piano], she writes: "Yet, in spite of my isolation, in spite of the long period of mourning I'd only just started, at the end of my beautiful and intense life as a nomad, I was a happy woman," she tells us that she had to earn that happiness. Her shadows became light, her dark velvets became suns. To live somehow is that return from the deepest, most intense black.

A.T.: It's staying upright.

Interview conducted by Francis Cossu and translated by Gaël Schmidt-Cléach