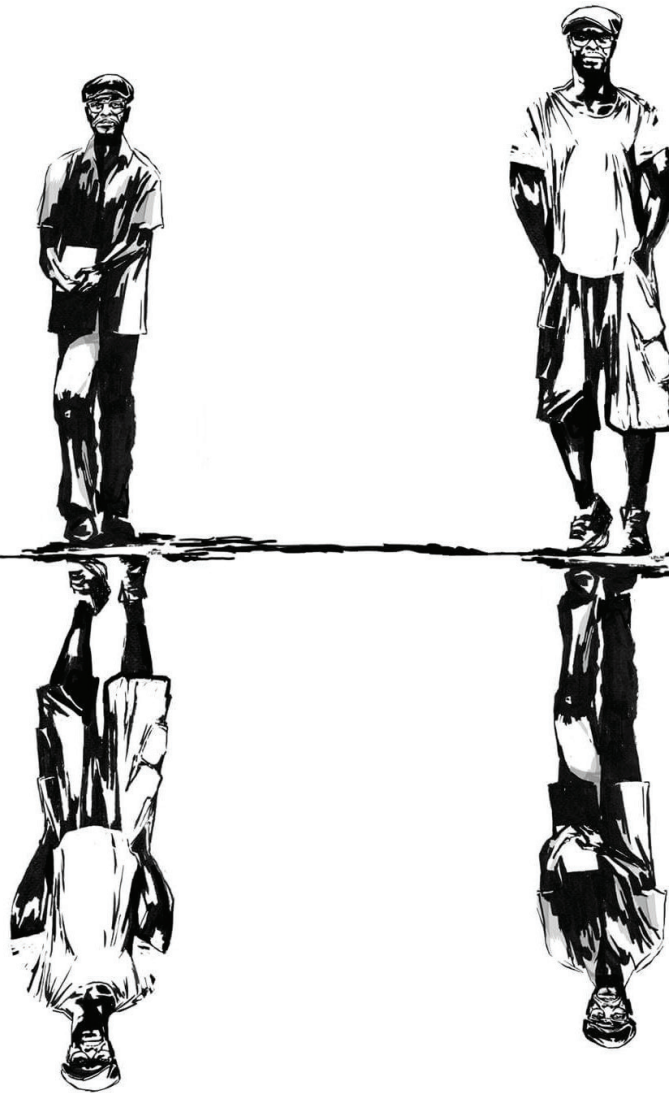


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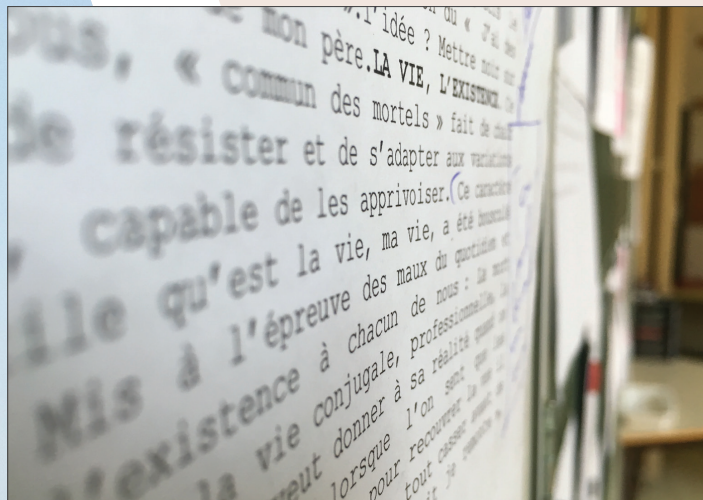
Inspired by a true story

le
voyage
de
mon
père...
mon
départ



le
voyage
de
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mon
départ

written and interpreted by Michel Djiwonou
directed by Yse Boberither



The work

What does 'having roots' mean?

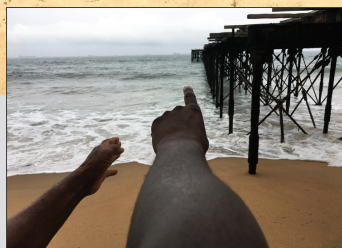
What does it mean to exist here in the suburbs, in France?

Can we read through our parents' silences?

One autumn evening, as he was facing his father in the dark corner of a restaurant, Michel was suddenly hit by these questions.

In 'Le voyage de mon Père...' Michel interprets a dream-like conversation that picks out snippets of reality when life reveals it as well as it mixes it with a lot of fantasy. He questions the father, the child and the son. He compares the dreams and the fears. He paces the African soil as well as the Parisian pavement. He explores the memories and the flesh of his ancestors.

Through this father and son conversation Michel hopes to start his own journey that might never happen because too many questions remain to be answered along the way. Laughter follows tears to the rhythm of a parade of different characters. All these characters touch our hearts. They touch us deep inside because there is something universal about them. A bit of you. A bit of all of us.



'Le voyage de mon Père... Mon départ' is a first creation that will search your heart and your relations to yourself and to the others. Maybe it will bring to light the importance of social interactions in our society. Hopefully this sentiment will ring true and -who knows? - it might leave you with an uncanny feeling you have lived this before.



THE AUTHOR, THE COMEDIAN

'Nothing has predestined me for this. I mean writing, going on stage, embodying things, confiding. Absolutely nothing. Then one day, my father granted me with this present. From this very moment I knew I should not keep it for myself but share it! In the glow of a small light I started constructing the creation of a dramatical work. Brick after brick, I have built a secret dream so it becomes reality, in order to come to this point where I stand naked in front of you. Alone on stage, but never in real life. I had company during this journey. Close relatives and friends, you and many others have fuelled the drive to my pen and a lot of labour to my heart.'

Michel Djiwonou



HISTORY

I have often seen my father but I have never taken the time to look at him. As far as I can remember, he has always been a rushing, active and very busy man. His calloused hands, his bulging muscles and his shiny forehead were the usual signs of his hardworking man's condition. It ran in his veins but there was something more.

What was the secret behind Dad's scars? What about these never-ending mutterings in his native language that he used to whisper to himself while he would work on some furniture? What did they try to tell me? What was unveiled through these long silent moments we would spend side by side? I have never tried to answer these questions. Until this day when, in a corner of a restaurant, as I was facing him, I saw his eyes glowing with this pale autumn dawn light. Dad will leave us... someday.

Then, I had to look at him with my heart. I had to start a journey asking him to hold my hand before he would eventually let it go.

Here is a dreamlike conversation between a father and a son. A child and his parent. Maybe two strangers considering how distant their dreams, their fears, their path are apart. On one hand Togo, labour and the sense of sacrifice. On the other hand France, reflections and carelessness. But here is the power of distances, they can always get closer when we look at each other with our hearts.

Describing obvious things with words can sometimes be difficult. Meeting Michel Djiwonou was the exact opposite. Even though we got introduced by a common friend, the rest was experienced by the logic of words and emotions. The meaning of the things we have shared belongs to our private sphere.

However, what can be said about it can be understood by reading these lines or seeing the artwork for the play. Out of our common values of sharing and our thoughtful conversations, the visual has emerged with this particular composition. After watching Michel rehearsing with Yse and observing what was unfolding on stage, it became obvious to me that the artwork would have to reflect sobriety to be efficient. The message in this play is universal and simply touches our souls. Michel is a man on the move. As any good walker he knows the value of the soil he walks upon.

I am very proud to go with him and walk this path together. My art serves his. As usual in my mainly visual artistic expression, the sense of movement unites us as a beautiful and unique destination.

Le dessinateur
Jean-Marc LEJEUNE



DISTRIBUTION

People believe in chance or luck. I don't! People we meet on our way all have something to teach us. This is how I came to meet Michel and this is how I departed on this artistic journey.

His journey...through his life, his origins and his culture. Although his were quite distant from mine, I was initially moved by the power of the words he had placed on the paper with so much reality and sensitivity.

His sensitivity and his story were strangely echoing in me in spite of all our differences. This is how our collaboration began and how for more than two years now we have had the desire to bring his words to life on stage. After sharing a lot of rehearsals, conversations, exchanges, public presentation of some extracts of the show, we hope to take you along on this initiatory journey where everyone should find a part of oneself.

La metteuse en scène
Yse BOBERIETHER



I have met Michel back when he was organizing and hosting philosophical debates along with his wife and two friends at the bottom of the tower block called Les Tartarêts. A few years later when he told me about 'Le Voyage de Mon Père', I have been hooked by the project of this 6ft5 tall primary school teacher who had settled his artistic residency in his primary school.

Trough the story of Mister Djiwonou, it seems that a wider story is being told. The actual history of a whole country. As he makes his father's voice ring, Michel hands over to a whole generation. He gives it an identity too. This project, to my mind, honours this discreet generation and uses the word journey. This made me want to be part of this as well.

The film maker
Bertrand PAQUEZ

The photographer
Diembi MAKABI

RÉFLEXION

My life is made of poems, books, films and songs. Today I realize how much authors have nourished my once rotten fruit. At the beginning a dry, bland and tasteless fruit which has now become juicy, sweet and fleshy. But it wasn't that simple.

My starting point is the rectangle of my classroom desk where I sat clamped to my chair, crumbling to dust under the criticism of a very disillusioned teacher.

Despite this I thank her for I grew up, I stood up internally and escaped the clichés, the stereotype to embrace the language, the words and the performance.

Thank you Madam.

Regardless of my three misspelt words every line, I moved towards literature. In spite of the burden of the block, I espoused theatre. Me too, I did want the cash and be paid with applause. Hearing the creaking of the boards as I said my lines. Sweating buckets as I animated those words with my body.

Thank you Daniel Pennac.

It took Dad to tell me, it took his words to hit my target, I had to tell his journey, I had to make his route known. Therefore I had to break down everything and rebuild again. Rebuild a dream again, a dream made of bricks and red soil.

It took me a lot of time and a lot of pleasure. Now I can sow the seeds of my fruit on the path of my life.

Brel used to say 'they only talk about their failures, what they could not achieve.' He is right and at least when I am on stage I tend to get as close as possible to this. Experiencing through my senses.

And be thankful.

I want to thank my father, thank you for the sacrifice.

I want to thank my mother, she has made a son out of me.

I want to apologize to my family for I know I haven't always been worthy.

I want to thank the stage.

Thanks to her.

I want to thank these lines.

THE DEBATE WORKSHOP

Watching a play does not conjugate in the singular.

A meeting is necessary. This meeting should take place immediately after or on a later day. The author needs to meet the audience. His audience. This soft demand has nothing to do with an after-sales service but rather with the result of a continued sharing.

The creation does not belong to its author once it has been through the developing bath that a questioning, criticizing, debating audience can be. Too often watching a show generates frustrations on both sides of the curtain. The show does not have to simply be performed live, it also has to be shared more than anything. This is the purpose of this debate workshop that hopefully will rebuild social bridges and liberate a sometimes-saving speech.



CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOP

Another after-show activity is possible when speech is not the appropriate means of sharing. If one considers that when we think, therefore we write, then we can conclude that the scripting act helps to structure the thought, but also the speech. Writing is a strong, intimate, sometimes lonely activity. That is why this workshop proposes to do it individually but within a group. The show would be the starting point including all the sensations, memories and emotions that it would have evoked. Live performance once passing through the prism of each one of us, can bring forth a variety of equally rich and different writings. They will allow everyone, if they wish, to express their singularity, without fear of judgement or marking.





INFOS & CONTACT

Alone on stage

duration : 1h20 min

FOR ANY INFORMATION OR RESQUEST

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