



SIDÉRATIONS

chamber opera

composition: Georges Aperghis

staging & choreography: Johanne Saunier

rehearsal director: Filip Rathé

dramaturgy: Marion Platevoet

scenographic concept: JOJI INC Jim Clayburgh,
Johanne Saunier

scenography & video: Emeric Adrian

costumes: Sophie Van Den Keybus

artistic coordination: Fabienne Séveillac

HYOID voices

Angèle Chemin, Sarah Defrise, Maris Pajuste,
Fabienne Seveillac, Andreas Halling, Arnout Lems,
Pascal Zurek

United Instruments of Lucilin

Danielle Hennicot, Ingrid Schoenlaub,
Pascal Meyer, Max Mausén

sound & electronics: IRCAM

Première: season 2026/2027

Chamber opera composed from :

- *Sidérations*, creation 2026, for 4 singers et 4 instrumentalists, texts and music by Georges Aperghis
- *QUAI N°1*, 1978, for 3 instrumentalists and 7 singers, music by Georges Aperghis on a text by Marie-Noël Rio
- selection of *Monomanies* (1991), *Jactations* (2001), *Retrouvailles* (2013) and of texts from *ZIG-BANG* (2004)

In 1978, with *Quai n°1*, Georges Aperghis and Marie-Noël Rio created the portrait of a woman suspended between the memory of her violated body, the gazes cast upon her and her repressed desires. On this enigmatic canvas where different voices collide, **the nightmare of sexual violence and the inner world of a woman are unraveled** in a polyphonic snapshot. A rare gesture into the lyrical landscape of the time, reflecting the modernity of Georges Aperghis' collaborations with female performers and creators throughout his career. *Quai n°1* was, moreover, framed by two creations co-written with Marie-Noël Rio, *Histoire de Loups* (1976) - which already dealt with violence - and *Liebestod* (1982).

Perhaps one of the major singularities that distinguishes the composer, is that he offers unique spaces for stage performance, making the performers the ultimate creators, and thereby opening up spaces of expression that are as delicate as they are irreducible. With this in mind, HYOID and United Instruments of Lucilin have joined forces to invite Georges Aperghis, fifty years later, to open a new trail in which the repressed words can unfold. The fierceness of womanhood, assignations, abuses, uprising and aspirations: what differences can we perceive in half a century? Stage director and choreographer Johanne Saunier takes up the challenge of taking us on a journey from *Quai n°1* (1978) to *Sidérations* (2026).

Quai n°1 revolves around the impossibility of saying things other than in the fragmentation of speech and sensations, and the urge to invent a new language. In response, *Sidérations*¹ pursues this investigation into the renewal of language, this time through momentum, rebellion and the flow of breath. If places of domination have not disappeared, what face do they take now?

¹ 'sidération': state of shock, astonishment, flabbergishment leaving the subject almost paralysed.

SIDÉRATIONS draws on the multiple strengths of Aperghis's musical theatre. The *tableaux vivants* based on a selection of texts, solos and duets exploring other ways of relating to oneself and to others, form the skeleton of this chamber opera, in which the two central pieces will resonate. With the performers of HYOID and United Instruments of Lucilin under the eye of live cameras, **SIDÉRATIONS unfolds a polyphony of points of view. By staging the shocks, retreats, liberations, alliances of voices or silences into something tangible, we question our ability to discern when facing violence and the force of our desires. Where do we stand in the arena of perception?**

Quai n°1

'A woman. The kind you catch a fleeting glimpse of, in the frame of a lit window, when you take the train through the outskirts of a city at dusk. She'd like to go somewhere. When she was little, she used to dream about the beautiful names of cities on the other side of the world. She knows nothing of herself, of what she wants, of her dreams. In the intersecting voices of her memory, of her absence, she is waiting for a train.'

Atelier lyrique du Rhin, 1978-79, 'Musiques d'Aperghis'.

“ *Quai n°1 was a project intended to the singer and actress Martine Viard, but also to the permanent ensemble of singers from the Atelier Lyrique du Rhin, who were the driving force behind our productions at the time. It was therefore a polyphony.*

Like Georges Aperghis, I don't like the monolithic at all, I think it's the opposite of art. When you write something, it obviously has something to do with reality; art is a kind of very intimate, very personal relationship with reality.

If we don't have this polyphony, and give the audience something to see and decide, we have nothing. Let the spectator decide for himself, given the chance. **”**

Marie-Noël Rio, excerpt from an interview with Marion Platevoet & Johanne Saunier, February 2025

“ la femme se dresse
tour de magie
sa gorge pimpante
fière d'elle
à faire surface
déjà de face
jamais de fin
incrédule
se déplie
sans hésiter
ses ongles à elle
inépuisable déjà livide
dressée
un instant jusqu'au point mort
en sens inverse
vivement mon souffle ”

Georges Aperghis, *Sidérations* (création 2026), excerpt



‘For me as a choreographer, dancer and vocalist, the first level of stage interpretation is its physicality. Beyond the song, the text or the movement, the construction of the space by the live bodies is the permanent subtext of the action. Whether the performers are in front of scores or completely free to move, spatial dynamic is a layer of the story.

The act of rape is a disruption of harmony, a destruction of the already precarious and often threatened balance of our relationships with others. The violence done to the intimate, to the body, to the mind: it's the annihilation of any sense of security.

*Power relationships can be read in space and on bodies. Proximity can reveal itself to be dangerous, tenderness oppressive. Astonishment has its organic variations: memories can become obsessions, staticity can betray solitude, paralysis or a state of survival. It all depends on where you are looking from. **The bodies appear more as lines of tension to be deciphered than as objectifiable 'states'.***

In SIDÉRATIONS, I imagine an interplay of balance/imbalance, where the forces of action and resistance are constantly shifting to create counterweights and zones of alliance. The performers will form a Calder-shaped mobile that can be seen from several angles. Initially standing behind long, fixed, hanging rods, at equal distances from each other, their bodies will force the space, take up positions and shift their points of view against those of others, until this human mobile is dismantled'.



Johanne Saunier, November 2024

Projection spaces

In order to convey the multiplicity of points of view, the video creation exploits different types of filming and projection:

- a zenithal view of the stage, captured by a fixed overhead camera and projected onto a screen transforms the performers' body language into the landscape. This detached perspective translates the stage activity into points and lines, thus tension is unraveled, where it was once invisible.
- textual projection, conveying the full enunciatory force of Aperghis' work and raising the question "Who does the telling?" in the history of violence. A mobile device will enable each of the performers to take hold of the texts and their translation, manipulating them as surtitles, statements, counter-discourses.

Video

“In his research, scientist Michael Bach reveals that vision, despite a normal physical and intellectual state, can be profoundly distorted. When placed in a state of stupefaction, this distortion can intensify itself. Could video be used as a tool to ‘astonish’ reality?”

What unfolds on stage is only a layer of reality. In SIDÉRATIONS, the video work could reveal how stupefaction is actively part of it. Through alterations in forms, perception of time, introduction of artifacts or texts, through the manipulation, by live camera, of bodies and faces (artificialization, fragmentation, etc.) the video will translate the vulnerability of vision itself., Building, doing so, many angles, many points of view, and revealing the very symptoms of stupefaction.

The video scenography could be built around the concept of a diptych: two screens that overlook the scene, showing both reality and its inner struggles, as well as different perspectives of the distorted reality.”

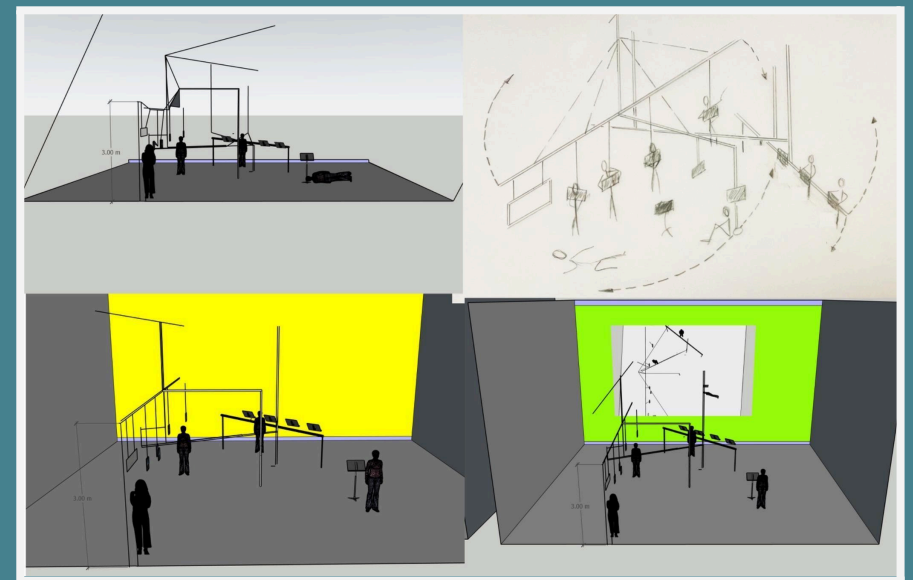
Emeric Adrian, March 2025

Scenographic elements

Like Calder's giant mobiles, a structure of vertical poles covers the volume of the stage. This aerial structure connects the individuals just as much as it separates them; it makes the group dynamic visible, a moving constellation that reflects our societies.

These rotating bars, suspended at different heights, carry the scores and allow the performers to move around the stage, shifting, changing sides, dividing or sweeping everything aside as they go, sometimes to wipe the slate clean, sometimes to reunite.

Shaped into several telescopic segments, these rigid supports - which evoke the jousts of the arena as well as the poles of the carousel - become elements of support or oppression. They can be dismantled under the pressure of the performers, who are constantly trying to rebuild the space they need.



Links

[Link to Georges Aperghis' biography](#)

[Link to a portrait of Georges Aperghis - Ernst von Siemens Music Prize 2021](#)

[Link to Johanne Saunier's biography](#)

Contacts

Executive production: HYOID voices

Coproduction: United Instruments of Lucilin, Grand Théâtre de Luxembourg, IRCAM (Paris)

Support: Cohort, Tax shelter - Perpodium.

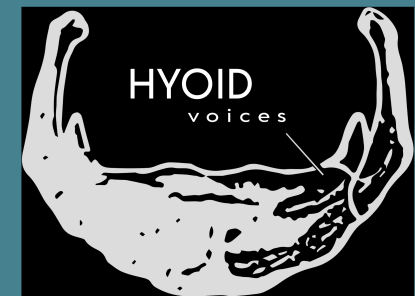
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Credits

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