



Mélissa Von Vépy
// Cie Happés

PIANO RUBATO

MÉLISSA VON VÉPY & STÉPHAN OLIVA

AERIAL & MUSICAL PERFORMANCE // CREATION 2023



Méliissa Von Vépy, aerial artist, and **Stéphan Oliva**, musician, invite the public on a journey by boat-piano, in a ship of which only the outline remains, like a skeletal frame.

This ghostly boat could be that of the Flying Dutchman, or the boat from *The Island of the Dead* by Böcklin, or the one which, in ancient Egypt, led souls to the world of the dead.

The passengers, in this living sculpture moved by Méliissa Von Vépy's breath and Stéphan Oliva's music, stroll through a mysterious space, from the world of the living to that of the dead. During the journey, water and air mingle, revealing the invisible and the silence. And then, there is only breath and movement.

PIANO RUBATO

AERIAL AND MUSICAL PERFORMANCE

Premieres on January 2023 at Culture Commune, National theatre of the Pas-de-Calais Mining Basin

Duo / all audiences / duration 50'

Different configurations possible : theaters (tiers - frontal), or non-dedicated venues: halls, arenas, open-air and outdoor venues... (audience in a semi-circle)

Concept and performance **Mélissa Von Vépy**

Concept and performance **Stéphane Oliva**

Set design **Neil Price, Mélissa Von Vépy**

Artistic collaboration **Julia Christ**

Sound design **Jean-Damien Ratel**

Lighting **Sabine Charreire**

Costumes **Catherine Sardi**

Technical director **Julien Chérault**

Production administrator **Jean-Baptiste Clément**

Production - distribution - communication : **Triptyque Production**

Teaser : <https://vimeo.com/774675405>

Photos : **Christophe Raynaud de Lage**

PARTNERS

Production Cie Happés // Mélissa Von Vépy

Coproduction

Culture Commune, National Theatre of the Pas-de-Calais Mining Basin

Le Sirque, National Circus Arts Centre of Nexon

Residencies

Le Théâtre d'Arles

La Cigalière, Theatre of Sérignan

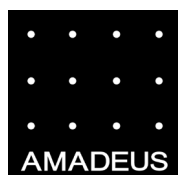
With support from French Ministry of Culture - Occitan Regional Cultural Affairs Office (DRAC), the Occitania / Pyrénées-Méditerranée Region, the Gard Departmental Council

Special support and thanks Amadeus Audio : development of a custom-made electro-acoustic device, Cédric Cambon : electronics design, Jean-François Tobias - Historical Piano Association, Emmanuelle Grobet Raphaële Von Vépy and Andy Steiner

Cie Happés // Mélissa Von Vépy is franco-swiss.

Their work is funded by the Ministry of Culture - Occitan Regional Cultural Affairs Office (DRAC).

Mélissa Von Vépy is an associate artist of Le Sirque - National Circus Arts Centre of Nexon





This ship floats on land, it is a sonorous vessel.
It sways in an endless journey to the other world.
Attempting to blend with the invisible,
with the souls of those who have gone before us.
The captain is music, the woman is wind
breathing life into this strange piano-boat;
All three, instruments of passage,
inextricably emitting and transmitting.

RUBATO [an Italian musical term, literally: «to steal or to rob » but in music : to play rhythmically with all the freedom an artist possesses : his expression of free will.]

EXTRACT OF CREATOR'S NOTE

The piano as a starting point

A piano - swaying boat, musical stage prop

It's as much my instrument as Stephan's. We also want it to exist on its own, as a sculpture. Like a ship's sail, the piano lid is extraordinarily extended to 5 meters in height.

And my breath, linked with a counterweight swinging in the hull, activates the movement ; a sort of slow fluttering that allows me to move over/under it, like a scuba diver: as I breathe out, the ship rolls down allowing me to skim the ground and as I breathe in, I am lifted up into the air

The concept of a closely interlocking scenographic structure and dramaturgy is one of Cie Happés' notable characteristics. For the creation of this «piano-boat», I called on my on-going collaboration (since 2011) with set designer and builder Neil Price.

This stage object brings about many technical challenges;

For if it must from the start summon the spectator's imagination by its power of evocation, it must also at the same time be regarded as a musical instrument of great quality - a sound system conceived by Jean-Damien Ratel with the remarkable support of «Amadeus sound system» - and of course, it must also serve as an «apparatus» to support my aerial evolutions.

In addition to this unusual design is the structure's movement: an electronic counterweight device, developed by Cédric Cambon, linked to my breathing which pivots on itself at 360°, swinging at 180°.

A musical and visual dive

For this piece, I would like to plunge into the essence of my aerial discipline like those of Butô and Qi gong in order to compose with Stéphan Oliva a score that is both visual and musical.

By resonating or answering Stéphan's notes, I make this piano-boat dance, melting into the air, embodying - physically and without emotions - with my breath and my muscles, a woman-wind.

The piano has become a boat, a vessel, a ship. Inferring from its intrinsic potential, the music inwardly moves us.

For this reason, we've written this performance as a voyage on the open sea, sometimes calm, sometimes stormy, on the surface or in the depths, approaching islands with unique hues.

Mélissa Von Vépy



DIFFUSION 2023

- **January 12 & 13, Premier** ■ Culture Commune, National Theater of the Pas-de-Calais Mining Basin, Loos-en-Gohelle
- **January 17** ■ Le Prato, National Circus Centre, Lille
- **April 15 & 16** ■ Les Franciscaines, Deauville - SPRING, International circus festival in Normandy
- **June 2 & 3** ■ Evenings c/o Cie Happés, Aigues-Vives
- **July 25 & 26** ■ Paris l'été Festival
- **August** ■ Multi-Pistes Festival, Le Sirque, National Circus Arts Centre of Nexon
- **September** ■ Sète National Theatre, season opening

LOGISTICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Different configurations possible

theatres (tiers - frontal), or non-dedicated venues: halls, arenas, open-air and outdoor venues (audience in a semi-circle / evening performance preferred)

All audiences - from 8 years

Duration 50'

- 2 performance minimum (possibility of 2 shows on same day to discuss)
- 4 people on tour, please contact us for pricing

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Minimum performance area dimensions

a 10m diameter circle (level ground - load: 500kg /m2), height under grid or ceiling: 7 m

> **see technical rider**

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ÉQUIPE ARTISTIQUE



MÉLISSA VON VÉPY // CIE HAPPÉS • concept, performance

Born in Geneva in 1979, she begins training in circus arts at the age of 5, then enters the French CNAC (National Centre for Circus Art) where she graduates as a trapeze artist in 1999.

At the heart of her company, Happés, she creates shows combining her aerial, dance and theatre experiences. The scenographic elements she designs in her works are an integral part of the dramaturgy, always founded in aerial expression: the physical and inner scope of Gravity.

Along with loyal artistic collaborators - Sabine Charreire, Pascale Henry, Sumako Koseki, Stéphan Oliva, Neil Price, Jean-Damien Ratel, Catherine Sardi...- Mélissa Von Vépy has been exploring, over the past twenty years, the infinite metaphors of our vertical movements.

PRODUCTIONS

2021 : ***Les Flyings [The Flyings]** (quintet)
 2018 : **Noir M1 [Black M1]** (solo)
 2017 : ***L'Aérien, causerie-envolée [The Aerial, an airborne lecture]** (solo)
 2015 : **J'ai horreur du printemps [I Hate Spring]** (concert- spectacle avec un quatuor de jazz)
 2013 : **VieLLeicht [Perhaps]** (solo)
 2009 : ***Miroir, Miroir [Mirror, Mirror]** (duo pour miroir et piano)
 2009 : **Dans la gueule du ciel [Into the Sky's Jaw]** (duo)
 2007 : **Croc [Hook]** (solo, co-mise en scène: C. Ikeda)

Co-mise en scène avec Chloé Moglia :

2007 : **En suspens [In Suspense]** (quintet co-mise en scène : C. Moglia)
 2005 : **I look up, I look down...**(duo) / Prix Art du cirque SACD - 2007
 2003 : **Temps Troubles [Troubled Times]** (trio)
 2001 : **Un certain endroit du ventre [A particular place in the belly]** duo)

* shows currently on tour

PERFORMER

Talk Show (2017) by Gaël Santisteva, *Ce qui n'a pas de nom* (2015) dby Pascale Henry, *Hans was Heiri* (2012) by Zimmermann & de Perrot, *UCHUU-cabaret* (2008) by Carlotta Ikeda, *Les Sublimes* (2003) by Guy Alloucherie.

OUTREACH AND ARTISTIC ADVISOR

Mélissa Von Vépy regularly directs workshops and master classes on aerial performance and is invited as a collaborator/artistic advisor by different companies.

She is currently working on the production, **Plonger - [Diving]** (autumn 23) by Sarah Devaux / Cie Menteuses, in the framework of her mentorship with Cie Happés.

La Cie Happés // Mélissa Von Vépy est franco-suisse.

Cie Happés // Mélissa Von Vépy is Franco-Swiss.

She is funded by the French Ministry of Culture - Occitan Regional Cultural Affairs Office (DRAC)

Mélissa Von Vépy is an associate artist of the Sirque - National Center, Nexon.



STEPHAN OLIVA • composer, pianist

Born in France, jazz pianist, improviser, composer (music for film, theatre, performing arts), classical and contemporary music artist, Stéphan Oliva follows a unique path, defined by his devotions, his emotions and his encounters.

From Bill Evans (whose live concert brought him to jazz) to the voices of Susanne Abbuehl, Linda Sharrock or Hannah Schygulla (all of whom he accompanies), from asceticism (Lennie Tristano revisited with his pal François Raulin) to trapeze (his duet with the «aerial dancer» Mélissa Von Vépy), from Paul Motian (whom he revered) to film music (which he composes), Stéphan Oliva is without doubt an original and pluralist musician and pianist.

Appearing on the jazz scene in the early 90s after a background in classical studies, Stéphan Oliva immediately joins an informal group of contemporary musicians (Claude Tchamitchian, Jean-Pierre Jullian, Bruno Chevillon, François Merville...) who share the same eclectic aspirations. They will quickly become the up and coming artists on France's jazz scene and remain today a leading reference throughout Europe.

4** jazzman (1992 - 1999 - 2002 - 2008 - 2010-2019)**

« Grand Prix » Jazz Album of the Charles Cros Academy 2017

The France Musique's French Music Choice of 2010, 2012 et 2013, 2017, 2019

Listening

Stéphan Oliva - *Cinéma invisible* - Bonus track #1 : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_K6am_mB7Qw



NEIL PRICE • set designer, builder

Neil Price was born in Hemel Hempstead, England where he studied engineering. At the age of 20, he leaves on a European tour as a street artist, staying in France where he has been living ever since.

He meets up and creates several shows with L'Estock Fish, a street theatre - circus company.

In 2004, he joins the Franco-Swiss company, Les 3 points de suspension / Dakota.

As technical director, he creates sets, designs props all the while performing with them as an actor (*Voyage en bordure du bord du bout du monde*, *Nié Qui Tamola*, *Looking for paradise*, *Bains publics*, *Ostrea Odulis-Flat Oyster*, *Squash*).

Since 2011, he's been designing sets for shows for Mélissa Von Vépy / Cie Happés (*VieLLeicht*, *J'ai horreur du printemps*, *L'Aérien*, *Noir M1*, *Les Flyings*).

An outstanding builder-engineer, Neil Price collaborates closely with each director bringing to life their ideas while managing the constant concern of providing a singular aesthetic universe in respect with precise safety specifications and practicality.

For the past ten years, many artists have called upon his skills to design and build their sets (Sumako Koseki, Ana Ventura, Thomas Guiral, Mathilde Jaillette, Olivia Csiky Trnka, Sarah Devaux...)

He is currently collaborating with Mélissa Von Vépy - **Piano Rubato**, La Cie du Prélude – *Littoral* and Charlie Moine - *Le comité des fêtes*.



CONTACTS

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