



# Darwin's Sex Tape

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# Darwin's Sextape

## **Text and Director**

Brigitte Mounier

## **Choreography**

Philippe Lafeuille

## **Performers**

Sarah Nouveau

Léo Lequeuche

Brigitte Mounier

Marie-Paule Bonnemason

## **Lighting Designer**

Nicolas Bignan

## **Construction**

Ettore Marchica

## **Costume Designer**

Emilie Cottam

## **Production**

Compagnie des Mers du Nord

## **Supporters**

Ville de Grande-Synthe, Conseil Régional des Hauts de France,  
Conseil Général du Nord, Conseil général Pas de Calais,  
SPEDIDAM

Running time : 1h30



## Purpose

After the performance of ***Eve against Lucy, Darwin's other nightmare*** (a scientific battle, pitting Darwinists against creationists) in 2008, the Company is hammering the point home with another show, inspired by an interest in biodiversity and the infinite variety of the animal kingdom and its sexual practices.

We will talk about the fabulous and unprecedented diversity of sexual behaviour and modes of reproduction in the animal kingdom, which encourages us to go beyond mainstream theory and to reconsider heterosexuality and inevitable family lore. Because although our culture teaches us that sex is an activity to perpetuate the species, an activity in which males and females happily co-operate, the natural world demonstrates the narrow-mindedness of this fantasy. Mankind has long seen the world through the filter of his own cultural inclinations, considering this bipartisan vision to be the norm and viewing any other combination as something seemingly unnatural. Unnatural? Really? Let's take a closer look at what nature has to say on the subject.

On stage, we will see and hear 1 singer, 2 dancers and 1 actress as part of this joyous show which will focus on the amorous behaviour patterns of the living species which populate our planet, enabling us to better understand nature and to tackle the misconceptions about procreation which our culture has perpetuated.





## Notes from the director

The reasons behind this show aren't new, although they continue to resonate in view of this century's news and politics.

Darwin's Sex Tape is a response (a powerless one, of course, but theatre is the only means at my disposal and sometimes has the ability to make a real mark on members of the audience) to the resurgence of homophobia which is expressed violently in many countries around the world and also in what we consider to be our own liberal continent of Europe. Indeed, just 2 hours from where we live, some governments have recently asked families to kill their homosexual children so as not to dishonour their nation.

On the other hand, in many countries and, once again, in good old Europe, human bodies, particularly girls' bodies, are still a subject of concern, an excuse for interdictions and a source of taboos. And, because of its sex, the female population continues to be subject to violence, discrimination and domination.

It's as if having a body was a crime. It's as if the separation of the sexes, which dates back at least 1 billion years, was an evolutionary error, as if having breasts and a vagina was a source of shame and – yes, let's say it – a sin.

How is it possible, when this planet will soon be home to 8 billion people, that seeing a naked body and using the words "vagina", "penis" or "copulation" still create discomfort and cause embarrassment?

1 billion years have not been enough for humanity to accept that our species is the fruit of male gametes and female gametes, that a sexually differentiated body is NORMAL, that we should be able to walk around naked without shame or fear, without even being noticed and paid the slightest attention.

So, this show's modest ambition is to put these species in their rightful place with eukaryotes, using the joy of dance and singing to remind us all of the incredible diversity of the sexual practices, processes of seduction and methods of reproduction in nature.

This show is accessible to all, once reproduction and/or Evolution have been discussed at school or as a family.



## The theme

From an evolutionary point of view, sex is a way to create differences. This way of creating differences is extremely diverse: there are thousands of ways to practise sex.

“In all species, from protists to humans, it is clear that most, if not all, of the fundamental activities of a living being ultimately contribute to the same goal: finding one or more partners for reproduction.

But contrary to what we might think, sex isn't necessarily a permanent and unchanging element for all living creatures. Some animals change sex over time. This phenomenon is quite common in the animal kingdom. Some animals are males when younger and become females as they age, but sometimes the transformation occurs in the opposite way: young animals are female and then become males as they get older.

“Homosexuality exists in nature. Homosexuality is observed in both sexes in subjects which otherwise have normal levels of hormones. Homosexual animals can form stable couples”.<sup>(1)</sup>  
“Some individuals of the same sex will copulate periodically and will maintain parallel access to reproduction through bisexuality. Others will only seek to copulate with individuals of the same sex. They exist without descendants, although cases of adoption have been observed”.<sup>(2)</sup>

There are also so-called reverse-sex species, in which the behaviour of individuals is the opposite of that which one would “expect”, based on their sex: the females engage in courtship displays, the males take care of the young, etc.

But the incredible diversity of behaviour goes even further: Did you know that dolphins sometimes have carnal relations with turtles? And did you know that some lizard species reproduce without any male intervention?



It should be noted that, when it comes to animals, no study uses the word “gender” as it is used when studying humanities.

In the humanities, the word “gender” covers the differences in behaviour between men and women. Do these differences stem from biological differences (the two sexes) or socially constructed differences, developed over centuries, which assign men and women different roles in society?

Is gender merely in the eye of the beholder? Is gender a historic, social or cultural construct?

From an evolutionary point of view, diversity makes species viable. “All creatures and all species have the freedom to choose the response which best suits their temperament, their needs and their circumstances. They can even assess the available responses to retain the very best or the most effective element of each. Consequently, a viable society at a human level is **an open, pluralist society which is welcoming and gives free rein to creativity**. It would be useless to replace the tyranny of the genetic programme with an externally imposed ideological programme, based on a single model. Whatever its origins, whether political, philosophical or religious, any dictatorship serves to impoverish those who are subject to it. A revolution which gets caught up in totalitarianism is a step backwards. Only freedom is revolutionary, because it enables innovation”.<sup>(1)</sup>

<sup>(1)</sup> Le sexe et la mort / Jacques Ruffié / Odile Jacob, 1986

<sup>(2)</sup> Trouble dans le Genre / Judith Butler / La découverte, 2006



## Sources / Bibliography

- *Le sexe et la mort* / Jacques Ruffié / Odile Jacob, 1986
- *Trouble dans le Genre* / Judith Butler / La découverte-Poche, 2006
- *La biodiversité amoureuse. Sexe et évolution* / Thierry Lode / Odile Jacob, 2011.
- *Les fantaisies sexuelles des animaux et les nôtres* / Hy Freedman / Stock, 1982
- *Comme les bêtes. Ce que les animaux nous apprennent de notre sexualité* / Menno Schilthuizen / Flammarion, 2016
- *La sexualité animale* / Franck Cézilly / Etude, 2009
- *Green porn* de Isabella Rossellini / Schirmer-Mosel, 2009
- *Bêtes de sexe ! : La sexualité des animaux expliquée aux humains Album* / Philippe Vuillemin, Lilith Alighieri / Drugstore, 2010
- *Plaidoyer pour les animaux* / Matthieu Ricard / Pocket, 2016
- *Sexuellement incorrect* / Philippe Arlin / La Martinière, 2016
- *Tous nos fantasmes sexuels sont dans la nature. Psychanalyse et copulation des insectes"* de Tobie Nathan chez 1001 Nuits
- *Le bestiaire d'amour*, film de Gérald Calderon, d'après le livre de Jean Rostand
- *La Banque des savoirs* / <http://www.savoirs.essonne.fr/>



## **The Choreography**

Using the wide range of the actors/dancers' physical skills, the choreographer recreates the balletic performances, courtship displays and mounting of different animal species. The choreography clarifies and replicates the species' sexual communication.

Based on descriptions in scientific literature, the actors explore what it is physically possible to do in technical terms to understand the distinctive nature of the reproductive modes of the chosen species.

At this point, let's be clear: there won't be any pornography on stage; there will, however, be poetic, beautiful, far-fetched and humorous elements, used to tell the audience all about the infinitely inventive nature of the reproduction of living creatures.

## **The Singing**

The singer is a character in her own right: the Voice of Nature. She contributes vocally to the amorous encounters. She uses classical and contemporary lyrical techniques to quote, reproduce and reinvent the courtship displays and vocal jousts which create nature's springtime sounds (calling patterns, trills, etc.).

## **The Costumes**

The costume designer's inventive and technical talents transpose the creativity of evolution into our physical and material reality. Lots of colours, lots of materials.

The animals have realistic appearances and shapes, just like a beautifully illustrated children's book.



# Scenography

The show is made for end-on stages.

## Upstage

There is a cyclorama on the whole width and height.

## Floor

Spring green dance floor on 2/3 of the stage.

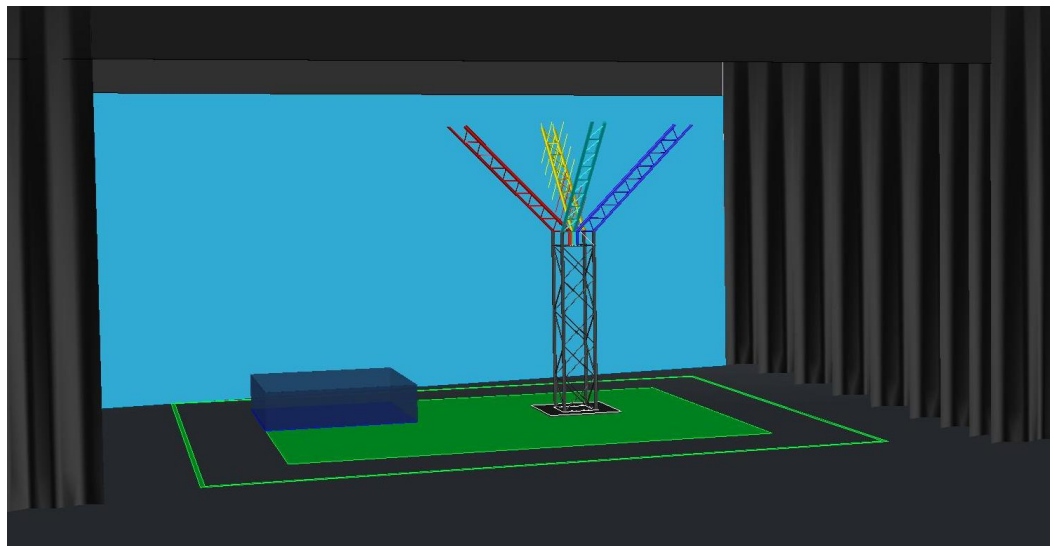
## Tree

The tree consists of a trunk (4,30 m) and 4 branches, made of steel and aluminium pieces of truss, which allow to climb easily on the top of the trunk and on the branches.

It's fixed on a rolling riser and enters the stage during the second part of the show.

## Pool

The pool is a square (1,70 m x 1,70 m), with sides (40 cm), on rolls. The transparent sides allow the audience to see what's happening inside. It's full of blue balls, and enters the stage during the frogs scene.



## The team, on stage



### **Marie Paule Bonnemason**

Marie-Paule studied singing opera with Luc Coadou, Christiane Eda-Pierre, Agnès Mellon, Valérie Fayet and Howard Crook. She won two gold medals of Chamber Music and Singing and an Excellence Prize of the Music Academy from Caen in France.

She carried on her theatrical and vocal formation with the Roy Hart Theatre with Linda Wise and Enrique Pardo and then with Axel Evereart, Pierre Mervant (Teacher in the CNSM in Paris), Laura Sarti (Teacher in the Guildhall of music and drama in London) and with Valérie Guillorit (Amsterdam) as part of the lyric workshop of Escales Lyriques conducted by Steven Taylor, producer. She participated to the vocal workshop of contemporary creation in Royaumont, conducted by James Wood, in Centre Acanthes 2009 and the Internationales Musikinstitut in Darmstadt with Donatienne Michel-Dansac and Georges Aperghis.

She won two operatta prizes in Rieumes and Béziers, finalist in the competition in Vivonne, second prize contemporary melody in the competition of Mâcon, presided by Eric Tanguy and the prize opera category in the 8e Springboard of musical theatre of Auray, presided by Jean-Luc Revol.

She won the first prize in musical in the international competition of Marseille in 2014.



### **Antonin Chediny**

Antonin took up dance at the age of 13 in his home town of Bordeaux and went on to study at Ecole Nationale Supérieure de Danse de Marseille (2010-2012) and at London Contemporary Dance School (2012-2015) where he graduated with a BA First Class. He was one of a small group of LCDS students to perform in front of HRH Duke of York at Buckingham Palace in July 2013 and the same year got awarded with the Peggy Howkins scholarship for 'demonstrating an

exceptionnel potential'. Antonin came back in France in 2015. Since then, he has worked for several companies such as Karine Saporta, Mehdi Farajpour. He also collaborated in few video clips for french singers Patrick Bruel and Vanessa Paradis.

For 4 years now, Antonin works regularly with Compagnie la Halte Garderie/ Johan Amselem . He also joined in 2018 two other companies, the CNDC Angers/Robert Swinston as well as Compagnie la Parenthèse/Christophe Garcia.



## Sarah Nouveau

Sarah Nouveau has worked as contemporary dancer with numerous choreographers: Haïm Adri, Jean Rochereau, Nadège Macleay, Régis Bouchet-Merelli, Michèle Etori, Elisabeth Schwartz, Monique Duquesne.

After a long formation in physical theatre (Le Chemin du Théâtre), she had been a clown for the Elixir Compagnie and comedian for the company Les Détours. Graduated in the art of teaching contemporary dance, she experienced teaching dance with diverse communities.

She graduated from Paris-IV la Sorbonne with a degree in philosophy and in dance history driven by Laurence Louppe in CEFEDM of Aubagne where Sarah Nouveau had taught herself dance history. She wrote several books on dance theory « *Le corps wigmanien d'après 'Adieu et Merci'* », « *Danser l'ailleurs* », and « *La culture choréographique au cœur de l'enseignement de la danse* » published by L'Harmattan. Since 2010, she creates shows with her company Le quadrille des homards, and develops notably choreographed lectures. She practices yoga since 10 years and now she is formed by Bénédicte Pavelak ("Transmit the art of body and voice"). Her research leads her to think differently the art of teaching dance and as meaning that dance is becoming a privileged tool for the self-discovery. She cooperates with la Compagnie des Mers du Nord for Le Manifeste and leads workshops on body and voice for the National Education.



## Brigitte Mounier

After graduating at the National Theater School of Strasbourg T.N.S. directed by Jean-Pierre Vincent and after more than 4000 theatrical performances on stage as comedian and in the air as a trapeze artist at the National Theater L'Odéon du Cirque Jean Richard, and passing by the inevitable places of decentralisation, Brigitte Mounier set up in 1994 on the Opale Coast, in the North of France.

There, she creates la **Compagnie des Mers du Nord** through which she directs and plays contemporary repertory and thirty artistic creations so far, all broadcasted in France and in Europe.

Furthermore, she organises every year since 2004 **Le Manifeste, Rassemblement international pour un théâtre motivé**, festival of live performing art and artistic education which gathers every year, in Grande-Synthe city and on the Opale Coast, a fortnight of international teams and artists. She is also involved in public education and intervenes for the National Education, the University and the Public Reading.

## Choreography



### Philippe Lafeuille

is a choreographer, stage director and artist. Founder of the companies Chicos Mambo and La Feuille d'Automne, he also has collaborated on numerous artistic projects and dedicated a large part of his energy to cultural action, notably among young audience.

In 1994, he created Chicos Mambo company in Barcelona with the dancers **Martí Boada** and **Adolfo Colmenares**. The Chicos Mambo won the price « **Compagnie - Révélation** » in multiple competitions (Terradicim, Butaca, Sebastia Gasch).

From 1997 to 1999, Philippe Lafeuille imagines and creates more than 200 sketches for the TV show "Les 1000 i una" on the Catalan TV3 channel.

Created in 1998, the show *Méli-Mélo* led to an international tour in Spain, in France (Théâtre Dejazet in 1999, Théâtre du Gymnase in 2000), in Italy and in Japan.

*Méli-Mélo II*, created for the Festival Off of Avignon in 2006, won the price of « **Best International Show** » in the Fringe Festival of Edinburgh and is touring in Europe and in North America until 2013.

*Tutu*, the last show of the company, was created in October 2014, featured in preview in KLAP – Maison pour la Danse of Marseille, then in the Bobino Theater (Paris).

## Scenography - Construction



### Ettore Marchica

After his beginnings in the metallurgical industry and in welding between 1970 and 1980, he enters the school of Popular theater of Flanders in Lille then he enters the Conservatoire National de Roubaix in 1979. Comedian and author in theater as a first step, he renews after all with construction and conception of setting.

He collaborates with Dominic Sarrazin as constructor and scenographer since 1988 – *Karpélapin*, *Stimulant*, *amer et nécessaire*,

*Planète sans visa*, (Mon) *Copperfield*.

Simultaneously, he conceives and realises scenographies for thirty shows of other companies, in which, *Transits* in 2001 and *Road Movie à bicyclette* in 2005 staged by Brigitte Mounier, *La Leçon*, 2006 and *I wish I am*, 2007 staged by Nora Granovsky, *Spartacus*, 2010 staged by Claire Dancoisne, *Le Petit Poucet* in 2010 staged by Christophe Laparra, *Les Faussaires* in 2012 and *L'ennemi c'est l'autre* in 2014 staged by Savério Maligno and in the course of a lot of other meetings, when he welcomes theater companies as general stage manager in Théâtre de la Verrière à Lille.

## Costumes designer



### Emilie Cottam

Emilie is graduated in scenography at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts Visuels de la Cambre and she perfected herself alongside Guy Claude François then she followed a training course in sewing and design in Théâtre National de Belgique et à La Cambre.

She worked as scenographer and costume designer for theater, for thirty creations in Belgium and in France, with the Asbl Faux, le théâtre de Galafronie, le Théâtre d'Oz, la Compagnie des Passeurs, le Nuna Théâtre, le Théâtre Le Public, le collectif CIL, la Compagnie Arts et Couleurs, L'L, Foule Théâtre, Le Rideau de Bruxelles, le Tof Théâtre, Orange Sanguine Estro Tango and for all the creations of Théâtre Agora.

In the cinema sphere, she also conceived and realised costumes for the film *Henri* of Yolande Moreau. Furthermore, she has also conceived and realised the indoor setting of the Centre Dramatique de Wallonie pour l'Enfance et la Jeunesse and the covering of la Filature, scène Nationale de Mulhouse.

## Lighting designer



### Nicolas Bignan

Nicolas Bignan holds the diploma « Régie Lumière » from the « Métiers d'Art » (Nantes, 1996). Since then, he has been working as an electrician (Opéra de Lille 2010-2015, Théâtre le Vivat d'Armentières 2012-2013, Compagnie Passe-Muraille 2013-2015), as well as a lighting manager for events, exhibitions (les Ateliers Lumière 1998-2006, SLS and CSE 2008-2010) and plays (Wisshhh, Compagnie les Caryatides 2012-2015, L'armée des silencieuses, Compagnie Rémanences 2014). Since 2010, with the Compagnie des Mers du Nord, he's been a

stage manager, and a lighting designer for "Road movie à bicyclette", "Hair Mundo Frei", " D'un retournement l'autre", "Democratia participativa", "Fukushima, terre des cerisiers". He's also the technical director of the festival Le Manifeste.





## La Compagnie des Mers du Nord

Created in 1996 in Dunkirk by Brigitte Mounier, La Compagnie des Mers du Nord is navigating in a contemporary writings repertoire in which the human is colliding with a constraining geographical and geopolitical environment.

26 shows have been created since 1996. The most broadcasted are:

- **Le chant des Abysses** (1996)
- **Guerre, ils ont écrit ton nom** (1998)
- **United Problems of Coût de la Main d'œuvre** de Jean Charles Massera (1999)
- **Transit** de Philippe Braz (2001)
- **Albertine, Marthe, Andrée et les Autres** (2002)
- **Synthe Saga** (2003)
- **Road Movie à Bicyclette** (2005)
- **Another Way Now pourrait supprimer 2800 villages d'ici 5 ans**, de Jean Charles Massera (2006)
- **Fantaisie économique et musicale pour Pokémon, Jordan, sa mère et l'Éducation nationale** de Jean Charles Massera (2008)
- **Eve contre Lucy, l'Autre cauchemar de Darwin** (2008)
- **Yes, peut-être** de Marguerite Duras (2010)
- **Hair Mundo Frei** (2011)
- **Hors catégorie** de Jean Charles Massera / Jean de la Ciotat (2012)
- **Reflets du Monde** (2013)
- **Democratia Participativa** (2013)
- **D'un retournement l'autre** de Frédéric Lordon (2013)
- **The Road to Santiago** (2014)
- **Fukushima, terre des cerisiers** de Michaël Ferrier (2014)
- **Lola, Bachir, Gretel et Knut, générations X, Y, Z** (2016)

In parallel, in 2004, le « **Manifeste, Rassemblement international pour un théâtre motivé** » is born in Grande-Synthe, where actors, thinkers, troublemakers and jugglers of utopias, art and mankind are meeting every summer henceforth.

This gathering of performing arts is mounted with a militant and an artistic approach as well and brings together every summer international artists, from all living disciplines, aiming at working with local population.

Besides its missions of creation and broadcasting, the company invests itself in a mission of public education with pedagogical and artistical actions with local communities, the urban area, the Région Hauts de France, educational institutions, local organisations, the University and and the Public Lecture.

**La compagnie des Mers du Nord is in residence in Grande-Synthe, France since 2002.**



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