

L'HOMME À TÊTE DE CHOU

GAINSBURG | BASHUNG | GALLOTTA

Crosses d'après photo Véronique

Gallotta



L'Homme à tête de chou

choreography

Jean-Claude Gallotta

creation

the 12th of november 2009 at MC2:Grenoble (France)

production

**Jean-Marc Ghanassia
and Centre chorégraphique national de Grenoble**

coproduction

MC2 : Grenoble

CONTACTS DIFFUSION

CCN Grenoble

Jean Ripahette : 33 4 76 00 79 74 / ripahette@ccng.fr

CPM

Jean-Marc Ghanassia : + 33 1 56 59 93 61 / jm.ghanassia@cpm.fr

L'Homme à tête de chou

Distribution

Creation the 12th of november 2009 at MC2:Grenoble - France

choreography **Jean-Claude Gallotta**
words and original music **Serge Gainsbourg**
in a version recorded (*) for this show by **Alain Bashung**
orchestration, additional musics and corealization **Denis Clavaizolle**

choreography assistant **Mathilde Altaraz**
dramatist **Claude-Henri Buffard**
sound mixing and corealization **Jean Lamoot**
costumes **Jacques Schiotto and Marion Mercier assisted by Anne Jonathan**

with **Matthieu Barbin, Hajiba Fahmy, Ximena Figueroa, Ibrahim Guétissi, Yannick Hugron, Cécile Renard, Eléa Robin, Gaetano Vaccaro, Thierry Verger, Stéphane Vitrano Loriane Wagner, Béatrice Warrant, Thalia Ziliotis**

(*) musicians **Denis Clavaizolle** (claviers, orgues, pianos, programmations, guitares électriques, basses, violas), **Frédérique Havet** (guitare acoustique), **Pierre-Valérie Lobé et Mamadou Koné dit Prince** (percussions), **Erik Truffaz** (trompettes), **Aurélie Chenille** (violons), **Guillaume Bongiraud** (violoncelles), **Morgane Imbeaud** (chœurs), **Yann Clavaizolle** (batteries)

gratitude to **Chloé Mons, Yves Quérol, Gérard Michel, Olivier Caillart**
with the authorization of **Melody Nelson Publishing and BARCLAY - un label UNIVERSAL**

production **Jean-Marc Ghanassia and Centre chorégraphique national de Grenoble**
coproduction **MC2 : Grenoble**

The Centre chorégraphique national de Grenoble is financed by the Ministère de la Culture / DRAC Rhône-Alpes, the Ville de Grenoble, the Conseil Général de l'Isère, the Conseil Régional Rhône-Alpes, and by CultureFrance for international tour.

L'Homme à tête de chou

Intention

A violent, sometimes painful dance crammed with love and politically incorrect sex symbols driven by the only fuel worth using: desire. The words, by Gainsbourg, are playful, brilliant, erotic, even lewd, with every syllable penetrating the ears and the senses exquisitely. Original music fed as much by Ravel as Steve Reich, the Doors as Debussy is augmented by harpsichords, congas, guitars, trumpets, violins and 'cellos. Lastly, a voice, that of Bashung, warm, deep, penetrating, even heartbreaking, is ever-present.

By the light of a sardonic moonlit night, inevitably petrol blue, *The Man with the Cabbage Head* tells not only of the tumultuous life of the little tart Marilou, an enigmatic trainee hairdresser that a man "blinded by her rustic beauty" makes disappear under the lather. The piece also tells another beautiful story, of guilds and artistic closeness, that of Bashung and Gainsbourg, Gallotta and Bashung, that has resisted (in farcical style) the forces of death. On stage, it is understatedly sad. The only things there are bodies, apart from the wheelchair that will never again be sat in by the absent Bashung. Nothing else is needed. Nothing more than dramatic diagonals, frenetic running about, sliding steps, wide arm movements, the strength and dexterity of co-ordinated movement. "It's a beautiful ending", writes journalist Patrice Demailly. "Wonderful, amazing, disturbing dancers, filled with devastating energy".

In twelve scenes, the fourteen performers, like wafts of perfume, make a flamboyant, black, tragic and intoxicating tribute to life. Despairing and cheeky, inconsolable and dashing, Serge Gainsbourg and Alain Bashung "bequeath their absence" as a gift on stage every night.

C.-H.B – may 2010

L'Homme à tête de chou

An interview with Jean-Claude Gallotta extracts

Alain Bashung “crossed over to the other side” on 14 March 2009, after you had been working with him for three years on a project to put on a show based on Gainsbourg’s “l’Homme à tête de chou” ...

Absence was part of this artistic adventure from the outset – the absence of Gainsbourg, and of Marilou, the central character in the *l’Homme à tête de chou* album. I was working on this idea for the show and had talked to Alain Bashung about it. And then he absented himself too. We knew he was ill, but we thought he’d be with us through to the end, that he’d come and see the show and even take part in it, live, one evening. What remains is the wonderful gift that he has offered us, with the help of Denis Clavaizolle and Jean Lamoot, of having re-orchestrated, arranged, sung and recorded for us the album that he was still working on in the last few weeks of his life.

It’s an amazing project: Gainsbourg, Bashung, Gallotta. What brought it about?

The adventure actually started quite a long time ago. Gainsbourg and Bashung were among the artists who inspired me. In my own way, I’ve always felt that I belonged to that family of artists. A few years ago, Bashung and I began to have closer contact; he was looking to bring dance into his concerts. And in 2006, the producer Jean-Marc Ghanassia, who had noticed the rapport between us, suggested that we worked together on this project.

We both reacted very quickly to the proposition; we met again and immediately felt at ease with each other. We had the same references. We became friends. To show that he was interested in the adventure, Bashung soon found time to re-orchestrate and record the whole album.

Is putting the show together a major break with your previous work or a form of continuity?

It’s both. I’m still totally in line with what I’ve been trying to do for many years, which is to “immerse” contemporary dance in other worlds. I’ve done it with rock songs, jazz, Khmer music, Bach, Kurt Weill, Janacek, Pascal Dusapin and Lully a few months ago. But it’s also a break because contemporary dance and songs belong to two different worlds, they’re different forms of energy, different types of challenge and sometimes a different audience, so we somehow have to get them to live together.

What technical problems has this adaptation posed?

It hasn't posed many more problems than a normal show. It must be said that Alain Bashung did some tremendous work. Without ever compromising the original work, and always with the greatest respect, he extended the thirty-two minutes of songs by Gainsbourg to provide an hour and ten minutes of musical continuity, with musical passages used to link the tableaux together. All I had to do was compose my ballet in twelve tableaux and with fourteen dancers.

And the dancers won't be required to "illustrate" the story...

No. What I'm looking for is to work with them in a single world that's parallel to the world of the album: it's my way of treating simplicity, violence, desire and absence. The issue of absence is found lurking in the work of both Gainsbourg and Bashung, the politeness of despair, the extreme rigour of the disenchanted. I'd like to see all that circulating between the dancers in a black-and-white universe, I'd like to show something of the latent sadness that the two artists felt along with their tremendous energy. And the dancers won't embody them, they'll simply suggest them, each of them may be filled in turn with the character of Gainsbourg, Bashung, Marilou, and *l'Homme à tête de chou* (Cabbage Head).

Above all, I want to represent an atmosphere, like music hall without the glitter, or with glitter that reflects both the agony and the ecstasy of being alive.

Interview with

Claude-Henri BUFFARD

(March 2009)

L'Homme à tête de chou

Biography Jean-Claude Gallotta

Jean-Claude Gallotta trained in the fine arts at the Ecole d'Art in his native city of Grenoble, France, but interrupted his studies to experiment with edgy performance works that brought together actors, musicians, dancers and visual artists. In 1978, he travelled to New York, where he discovered the work of Merce Cunningham and his unstructured approach to choreographic time, space and movement.

Returning to France in 1979, Mr Gallotta co-founded (with Mathilde Altaraz) the Groupe Emile Dubois. In 1981, the company moved into the Maison de la Culture de Grenoble and quickly established a dynamic locus of choreographic innovation. The works that Mr. Gallotta created there include *Ulysse*, a playful ballet that combines elements of classical and modern dance ; it was followed by *Les Aventures d'Ivan Vaffan*, *Les Louves et Pandora*.

In 1984, the company's space was renamed the Centre Chorégraphique National de Grenoble, and the group remounted *Ulysse* for performances at the Los Angeles Olympic Festival, the American Dance Festival, the Holland Festival, and the Avignon Festival.

In 1986, Jean-Claude Gallotta was appointed Director of the Maison de la Culture de Grenoble (which he renamed "Le Cargo"), thus becoming the first choreographer to lead an institution of its kind.

In 1987, his ballet *Mammame* scored a huge hit at Montreal's Festival International de Nouvelle Danse, and Canada's dance and theater media presented him with the award for Best Foreign Production of the Year.

In 1989, having collaborated on a dozen audio-visual projects with, among others, Claude Mouriéras and Raoul Ruiz, Jean-Claude Gallotta directed his first feature film, *Rei Dom – La Légende des Kreuls*.

By 1990, the Groupe Emile Dubois had given over 130 performances in 23 countries, and its original repertoire had expanded with the addition of *Docteur Labus* and *Les Mystères de Subal*.

Jean-Claude stepped down as Director of the Maison de la Culture de Grenoble in 1990 in order to devote himself to his first book, *Mémoire d'un dictaphone*, published the same year. During the 1991-1992 season, he unveiled two new multidisciplinary works, *La Légende de Roméo et Juliette* (premiered in November 1991 at the Festival Olympique des Arts d'Albertville) and *La Légende de Don Juan* (premiered in June 1992 at the Seville Universal Exposition, coproduced by the Avignon Festival). He also directed his second film, *L'amour en deux*.

In 1993, he published his second book, *Les yeux qui dansent*, a collection of interviews with Bernard Rafalli. In June of that year he remounted *Ulysse* for an extensive international tour culminating at the Festival de Châteauvallon.

1994, saw the premiere of *Prémonitions* in Grenoble.

In 1995, Jean-Claude Gallotta was commissioned by the Lyon Opera Ballet to compose *La Solitude du danseur*, four solos set to music by Erik Satie. He collaborated with Nicholas Hytner and Sir Charles Mackerras to stage Leos Janacek's opera *La Petite renarde rusée*, produced by the Théâtre du Châtelet. At the Festival de Châteauvallon he performed the premiere of his new solo *Hommage to Pavel Haas*, and in Grenoble he choreographed *La Tête contre les fleurs* for the company, followed in 1996 by *Rue de Palanka* and in 1997 by *La Rue* and *La Chamoule ou l'art d'aimer*.

He has a longstanding connection to Japan, where he was first invited by stage director Tadashi Suzuki : from 1997 to 2000, Mr Gallotta headed the Dance Department of the newly-created Shizuoka Performing Arts Centre, where he founded and directed a resident company of eight Japanese dancers.

In 1998, he directed *Le Ventriloque* by Jean-Marie Piemme and *Le Catalogue* by Jean-Bernard Pouy, and wrote a play, *Pierre Chatel*, as part of the "Adieu au Siècle" millennium project.

For the Opera Ballet, Jean-Claude Gallotta created *Les Variations d'Ulysse* (premiered at the Opéra Bastille in 1995 and recreated in 1998) and *Nosferatu*, with music by Pascal Dusapin (premiered at the Opéra Bastille in May 2002 and upcoming in spring 2006).

In 2002 he premiered *99 duos* at the Théâtre National de Chaillot, and in 2003 created *Trois Générations* for the Festival d'Avignon ; however, that engagement was cancelled. The work (choreographed for an ensemble of children, former dancers, and members of the company) premiered in March 2004 at the Rampe d'Echirolles and was presented that May at the Théâtre National de Chaillot.

In 2004, for the opening of MC2, he created *My Rock* ; in 2005 with the director Hans-Peter Cloos, a show marrying dance, theatre and music, *Les sept péchés capitaux* of Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill; and in 2006, *Des Gens qui dansent*.

In October, 2007, at the Théâtre National de Chaillot of Paris, he created *Cher Ulysse*. In 2008, *Bach danse experience* with Mirella Giardelli and the Atelier des Musiciens du Louvre • Grenoble; *Armide* from Lully with the conductor William Christie and the director Robert Carsen at Théâtre des Champs-Élysées - Paris; *Chroniques chorégraphiques - saison 1*, a kind of « stage movie ». In 2009, *Le Maître d'amour* from the book of Maryse Wolinski and *L'Homme à tête de chou* from Serge Gainsbourg, recorded by Alain Bashung.

In 2011, he performed solo in *Faut qu'je danse!*, presented as a prelude to the recreation of his trio *Daphnis é Chloé*.

In this rock opera, twelve tableaux are performed and the rhythms alternate between slowness and frenzy. On the bare stage, 14 dancers work alone, in twos and threes and in a group to interpret violence, desire and absence. The characters are shown in different forms: Marilou – in jeans, black bra and high heels – and *l'Homme à tête de chou* (Cabbage Head) changes his face. And the fatal muse dances alone to perform *Variations sur Marilou*, an ode to female pleasure.

Gainsbourg and Bashung dance / Sabrina Weldman



Jean-Claude Gallotta works in the suggestive and then in the lascivious embodiment of lovers' erotic games: the scene illustrating the orgiastic reprise of *Variations sur Marilou* literally shows us choreography in a new light that is passionate, sensual and playful in the way in which it deals with the interactions between the dancers... The fluidity of the whole leaves the spectator with no respite as he is caught up in the coherence of a show that needs to be seen again and again in order to pick up all the echoes.

Love's intoxication / François Cau



"Pupil absent iris / Absinth", Marilou "plunges with delight / Into the petrol blue night / of her pair of Lewis'." Alone in front of the armchair, Cécile Renard, auburn fringe and undulating body, "self-controls" as Gainsbourg says, to the rhythm of the tune. Sexy? It's very sexy. And rocky too.

When Marilou dance reggae / Laurence Liban



Seven dancers, seven Marilous and seven dancers, seven *Homme à tête de chou* (Cabbage Head), abandon themselves to a frenzied dance. A sort of destructive "dizziness of love" against a background of desire, violence and the voice of Bashung. Words by Gainsbourg.

The ultimate singing of Bashung / Serge Pueyo



In twelve tableaux, Jean-Claude Gallotta doesn't emphasise, he suggests. Gallotta carries a sadness inside him, symbolised by the empty armchair on castors: a point of convergence for the dancers. Bashung should have been sitting in it. *L'Homme à tête de chou* is the fulfilment of a promise, a dialogue that is carried on with the absent person. And the warm tones of Bashung's voice flow easily and respectfully through the recital. Later on, his country crooner voice takes off and tears at our emotions on *Ma Lou Marilou*.

For "L'Homme à tête de chou" Bashung entered into the skin of Gainsbourg / Bruno Lesprit



Gallotta offers a dance that innocently plays on the codes of musical comedy. There's a narrative, characters and a dance that's based on the rhythms of the music score. But Gallotta interprets it all in his own way, using suggestion and clear images.

"L'Homme à tête de chou" enters in the dance / A. B.



The dancers are magnificent. With devastating energy, they devour space with the appetites of wild animals and an unfailing generosity, uncovering bodies that are often stunning, with all the appeal of youth... The choreography is delightful, spirited, effective and very recognisable: pure Gallotta with its frenzied runs, jumps, slide steps and those ambiguous movements marked by nonchalance and formality, facetiousness and conscious affectation.

Made to seduce / Raphaël de Gubernatis



The dance repeats the highlights without illustrating Serge Gainsbourg's often daring words. Alain Bashung's mellow, solemn voice works wonders...*L'Homme à tête de chou* (Cabbage Head) becomes a long, symphonic rock poem. In his choreography, Gallotta opts for frenzied runs, contagiously energetic leaps and sensual trios: a girl dancer with her hands inside two boys' flies takes them off in a crazy saraband and ends up naked, covered only by her partners, who squeeze her between them.

Alain Bashung's last dance / Philippe Noisette



A very ethereal dance in which Jean-Claude Gallotta uses repeated "chassés" to allow the dancers to indulge in sweeping, generous movements that take up the whole stage. A very sensual, even sexual dance that involves nudity and taboos, but always within the bounds of elegance.

Gallotta dances Bashung / François Deletraz

Le Journal du Dimanche

L'Homme à tête de chou (Cabbage Head) Bashung lives on stage with fourteen dancers. It's a dark, tragic, dynamic, rhythmical ballet, full of life despite everything. Like a continuing conversation; an inextinguishable life impulse.

Waltz with Bashung / Alexis Campion



La Terrasse

Energetic, powerful, frenetic, the dance generally uses the stage to great effect: great traverses, chassés and leaps, a whole vocabulary whose classical foundations glitter with each step. And of course there are the great group effects, the bodies, working jubilantly in unison to sustain and give rhythm to what is being played out before us: the drama of a passionate love.

L'Homme à tête de chou (Cabbage Head) / Nathalie Yokel

la Croix

The choreography is directly inspired by Gainsbourg's musical boldness. Jean-Claude Gallotta develops this range of rhythms with his own personal dance vocabulary, vigorous runs, sweeping arm movements and frenzied chassés. He delights in group effects and offers some lovely personal variations ...A show with radiant energy.

Gallotta and Bashung make l'Homme à tête de chou (Cabbage Head) dance / Marie-Valentine Chaudon



Télérama

Gallotta and his dancers have always shown the ability to be ethereal, light and cheerful in disaster, their bodies perpetually moving, running and jumping to provide a joy in being and living despite everything. There are fourteen of them in jeans and shirt, sometimes stripped to the waist or in a black lace bra, taking turns to play the heroes of the bloody drama and to love love and sex until it kills them. Although the show is short, the audience comes out emotionally exhausted. Using bodies and voices, violence and softness, the Gallotta-Gainsbourg-Bashung trio takes us to the abyss of desire and jealousy. And the varying silhouettes of the fraternal dancers disappear as if sliding into the shadows of obsession and memory.

Do you know how to tattoo a cabbage? / Fabienne Pascaud -

inrockuptibles^{les}

The two indissociable stories within the story of sound and bodies give a new, original, poetic construction of *l'Homme à tête de chou* (Cabbage Head).

Latest news of the stars / Marc Besse