

A 2021 CREATION - 2021/2022 SHOW TOUR SCHEDULE



ACT *Opus*

ROLAND AUZET

BYE BYE MELANCHOLY 永别了忧郁

Luo Ying - Roland Auzet

Texts - Luo Ying

Creation, Music and Stage Direction - Roland Auzet

PRODUCTION ACT-OPUS THE ROLAND AUZET COMPAGNY -

JOINT PRODUCTION ZK INVESTMENTS LLC, TPAC TAIWAN

AND FRENCH NATIONAL STAGES

**« ... UNDER THE GUISE
OF MAKING PROGRESS,
WE PRETEND TO
OVERLOOK THE FACT
THAT...
IN OUR SOCIETY, NO
ONE COMES OUT
UNSCATHED... »**

LUO YING

Premise

This story spans a time in history, from China's Cultural Revolution until present day in Europe.

Seen from the West, the Cultural Revolution is a period almost sugar-coated by pop art. It's the story of a Communist nation whose youth, caught up in a spontaneous and benevolent movement, successfully (sacrificing just a few deaths, the price to be paid for any revolution) brings down an antiquated governing system, guided by a Chairman exonerated of past transgressions and elevated to the status of iconic leader eager to embrace the aspirations of future generations.

This healthy release of youthful energy, which came to an end with the tragicomedy projected at the trial of the Gang of Four, appealed to European intellectuals and artists and nurtured some of the fantasy surrounding France's 1968 rebellion.

On the other side of the Great Wall however, one of the 20th century's greatest tragedies was playing out: mass indoctrination to an unprecedented extent, cynical manipulation of an entire population, societal militarization, a student-led Red Guard denouncing and even killing their noncompliant parents, unleashing a wave of random violence and wanton assassinations encouraged by an omnipotent Mao, responsible for (at the very least) one million victims.

These nine nightmarish years (1966-1975), all discussion of which is now illegal, remain an open wound in the country's history, as well as in all Chinese families. This past of violence and tragedy, this "Red Guard discomfort" continues to etch into the country's collective subconscious a feeling of guilt totally banished from the official historical narrative, for fear of its undermining influence on national cohesion despite a power structure built on historical mistruths and subsequent coverup.

The play mainly follows the life story of Luo Ying, a former Red Guard member who becomes a poet, a pure product of his country's history. He is split into two identities: the author and his personal quest to expose the lies, and Gaping rekindling the spirit of a young revolutionary. These identities are accompanied by Angie, You, Liu, Sifan, Mi, Mingyi, Haïni and others who serve as the face of modern China and the nation's bedrock. According to the authorities: "They represent peace, while contributing to global development and respect for international order".

This young generation has become wealthy overnight and is living at the same breakneck pace while pondering the meaning of existence, or how to overcome the moral cynicism that has engulfed their lives. China's youth, with a front-row seat to post-Occidental globalization, are well off though at the cost of a drastic widening of inequalities. Even more alarming is that their country may today stand as the world's second most powerful

yet has acquiesced, often against its own will, to being denied the rule of law and freedom of expression, in exchange for material comforts. They have banished God and are now doing away with the human soul. Even in the name of progress, not all of society, can pretend to forget: among these former Red Guard members, no one comes away unharmed from the free-for-all, when civilization can prove to be worse and more violent than nature itself.

Their modernity is thus propped up by a historical tragedy, hushed and taboo, yet known to all. Such is the impasse of this era, fraught with risk when crossing the red line between what can be said and what can't despite the absence of markings. In fact, this line wavers depending on the criteria and context, which themselves are not stable. Coming to terms with its history and recent tragedies, responsible for shaping every Chinese individual and family identity, is less about the need to transmit an actual living memory, as corny and glossed over in China as anywhere else, but more of a vital act to transmit and share since a people without memory is a people without a future.

In the author's words: "China must completely purge its historical memory for society to progress. Given all the complex and bloody political battles, at the very least this detestable cultural revolution needs to be eradicated. It deprived the nation of its sense of shame, moral values and decency. It spawned an attitude of thuggery, resorting to underhanded practices, a social model that for some marked a descent into hell."

Alongside the poet's quest, in contemplating the upcoming duty to transmit memories, dramatic projections will serve to express the period's richness and complexity:

- Daf Rosenberg - a Frenchman who believed in the Cultural Revolution and got involved first as a translator, then as a combatant fighting side by side with rebel factions. The disturbing omnipresence of a character operating in the shadows, all the while having Mao Zedong's ear.
- Xiao Wang - a Chinese woman, preoccupied by her country's present and future.
- Pierre Barthélemy - Another Frenchman, former Maoist, violent, nostalgic for the Cultural Revolution, questioning Europe's standoff with China. He interiorizes multiple and contradictory feelings with intentions that are dark, paradoxical and at times quite extreme.

With this set of myriad projections filling the background, the underlying question takes shape: how could China, after infusing the hope of progress and laying the foundation for economic independence, have transformed into a modern champion of despotic runaway capitalism and an increasingly totalitarian regime?

What role did the Cultural Revolution play in the national political subconscious for this evolution, so quick, brutal and apparently widely accepted, to occur with the "willing submission" of the nation's citizens-subjects?

Can it be said, as does Jean-François Billeter, that "Chinese capitalism is not really the reflection of an authoritarian communist regime bent on concealing the relics of its imperial past. The forces for progress appear to have entirely eroded, which is tragic for not only China but the whole world as well."?

"*Adieu la Mélancolie*" (Bye Bye Melancholy) is a project of reestablishing an identity and digesting family history through theater, in addition to resisting a world devoid of memory. It's a story in which History is viewed through a magnifying glass, tracking the life of actors struggling within a memory kaleidoscope turning the situations that have forged their lives.

This period encompasses present-day China and remains largely unknown or misunderstood in the West, yet it's a period increasingly resembling our own.



The stage, set design and direction

At this point in developing the play, the set design will be segmented into several parts, each comprising a critical central theme, namely: "Revolution is not a dinner party".

How can Mao Zedong's citation actually be verified? Contradicted or refined?

The imagined stage space is vast.

The set design will be modular and easily changeable.

The presence of a crowd (adults, teens, etc.) is anticipated. It may contain upwards of fifty people depending on the currently planned stage dimensions. The tension between this group and the actors will be of major importance to the project.

We'll be exploring the extent to which the beauty of a group may be delicate and moreover what's the relationship between this beauty and strength, revealing the current tendency of our societies to succumb to moments of fragmentation.

We're working on a participative angle for this crowd, with a variation on the "Dinner Party" theme.

As the play begins, the stage will be transformed into a reception room (round tables, tablecloths, dishware, decorations, a DJ, etc.). Twenty or so tables appear with diners seated... some 40 in all... (depending on stage sizes - friends of the theater, amateurs, extras, the public, etc.).

The narrative thread will run its course during this evening. For the dramatic elements to be fleshed out, a boom operator will track down sound and situations... The lighting will follow the play's sequencing... The purpose is to distill the mix of voices and sounds, while remaining tableside, to better listen in on the details, the pacing, the rumblings, the repetitions and silences and, ultimately, the intrigue that permeates, combined with the actors' voices.

The public (from the reception room) will have the impression of overhearing a whole world, listening to the inner thoughts of both the actors and guest spectators, thereby gleaning the story behind the play through an array of elements.

On the tables, a signal light gives the guests their cues:

- *On: They converse normally.*
- *Off: Total silence.*

Compiling the emphasis of each group will create a preliminary task, to be carried out in conjunction with the participants.

Like in Joseph Haydn's farewell symphony, guests will slowly file out from the reception room to recompose in other group images amidst the open space.

In addition to these modular spatial configurations, we're working on several proposals for projecting the "Revolutionary cult" backdrop.

- Kitsch: Mao's cult of personality, common handmade objects (ceramics, posters, small red book, etc.), the dazibao wall posters, the "good-natured" face and liberating appearance of the movement.
- The "Revolutionary cult" appeal in France: posters, period artifacts or images. Attracted to the exoticism of workers all dressed in blue; the Mao collar fashion statement.
- Visual projections of massacres and exactions: reality of public humiliations (dunce caps strapped on intellectuals and teachers), famine, disease, book-burning, pillaging of stores, massacres, cannibal banquets and mass suicides.
- The visual depiction and decor scenes of a torn conscience, depression and social regimentation.
- A large luxury hotel room, empty, in an international airport or the business district of a cosmopolitan city.
- An interrogation chamber: macabre memories, bad conscience, images of crimes committed while feeling indifference, even pleasure.
- Consciences devoid of their subjectivity: images, screens, the human condition transformed into a dataset and controlled by a multitude of powers: the Party, the State, Tencent, Alibaba, Huawei, the Chinese "Social Credit" system, etc.



The music

The music will be composed in a way that lays out spaces of convergence between theater and music. It will imbue narrative spaces by reliance on a well-defined set of compositional elements. Example: a series of musical themes, to serve as the initial vocabulary for the various key moments and mark significant dramatic transitions - wide-spectrum environments capable of fragmenting or tightening into highly-concentrated polyphonies - more intimate settings suggestive of spaces more enclosed, unresolved, uncertain, hesitant, transient, forbidden, ambiguous or indecisive. Certain moments will be based on writing principles accumulating rhythms, in the aim of instilling a sensation of space that is confined, mechanical, repetitive, timeless and offering no outlet.

The Piano will be the thematic instrument of choice throughout the project.

Personal profiles

Luo Ying (texts)

Huang Nubo was born in Gansu province, in a military family. As of the age of two, he grew up in Yinchuan in the Ningxia Region. Under the penname **Luo Ying**, he recounts the suicide of his father and declares himself an "active counterrevolutionary" subsequent to the Maoist purges during the One Hundred Flowers campaign; upon his mother's death, relegated to begging, and then gassed nearly ten years later.



Cultural Revolution

During the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), he served as a member of the Red Guard. This period exerted a tremendous influence on Luo Ying. At the age of 15, he decided to change his first name from Yuping (jade peace) to Luo Ying (waves of anger) as he would be subjugated no longer. Later, he would describe the horrors witnessed as a youngster in the Red Guard. Like 17 million youth educated and acculturated in the Red Guard, he would be sent to the countryside. Following the death of Mao Zedong and detention of the Gang of Four in 1976, he was allowed to return to Beijing.

Publications - Books

Luo Ying began writing poetry at the age of 14. He published his first book in 1978. An initial collection of poems dates back to 1992 (*Love me no longer*), followed by *Adieu la Mélancolie* (Bye Bye Melancholy) (1995) and *Burgeoning flowers* (2003). In 2005, Luo Ying began searching for a new form of poetic expression through the practice of a prose-poem reinvented by mimicking traditional Chinese rhapsody (fu). His more recent collections are set against the backdrop of Chinese society undergoing rampant economic growth: *Urban wanderings* (2005), *Rabbits, rabbits* (2008), *The Ninth night* (2011).

- *Rabbits, rabbits*, translated from Chinese by Xu Shuang, with the collaboration of Martine Chardoux, and preface by Jacques Darras, bilingual edition, Le Castor Astral, 2013.
- *The Red Guard Discomfort, memories of the Cultural Revolution*, preface by Jacques Darras, translated by Xu Shuang and Martine de Clercq, Gallimard, 2015. He reveals himself

as both a victim and guilty party. He describes his gradual radicalization, shows the cadaver of his father dumped on a waste heap, his mother begging. He references this "Red Guard discomfort" that has shaped his life. The book remains banned in China, where the subject of the Cultural Revolution is still taboo.

Press coverage

During the Sino-French poetry gatherings organized in 2013, André Velter noted: "I've known Luo Ying for nearly ten years. He's an entirely unique individual, not just as a Chinese poet, but in today's current poetry scene worldwide."



Roland Auzet (creation, music and stage direction)



With an advanced degree in music, having won acclaim at several national conservatoires and international prize winner (e.g. Darmstadt), Roland Auzet has over the years built a successful professional career around creating and directing artistic projects focusing on a multidisciplinary use of the stage, utilizing his talents as both director and composer.

Mr. Auzet served as Managing and Artistic Director of Lyon's Théâtre de la Renaissance until June 2014.

On the instructional side, he directs TOTEM(s) - "Young artists" Academy at Chartreuse de Villeneuve lez Avignon (Summer Encounters - Avignon Festival) and hosts a module entitled "artistic projects and economics of live shows" at NYU Abu-Dhabi, UC San Diego (California), McGill University (Montreal) and the University of Banff (Canada).

Roland Auzet has created over 25 musical shows, in collaboration with contemporary authors, and moreover works as a director both in France and abroad (e.g. Canada, United States, Taiwan).

His most recent productions, *Dans la solitude des champs de coton*, by Bernard Marie Koltès, *VxH - the Human Voice*, inspired by Jean Cocteau and Falk Richter, *END – Ecoutez nos défaites*, by Laurent Gaudé, *Hedda Gabler, d'habitude on supporte l'inévitable*, from a work by Henrik Ibsen and Falk Richter, and *Nous l'Europe, banquet des peuples*, by Laurent Gaudé, have entertained audiences across France and internationally.

Robert Lacombe (artistic collaboration)

Born in Budapest in 1969, Robert Lacombe studied philosophy and political science, before a twist of fate veered his path to the artistic oversight of festivals (The Word Marathon, Autumn in Normandy) and cultural diplomacy. After holding posts in Vietnam and Japan, he served as cultural advisor to the French embassy in China, a country he had regularly visited ever since an extended and formative stay as a teenager. Today, Robert holds a senior-level civil service job with the Culture Ministry.



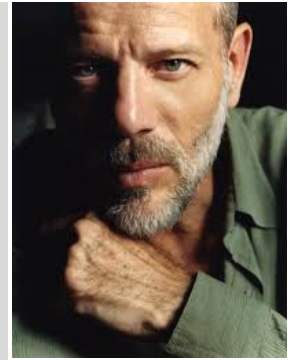
Pascal Gregory

Trained at the Conservatory, a 25-year-old Pascal met André Téchiné, who signed him up for *The Brontë Sisters*, as well as Eric Rohmer, with whom he would make three films: *A Good Marriage*; *Pauline at the Beach*; and *The Tree, the Mayor and the Mediatheque*.

A favorite actor of Patrice Chéreau, the two worked together in the theater before filming *Queen Margot*, earning Pascal his first César award nomination. This kicked off a collaboration that would yield *Those who love me can take the train*, *Son frère* and *Gabrielle*, co-starring with Isabelle Huppert.

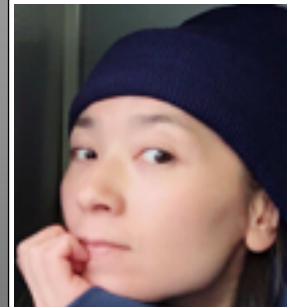
More often attracted to a film d'auteur style, Pascal Gregory has performed with Raoul Ruiz, Andrej Zulawski, Ilan Duran Cohen, Olivier Dahan, Jacques Doillon, Maiwenn Le Besco, Denis Dercourt, Werner Schroeter, Serge Bozon and Mathias Gokalp, among others.

Less visible on stage, he has over the past few years taken on roles in the following plays: August Strindberg's *Playing with fire*, directed by Luc Bondy; *Jeanne au bûcher* directed by Nicole Aubry; Sarah Kane's *Blasted*, under the direction of Louis Do de Lencquesaing; and most importantly Patrice Chéreau: Botho Strauss' *Time and the Room*, Bernard-Marie Koltès' *In the solitude of cotton fields*, Racine's *Phaedra*, Jon Fosse's *Dream of Autumn*, and *Ninet'Inferno*, staged by Roland Auzet, with Mathurin Bolze.



Mi Le

As an actress and drama art worker in China, Mi Le shows high interest in cultural exchange projects, acting in the leading role of *The Ending of Love* and *The Beginning of Love* by French writer and director Pascal Rambert and participating in Sino-French Cultural Spring Exchange for two years in 2016 and 2017. Not only acting, also she has directing works on the stage, as *No Sound of Life*, *Retrospect*. Influenced by the artistic conception of Japanese dramatist Satoh Macoto, Mi Le attempts to explore the relationship between drama and society. In 2019, she devoted herself to Asian drama and diversified cross-border fusion for exchanges in Japan and Singapore.



Sifan Shao

Having trained in France in the Free Classes offered at the Cours Florent, the National Chaillot Theater workshop and with various directors as part of professional apprenticeships (Anatoli Vassiliev and Thomas Ostermeier to name just two).

Selected as a Talents Cannes Adami in 2006, since then Sifan has worked as an actor in many cinematographic and theatrical productions, both in France and China.

Alongside his career in acting, since his return to China, Sifan has hosted a cultural program entitled "Let's talk" on the French CCTV channel and moreover has directed the presentation of several works by French and European authors (e.g. Feydeau, Molière, Pessoa, Lagarce) to Chinese audiences. In 2019, he released his latest creation, the fruit of a playwriting workshop held with his troupe of actors from *66.5° North Parallel*.



Angie Wang

Angie Wang received her master's degree in drama from National Taiwan University of the Arts (NTUA) and was awarded the Best Actress of Golden Lion Award of NTUA for three consecutive years. After graduation, she became a professional actress, a voice actor, a lecturer, and an acting coach, meanwhile performed in China, Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, America and Australia. Up till now, Angie has participated in the performance of more than fifty works. In addition to the regular acting performances, she has started to host acting workshops since 2015 with scenarios like "No Acting Please," "Rival Show," and "If I Were He/She". Through participating in the production of *7 Days in Heaven*, Angie extends her realm of acting to film productions. In 2019, she was elected as a resident artist of National Theatre and Concert Hall, where she started to write scripts to rethink the positioning and possibilities of her own art works.

Ting-Fang Liu (Da Tian)

Graduated from Taipei National University of Arts and major in theatre performance, Ting-Fang is an enthusiasm not only for musical and modern drama but also traditional theatre. As a born risk-taker and snooper, she likes to keep trying new things and challenging herself. Her favorite role in *Isle of Dreams* gave her a best try to combine musical and traditional theatre practices on stage and was nominated by 15th Taishin Arts Award (2017). Recently active in the jazz musical *Twelfth Night* of Tainaner Ensemble and *Turn Left, Turn Right* of Mr. Wing Theatre Company.



Haini Wang

Born in China, Haini had already completed a comprehensive training program before arriving in France. In 2003, she was accepted to the top-tier Beijing Dance Academy, where for five years she specialized in the "show" genre, with regular television work assignments during this time. She was accepted to the Clermont-Ferrand Regional Conservatory of Dramatic Arts in 2010, where she studied under Christine Girard, Johanny Bert, Patrick Bezin (mask-making), Eric Lyonnet (clown), Bruno Marchand, Frédérique Melot and Pascale Simeon. She was then recruited by Stuart Seide to join the 2015 class of the Ecole du Nord. In 2015, she played in Simon Stephens' *Punk Rock*, a film performance created by Cyril Teste. Under the direction of Elise Vigier and Frédérique Loliée, she starred in *Mathias and the Revolution* by Leslie Kaplan. In 2016, she developed a project to stage along with the troupe from Insas (Brussels) a text by Marilyn Mattei, entitled *Toxic and the avenger*. She has recently appeared in Alexandra Badéa's *Pulverized* and Tiphaine Raffier's *France-phantom*.

Mingyi Zhang

Mingyi Zhang is an actress and co-founder of White Light Theater Company in Beijing. She has accepted training at The Secondary School of Beijing Dance Academy(Ballet), Central School of Drama (Bachelor) and University of Exeter (Master). Her recent works in theatre includes: *Lovers, Hedda Gabler, Antigone, Deadman's Cellphone, The Night at N66.5°* for White Light; *The Giant's Garden, My Horse Mama* for Beijing Children's Theater Company. Film includes *Summer Can Wait* that was nominated for Best Featured Film and Best Actor at the 12th FIRST International Film Festival.





You-Lin Zhu (Patty)

You-Lin is a Taiwan based professional actress frequently appearing on stages throughout Asia. She has also featured in multiple Taiwanese films and television series, in addition to her work in advertisements and music videos. Graduated from Taipei National University of the Arts, You-Lin regularly performs with Edward Lam Dance Theatre, a Hong Kong based theatre company as well as a very important commission partner of National Theatre and Concert Hall, Taiwan, such as *Art School Musical*, *Finding Loveless Land*, *I Hate Therefore I Marry*, *What is Success? Awakening*, etc.

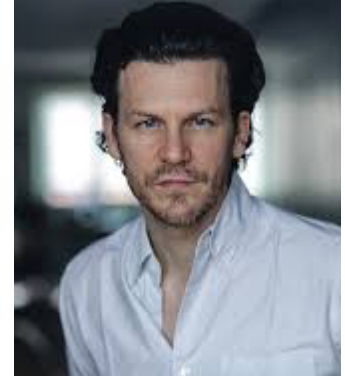
Thibault Vinçon

Discovered as an apprentice puppeteer in Emmanuel Bourdieu's *Poison Friends*, Thibault Vinçon has been offered roles in the theater, cinema and television for the past 15 or so years.

A regular actor with filmmakers as original as Mikaël Hers, Raoul Peck and Emmanuel Bourdieu, he has also played in productions for the likes of Roberto Garzelli, Emmanuel Mouret, Anne le Ny, Jeanne Herry, Yann Gozlan, Rodolphe Marconi, Marc Fitoussi, Marion Laine, Ducastel and Martineau.

With *Adieu la Mélancolie* (Bye Bye Melancholy), Thibault Vinçon will be working again with Roland Auzet for the fourth time after *Steve V (King Different)*, *Hear our defeats* and Laurent Gaudé's *We, Europe, A mosaic of peoples*.

Thibault is particularly fond of bridging the wide gap between modern and classic theater: over the past few seasons, he has worked under the direction of Simon Stone and Denis Podalydès. A graduate of the 2003 Conservatory class, he has developed professional relationships with, among others, Bernard Sobel, Richard Brunel, Jean-Paul Wenzel, Claudia Stavisky and Simon Delétana.



Akemi Takeya

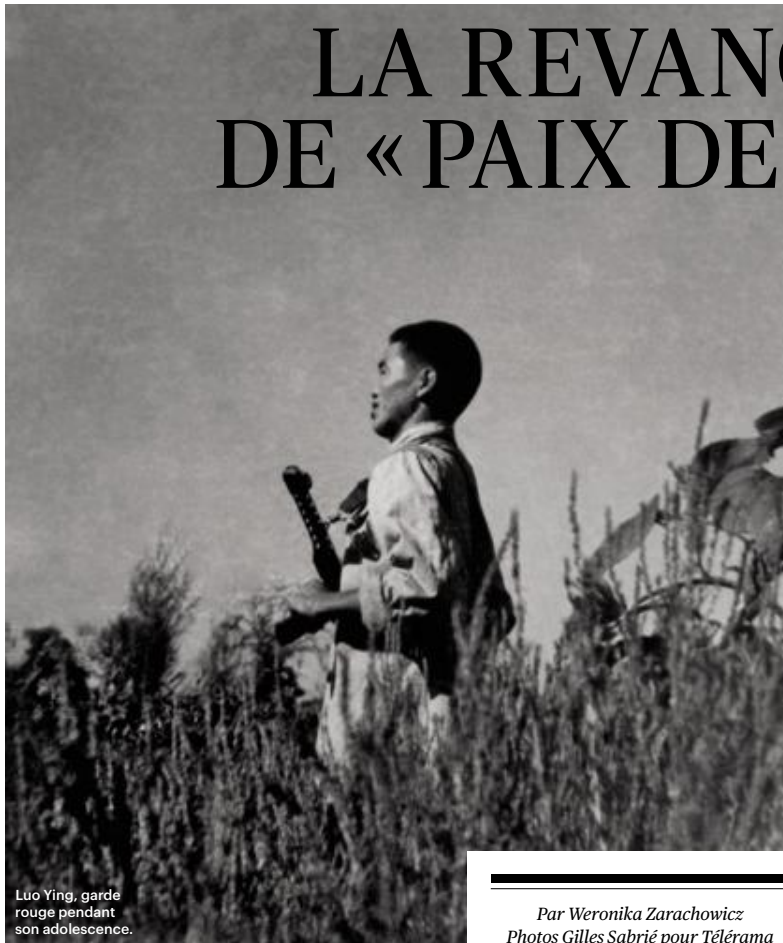
Choreographer and artist, Akemi Takeya has created many dance shows, as well as videos and performances collaborating with artists like Granular Synthesis, Ulf Langheinrich, Dorfmeister, Wolfgang Mitterer, Tom Cora, Christian Fennesz, Ong Ken Seng, Benoît Lachambre, Ko Murobishi and Carlotta Ideka.

Several of her works, including *Feeler*, *So what!*, *ZZ*, *Black Honey Drops*, *Bodypoems* and *Tapped / Untapped*, have been presented at the ImPulsTanz Festival in Vienna.

She has explored various 20th-century avant-garde movements, in creating performances and installations, e.g. *Lemonism X Actionism*, presented within the framework of The Raft project. For her latest project, *ZZremix*, Akemi reunited with playwright and author Armin Anders, lighting designer Jan Wagner, visual artist Markus Schinwald, and sound specialists Peter Kutin and Moritz Nahold.

Enfant des bas-fonds puis garde rouge pendant la Révolution culturelle, Huang Nubo est devenu un puissant homme d'affaires... et l'un des grands poètes de son pays. Sous le nom de Luo Ying, il signe des textes rageurs sur la Chine de Mao.

LA REVANCHE DE « PAIX DE JADE »



Luo Ying, garde rouge pendant son adolescence.

Par Weronika Zarachowicz
Photos Gilles Sabrié pour *Télérama*

Un jour, il venait d'avoir 15 ans, Huang Yuping s'est assis au bord du fleuve Jaune. Il a regardé les vagues impétueuses cingler le rivage et il a pris une décision. Désormais, il s'appellerait Huang Nubo. *Nubo*, « vagues en colère » en chinois, parce qu'il en avait « assez de subir ». Assez de la faim, de la misère, assez de sa condition d'enfant paria grandi sous la sinistre Révolution culturelle. Nubo a fait un sort à *Yuping*. « Paix de jade ».

fortunes de la planète. Il a aussi gravi les sept sommets les plus hauts du monde, atteint le pôle Nord et le pôle Sud. Cela lui vaut d'être le premier Chinois membre du Club des explorateurs, « à New York, un club très sélect ». Et, « surtout », il a conquis le graal de la culture chinoise, il est devenu poète, sous le pseudonyme de Luo Ying, « fleurs qui tombent »¹.

La première fois qu'on a entendu parler du milliardaire poète, on a pensé : encore une lubie de *hu tao* – « nouveau riche » – de la Chine communisto-capitaliste... C'était avant

et s'est juré qu'un jour il se vengerait. On dirait une légende, mais c'est ainsi que Huang Nubo, immuable sourire aux lèvres, raconte les choses dans un salon du Ritz-Carlton de Pékin, un demi-siècle plus tard. A 58 ans, il a toujours la peau lisse et mate des Chinois du Gansu, région pauvre à la jonction du plateau tibétain et de la Mongolie, et une silhouette atypique en Chine, 1,92 mètre tout en jambes. Mais on l'appelle maintenant « Monsieur le Président », ou « Président Huang ».

Huang Nubo s'est vengé. Parti des « bas-fonds », il a construit un empire immobilier et touristique, le Zhongkun Group. Il est devenu un pilier du classement *Forbes* des plus grandes



L'image de Huang Nubo, président de Wild Aid Chine, projetée sur un écran, lors d'une soirée pour la cause des éléphants.

A l'entrée de ses bureaux, des centaines de photos montrent Luo Ying : avec Bernard Kouchner, un groupe de punks... En bas, le centre commercial Zhongkun, où siège l'entreprise.



À LIRE

Le Gène du garde rouge. Souvenirs de la Révolution culturelle, de Luo Ying, traduit du chinois par Martine de Clercq et Shuang Xu, Gallimard, 2015.
La Récidive. Révolution russe, révolution chinoise, de Lucien Bianco, Gallimard, 2014.

À ÉCOUTER

France Culture
 Luo Ying est l'invité de l'émission *Ça rime à quoi*, le 11 janvier à 20h.

» de lire ses deux recueils traduits en français. *Lapins, lapins*, texte rageur et effaré sur l'enfer urbain et tentaculaire de la Chine contemporaine. Et *Le Gène du garde rouge. Souvenirs de la Révolution culturelle*, qui sort ces jours-ci chez Gallimard. On a découvert un ovni littéraire, poème et confession sur le cataclysme déclenché par Mao Tsé-toung en 1966 – la déportation dans les campagnes des intellectuels, jeunes instruits et cadres du parti pour les rééduquer par le travail manuel – qui se solda par 1,5 million de victimes (peut-être plus) tuées, suicidées ou dévorées, puisque les cas de cannibalisme furent légion². On est resté sous le choc de ces « ballades folkloriques des temps modernes » écrites dans une langue directe et brutale, dénuée de tout lyrisme et pleine d'ironie.

Luo Ying y relate le suicide de son père, déclaré « contre-révolutionnaire actif », et la mort de sa mère, intoxiquée au gaz. Acteur et victime, il conte les horreurs auxquelles, jeune garde rouge, il assiste pétrifié et fasciné, puis son ascension vers la fortune. Il brosse aussi le portrait découpant d'une Chine du XXI^e siècle truffée d'ex-révolutionnaires ivres de prospérité et hantés par leurs démons. Il dénonce la corruption généralisée, la cruauté de l'époque post-Révolution culturelle. Et puis, il pose une question inhabituelle en Chine comme en France : qu'est-ce que les poètes font de la réalité ? A le lire, on a l'impression que son destin raconte un peu, beaucoup, de la folie, des paradoxes de la Chine capitaliste et, peut-être, de ceux du monde. Peut-on, vraiment, écrire des poèmes et courir après l'argent, le pouvoir ? Vu de Paris, cela ressemblait à un casse-tête (chinois). On a voulu voir si c'était pareil à Pékin, ville aux 192 000 millionnaires. On a atterri début décembre dans l'ambiance kitsch-british du Ritz-Carlton, sur fond de chants de Noël – version musique d'ascenseur jazzy.

Ce soir-là, Huang Nubo, costume et cravate noirs, n'est ni « loup combattant » ni « écrivain solitaire », comme il se nomme. Il est philanthrope, et soutient la cause des éléphants pour le compte du Wild Aid, une ONG américaine dont il est président pour la Chine. A ses côtés, le basketballer Yao Ming (2,29 mètres !), la star de cinéma Li Bingbing et, en slim cuir et tee-shirt noir à paillettes, le nabab de la chaîne d'hôtels de luxe Parkview et collectionneur d'art George Wong. Sur scène, l'écran déroule un panégyrique du puissant « président Huang » – « Il a grimpé l'Everest trois fois ! Je vous demande d'accueillir le poète le plus grand de Chine ! » –, photographié dans son bureau avec son requin en aquarium, dans la savane avec les éléphants... Mes voisins de table n'ont pas lu Luo Ying. Scotchés à leurs smartphones, ils écoutent d'une oreille un commissaire-priseur s'époumoner en anglais pour vendre aux enchères un voyage à la rencontre des baleines (adjudé 35 000 euros) et faire gagner un billet d'avion pour « n'importe quelle destination en Afrique ! ». Insolites débuts du caritatif en Chine. « Mais, d'ici peu, la Chine sera le principal donateur avec les Etats-Unis dit Peter Knights, le directeur de Wild Aid Chine. Huang Nubo est de ceux qui ont compris que l'écologie était un enjeu vital. La société post-consommation viendra de Chine. »

Huang Nubo affirme être déjà dans la post-consommation. Les signes extérieurs de richesse dont raffolent les *hu tao*, très peu pour lui. Il n'a « ni Rolex ni smartphone », juste un portable classique avec touches discrètement dorées.

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