

**I: You have created many shows together; can you talk about your creative process?**

**C:** The creative process happens in several stages. What characterizes our process is undoubtedly the fact that at the beginning the texts we use are not necessarily theatrical texts. We have created performances based on Japanese haikus, literary texts by Balzac, Simone de Beauvoir's memoirs as well as her correspondences, excerpts from novels, short stories, poems and other texts by great authors like Genet and Beckett. In Europe we created a performance about Rwanda using African actors based on texts from ten different authors. There was a lot of music and choreography.

**S:** We create an experimental work which causes a convergence of different types of art forms... we do not just work with actors.

**C:** We have worked with mimes, dancers, filmmakers and multimedia artists. Music is always present.

**S:** It can be recorded or performed on stage.

"I usually choose texts which seek out performance, music, and create images. It is a dramaturgical choice but one that experiments and then finds its definitive form on the stage."

**I: What type of music?**

**S:** I was trained as a classical pianist but I play many instruments. My compositions are influenced by jazz, contemporary music and world music. I also have a collection of instruments from all over the world that I use in my own way.

**I: In other words?**

**S:** For example, the valiha is an instrument from Madagascar whose strings are usually pinched, but I play them with a bow. I am on the lookout for new sounds. I have also written several works for prepared piano.

**C:** Stéphane also invents instruments.

**S:** They are really objects that create sounds. I like to reshape the function of an object and explore new sonorous materials.

**C:** Let's say that there are always codes... We can reshape these codes, but we need to be able to invent others and know how to use them. I create theater pieces a little like one might create haute cuisine... Look, innovate, let myself be taken over by inspiration... but in the end whether it be a culinary or theatrical work, we inhale the creation of a new harmony.

**S:** You're using a musical term...

**C:** It's the famous intersection between the arts...

**I: You were talking about a process in several stages...**

**C:** Yes, I always start by reading. I read a lot and do quite a bit of research on the project. And afterwards, I write. It is essentially a work of adaptation, a montage of texts. I usually choose texts which seek out performance, music, and create images. It is a dramaturgical choice but one



that experiments and then finds its definitive form on the stage.

**I: How do the actors learn the text?**

**C:** The same text can be interpreted in a thousand different ways. The actor's intention, their personality, voice, physique are the first things to take into consideration. I always start with the actor. The text must excite their imagination, sensibility, influence their body and create movement in space. It is this meeting between the actor and the text which inspires the staging.

**I: Do you already have ideas about the staging when you write the play?**

**C:** Yes and no. Encountering the actors is essential. Ideas come to me when I see the actors evolve on the stage as well as when I hear the music. I realize that in my staging work there exists both a mastering and a letting go. I have a precise project in mind but before everything else I must be in tune with the actors and be able to abandon certain ideas in order to take advantage of what is happening in the moment. I must let myself be surprised.

**I: Is this how you define experimental theater?**

**C:** Without a doubt. In the sense that the research never stops. I insist greatly on this point with actors. I solicit their imagination and show them that I also believe that an actor is also a creator, a little like a painter who draws lines in space. They must decide what traits they want to give to their character (thin, thick, fat), the colors that they want to use. And also the manner in which they frame the character. There is a difference between an actor who performs in the theater and one who performs in cinema. In the theater, the actor is also their own camera. It is in performing that they decide the compositions. This is where the extreme precision of the gesture originates. Everything is very physical. An actor must also be in tune with the different interior rhythms that can trigger the state of a character. We do not have the same body if we are nervous, relaxed, proud or jealous...

**S:** Your training has influenced you greatly.

**C:** Yes, I had the chance to go to study at the Ecole Internationale Jacques Lecoq in Paris. Jacques Lecoq was my teacher and I owe him so much. He offered a pedagogy which was based on all the different styles of the theater. The school proposed a trajectory that encompassed mime, pantomime, masks and farce, the Commedia dell'arte, melodrama, tragedy and even the clown... There is always a corporeal engagement. Young actors, who often separate the mental from the physical, must understand this.

**I: And musical work?**

**S:** There are the same demands. Singing is impossible without corporeal engagement. In order to be fair, it is not enough to just respect the melody and the rhythm, it is also necessary to be in a state of performance, to have an intention. It is the character who sings.

**I: Can you talk about L'oeil qui voit? L'oeil qui voit is a theater piece which is inspired by the avant-gardes,**