

## TOUR DATE AFTER THE FESTIVAL

– November 10, 2018, Le Manège Scène nationale de Reims

## THE NIGHT OF NO RETURN

To reinvent and shift our collective imagination and the fantasies it carries, to let the incredible arise from ephemeral and improbable artistic encounters, to lose meaning but find the way again, to make fleeting experiments, to live unexpected and unique moments, to comfort and reinforce the burning desire to be close to the artist and their work, to be drunk on poetry and satire, to laugh, cry, sing... such is the beating heart of this *Night of no return*, imagined specifically for the Festival d'Avignon. Ardour and sensuality are what unite the many personalities invited by Monsieur K. Musicians Anna Petrovna and Frédéric Chopine enchant us with their playful beat and enthusiasm. Also invited: the creatures of Madame Arthur's troupe; Jonathan Capdevielle, actor, singer, puppeteer, director, and dancer; Dimitri Hatton, performer, clown, actor, and musician; Jeanne Plante, wild singer. *The Night of no return* pushes down away, confuses identities, and opens up a space of dreams and fantasies, leaving room for last-minute guests and other explorers of this nocturnal adventure...

## MONSIEUR K

Born in Orleans, Jérôme Marin studied in his hometown conservatory before coming up in 2001 with the character of Monsieur K, for solo or group cabaret projects. He has worked with many artists (singers, performers, dancers, clown, actors, etc.) and directed many shows, bringing new life to this nocturnal world of songs, acts, fantasy, and cross-dressing, which has been experiencing a renewal since the opening of the Madame Arthur cabaret in Paris in 2015.

72<sup>th</sup>  
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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FESTIVAL D'AVIGNON 72°

JULY 16 17 | DELIRIUM

# INTERVIEW WITH JÉRÔME MARIN

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## **How did you first come into contact with the world of cabaret?**

**Jérôme Marin:** Back in secondary school, I started working on Karl Valentin's theatre. After graduating from the conservatory in Orléans, I slipped into the world of the night. I was a drag queen, and encountered forms close to cabaret without really identifying them, before coming back to Karl Valentin in 1997. When I decided to do theatre, I started working in bars, reading texts then performing songs. I created the character of Monsieur K in the early 2000s. I first performed at the Petit Bouchon de la Lionne in Orléans, a place which attracts both the cultural elite of the city and people who want to have a drink after work. Singing Kurt Weill, even if my make-up wasn't as outrageous, my heels as high, and my costumes as extravagant as they are today, was a challenge. It got away from me, in a way, and attracted more and more people. Monsieur K then moved to actual theatres and concert halls, while never losing track of his attachment for the stimulating public spaces where he first learnt his trade. Doing cabarets in such places is essential; it's no small achievement to attract the attention of someone who'll then tell you: "*You know, culture isn't really my thing, but what you're doing, really...*"

## **Little by little, your knowledge about cabaret grew...**

In 2006, I was performing at the Théâtre d'Orléans and petitioned the regional directorate for culture for a grant. I was interviewed by a music committee, which was an extremely violent experience: "*Cabaret isn't art, it's a minor genre, there's no cabaret tradition in our region.*" So many false claims against which I didn't have the arguments necessary to defend my project. I decided to do some research, to learn about the movements, evolutions, various forms, and historic relevance of this artistic genre. I also left Orléans for Marseille to go to the Universités Euro-méditerranéennes des homosexualités, where I met and worked with the small gang made up of Madame H, Corrine, Monsieur Katia... A group of young actors, directors, and writers offered to welcome me in their bar in Paris, L'Ogre à plumes, where I performed once a month for two years, along many other artists, and in front of an audience...

## **How would you define this artistic genre today?**

You can't separate the art form from the place where it is performed. People who want to perform cabaret while focusing exclusively on the stage and not the place as a whole are doomed to fail. Cabaret puts the artists very close to the audience; they play with the artists and envelop them. When I performed as Monsieur K at the Petit Bouchon de la Lionne, with no setting, nothing, I always felt like my performance, my singing, my gaze allowed me to show the audience that there was another setting than the meager one in which I stood. At some point, artists unfold their wings, and sweep people away to a different place. In one evening, a shift happens. For that transformation to occur, there needs to be a confrontation with the audience. If you want to talk

about the spirit of cabaret, you have to consider the part played by satire in an art form steeped in the political. As for my artistic family, it's more of a creature, a creature which covers a large spectrum from male to female, inseparable from a delicious mixture of theatre and poetry, with the use of the mask as well. This work always leads to poetry, even if it focuses on deconstructing for some, on over-aestheticisation for others. Clowning could be part of it, too.

## **What would you want your contribution to cabaret to be?**

I haven't done it yet. My dream would be to create a National centre for cabaret. A lot of its past is about to be lost; the last *grande dames* of cabaret are at the end of their lives; a lot of material is dissipating. It's an interesting genre: not only was it born of the tradition of fireside gatherings, of the desire to make an evening memorable, but it's also about having a drink, it's a place of consumption. It would be amazing if public institutions were to play a bigger role: it's always been driven by the private sector. That's how all the left bank cabarets in Paris went out of business. Real support would allow us to keep working. There are so many different movements... It would be a good idea to create a place where different disciplines come together: singing, dancing, mime, clowning... It's an art form that isn't well-developed in France.

## **The confrontation of male and female identities creates a feeling of confusion unique to the cabaret. What is the audience looking for here?**

Decadence. There's one clearly verifiable thing about cabaret: people either love it or hate it. There's no half measure. Forget about the convention of applause! I'd rather have people hate us than limit what we can do in our work. If they stay, they're open to it. Sometimes you have to go meet them, pat them on the back, sweet talk them, lock eyes with them for the seduction to happen, for something inside them to break free. There's an electric dimension to it. These two evenings at the Delirium can't but be very different: it's not a show! They're an ideal way to show the state of mind in which we work. Actually, we're sort of "rebounding," especially when you think about the way the place is used. The stage is large enough for a lot of people; the bar is big and comfortable, it's a central part of the place; the library part makes it seem like you're in an English country club: people there are more withdrawn, you have to go get them without making them uncomfortable. What matters in a place such as this is the turn over. People come and go—or they stay; you have to accept to continue, regardless of how you feel. We're making the place ours for two nights with spectacular moments punctuated by more quiet ones to let people breathe, and we satirically discuss the scandals, flops, and hits of the Festival d'Avignon. It's good to laugh at those things, to stick out our tongues at the Festival. The political content of the event is important. Being at the Delirium makes us even freer. The most important aspect of all that is the defense of cabaret. It still gets belittled, it's still seen in a bad light. Hence why these two evenings are so important to me.

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Interview conducted by Marc Blanchet  
and translated by Gaël Schmidt-Cléach