

Comédie de Genève!

TOURING FILE

# Aria da Capo

A CREATION BY  
**SÉVERINE CHAVRIER**



© Louise Sari

**Created in September 2020 at Théâtre National de Strasbourg**

**Adresse postale**

Promenade Louise-Boulaz 2  
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# Credits

Direction & sound Séverine Chavier  
Text Guilain Desenclos, Adèle Joulin and Areski Moreira  
Video Martin Mallon and Quentin Vigier  
Sound Olivier Thillou  
Lights & stage manager Jean Huleu  
Set design Louise Sari  
Costumes Laure Mahéo  
Musical arrangement Roman Lemberg  
Set construction Julien Fleureau

With Guilain Desenclos, Victor Gadin, Adèle Joulin and Areski Moreira

Production for creation CDN Orléans/Centre-Val de Loire  
Production from 2024 Comédie de Genève

Coproduction Théâtre de la Ville-Paris, Théâtre National de Strasbourg  
With the participation of DICRéAM

Show in French  
Duration 1h45

Created on 30 September 2020 at Théâtre National de Strasbourg, for Festival Musica

Available on tour

## CONTACT TOUR

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# Project introduction

*Scherzando, agitato, andante ma non troppo*, a quartet of young budding musicians explore their age and the upheavals it conveys. Is adolescence the bearer of a promise or a terrible wait? Rare acuity or confusion of feelings? Withdrawal or impetus? Is it an airlock or a continent? What melancholy or ecstatic states does it convey? If it were to take musical shape, what would it sound like?

One girl and three boys. One plays the violin, the other the trombone and the third the bassoon, while she sings and plays the piano. Séverine Chavrier tunes in to their frequency altogether, for, in that show, they play music, sing, have fun and tell in their own way what being a teenager means to them. Their lyrics stand in sharp contrast to the preconceptions generally held about this so-called awkward age.

By acting several parts and wearing masks, they shed an ironic view on their elders. And they use the words of Thomas Bernhard and Elfriede Jelinek to tear their idols apart, be they forefathers, great composers or parents... The result of common research on music and improvisation, this creation closely renders the intensity of desire, between tenderness and untamed energy, facing a realm of possibilities.

Hughes Le Tanneur for Théâtre de la Ville – Paris



© Alexandre Ah-Kye

# The Quartet

Aria da Capo's four musicians are or have been studying at Conservatoire à Rayonnement Départemental d'Orléans.

Areski Moreira (21 years old) joined the school in 2009 and started to learn the violin the following year. Simultaneously, he took dance lessons, attended traditional music workshops and started learning the piano. In 2018, he entered Maurice Ravel Conservatory in Paris. The same year he met Séverine Chavrier during the show *Nous sommes repus mais pas repentis* based on Thomas Bernhard.

Guilain Desenclos (21 years old) joined Orléans conservatory at the age of 10 and started to learn the piano, an instrument he worked on for 5 years before taking up the bassoon. Passionate about the history of classical music, he has shown interest in composing for the past 3 years. In September of last year, he joined the Conservatoire à Rayonnement Régional de Paris.

When she was 5, Adèle Joulin (22 years old) joined Orléans conservatory to study the piano. At the same time, she studied and sang in choirs, and took up dance and music lessons. She is pursuing her collaboration with Séverine Chavrier by joining the cast of *Ils nous ont oubliés* in September 2023.

Victor Gadin (20 years old) is the youngest musician in the quartet. He chose to play the trombone after two years of training, while also exploring drums and guitar outside of the institution.



© Alexandre Ah-Kye

# Interview with Séverine Chavrier

Oriane Jeancourt Galignani: As a musician, and after having combined music with theatre and dance so often in your shows, was *Aria da Capo* a dream come true for you, in that you devoted an entire show to young musicians?

Séverine Chavrier: It was actually a dream come true to work with teenagers—it was a desire I'd had for a long time. But it's thanks to the music and after meeting these young musicians that I took the plunge. Music as an art and a learning process gave me the point of entry, a different cardinal point to try and unpack their own world. With them we managed to raise the questions that lie at the heart of this show: how does one become a classical musician in today's world? How does one become a musician at 15? How does one live one's youth while practicing this solitary, difficult, and demanding task? If we take Thomas Bernhard's words, who says that music, in its sensuality and abstraction, lies above everything else: how does one get to live the rest? Very few musicians are happy with music. Those are questions I did ask myself when I was their age, learning my craft as a musician. In my case, theatre saved me.

Does this show have autobiographical roots?

The connection I share with them probably lies in my own teenage years, but most importantly it's based on passion for the music. We share common experiences, reference points, and passions. But everything stemmed from them. I met Areski Moreira, the violinist, during my show *Nous sommes repus mais pas repentis*, which is based on Thomas Bernhard's work. He then pointed me towards the other players to form this quartet you now see on stage. The raw material I intend to preserve is their words, interactions, secrets, laughter, bonds, lucidity, inflexibility, and preoccupations. To me, it's like a sectional plan of their daily life, a diary of times hoped for and missed. I believe that the language they speak, with its dregs and its new terms, can express poetry and that, most especially, the violence of their expression opens up a world we didn't even know

existed, in a way that leads us to question our own future.

They talk a lot about love and music. Would you say those are the cardinal points of their lives? In what way does this show also celebrate teenage friendship?

Desire is the central issue in their lives. Knowing whether you'll be loved, whether you'll know how to love, how to be desired, how to express your erotic charge... I think those are crucial questions at that age, when you're building your sensual landscape. Attention to the awakening of desire during this period of adolescence lies at the core of our work. Then comes the matter of the music—whether showbusiness, learning ground, a demand, absolute, a passion, or an unreachable goal. Friendship is constitutive of that age, bringing emancipation, acting like an excitement gauge. Here, masculine friendship reveals all its ambiguity, love, and rivalry. The bonds we strike at that age are unique. There is passion on stage between these men. I sought out their laughter, their foolishness, and their joy to roam free—like an ongoing party when everyone is confronted to their own solitude within a group.

How did you manage to bring out their teenage secrets, their energy and melancholy?

They held a rehearsal diary. Every day, they had to write about their experience. The strength of their friendships, off stage, also contributed to them opening up.

There was also some improvisational work. During their break, they would chat, then re-enact parts of their discussions on stage. I devised a technical system so that they could act without having to learn the scene. Anyway, for me, they've always been artists in their own right. Thanks to them, I rediscovered adolescent times—that infinite time of exploring who you are.

Music is very present in the show. All sorts of music, from formal classical music to rap, from Beethoven to contemporary hits. Why such an eclectic range?

Because it actually is one of the main stakes for contemporary musicians, i.e. learning how to live with all sorts of musical genres, to live with MP3s, while exploring the rich and complex sounds of their instrument daily. They're inspired by all the music they listen to on their smartphone.

So, there was this idea of having fun, reproducing a bit of all that and being content with it, while sometimes finding great pleasure in the lyrical charge. Classical musicians move in the vastness of infinite and magnificent repertoires, but they're also cut off from many other musical genres.

As for me, I've always worked without preconceived ideas about music. I think that the stage can welcome all of them at any given time, just like different energies.

Your title, *Aria da Capo*, suggests a structure that is free, open to variations...

*The Goldberg Variations* open with an *aria da capo*. Beyond the nod, there was perhaps the idea of the beginning of a loop that never stops, in the form of adolescence—a long and repetitive period, a beautiful period of stagnation before the big leap. Each scene is like a sort of miniature, which could contain the whole show in itself, like variations on a same theme.

How did you go about choosing the instruments and the orchestra in the background?

I didn't want the music to become a performance or a problem. I would've liked all of them to play the piano,

sing... so they'd have a vision of harmony that might be simplistic at times but always lyrical. The relationship to an instrument on stage is very different from the one they might have at music school. In the show, music is a world, a reference point, a passion.

For me, music on stage is like chorus lines, remembrances, references. It's about bringing out the lyrical, emotional, and energising charge of music in its simple form and structure. With some tiny arrangements and an ever-present technical envelope, they were sometimes able to improvise and create soundscapes that served both the stage and the show. All the work actually consisted in undoing their student reflexes, in helping them to maintain ambiences rather than constantly transforming them without having the necessary harmonic or technical baggage to do so. Less is more. And then there's the ghost of the orchestra, lurking.

This ghost orchestra is indeed very striking. Was it part of the show from the beginning?

The idea came fairly early on, as a counterpoint to the isolation of the box rooms—creating a spatial break, and a temporal one as well, like another world going extinct, resonating with the voices of absent musicians. I like that this musician-less orchestra, haunted by a few signs of human life, might appear like a mental offshoot, a waiting room or a womb that symbolises as much group anonymity as it projects the spectre of big symphonic music.

Interview by the Théâtre National de Strasbourg and Musica Festival



© Alexandre Ah-Kye



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## **TOUR 2020-2021**

30 September – 4 October, Théâtre National de Strasbourg, in the frame of Festival Musica (FR) - CRÉATION

21 - 24 October 2020, CDN Orléans / Centre-Val de Loire (FR)

12 - 15 November 2020, Théâtre de la Ville – Les Abbesses – Paris (FR) – ANNULATION COVID

4 - 7 March 2021, Centre Pompidou - Paris (FR) – ANNULATION COVID

## **TOUR 2021-2022**

21 - 22 October 2021, Points Communs – Scène nationale de Cergy Pontoise (FR)

28 - 31 October 2021, Théâtre de l'Athénée - Paris (FR)

10 December 2021, Théâtre Roger Barat – Herblay-sur-Seine, in the frame of Festival théâtral du Val d'Oise (FR)

## **TOUR 2022-2023**

1 - 3 December 2022, CDN Orléans / Centre-Val de Loire (FR)

5 - 6 January 2023, Théâtre des 13 vents – CDN Montpellier (FR)

2 - 4 March 2023, Théâtre national de Bordeaux en Aquitaine – TnBA (FR)

21 - 22 March 2023, Théâtre de la Cité – CDNToulouse Occitanie (FR)

30 - 31 March 2023, Halles de Schaerbeek - Bruxelles (BE)

12 - 22 April 2023, Théâtre Nanterre-Amandiers (FR)

## **TOUR 2023-2024**

17 - 18 November 2023, Festival de Otoño - Madrid (ES)

7 - 8 March 2024, Comédie de Valence – CDN Drôme-Ardèche (FR)

**AVAILABLE ON DEMAND**



# Press clippings

*“A revelation. [...] Nothing here is ever set in stone, as Séverine Chavrier constantly reinvents her stageplay, which is as free from convention as adolescence can be.”*

Laurent Goumarre, *Libération*, 17 April 2023

*“In contrast to clichés about the milieu, we discover a generation that is torn between the desire to be demanding and the right to live out its adolescence – impossible to reconcile. It is a fascinating dichotomy.”*

Igor Hansen-Love, *Les Inrockuptibles*, 1 April 2023

*“[...] A fascinating plunge into the intricacies of the human heart, the strength and grace of which Séverine Chavrier’s coming-of-age theatre has captured in an absorbing production that is by turns funny, moving, passionate and just the right amount of disturbing.”*

Marie-Aude Roux, *Le Monde*, 4 November 2021

*“Séverine Chavrier’s new creation, Aria da Capo, magnifies the ebullient youth of four infinitely touching and relevant teenage musicians.”*

*“Chavrier succeeds in orchestrating a fascinating story of self-knowledge and self-building through a motif that plays a large part in her creations, i.e. music. [...] The sound material vibrates, crackles, saturates, detonates, grows and becomes distorted throughout the performance, bringing together the most beautiful scores of our musical heritage with the words and voices of history’s great masters and performers, who are deliciously mocked or idolised by undisciplined young people.”*

Christophe Candoni, *sceneweb.fr*, 28 October 2021

*“Trivial: the bodies of teenagers slumped on mattresses, taking drugs or fantasising about getting their dicks sucked. Sublime: the infinite time they have at their disposal, ‘the time to tell their own story, the time to live for a while before having to take charge of their own lives’. Trivial and sublime: the mixture of energy and fatigue that is so typical of adolescence.”*

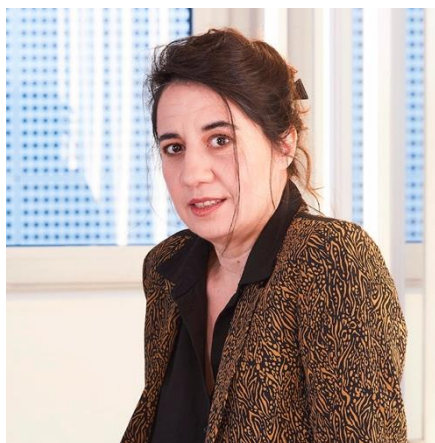
Dominique Lindemann, *Transfuge*, 15 October 2020

*“On stage, the set is in flux, as is the mood of the young virtuosos. A pinch of self-mockery and detachment creeps into the performance—a possible variation on the ability to give one’s all to produce melodious notes from the hollow of an instrument.”*

Christine Zimmer, *Dernières Nouvelles d’Alsace*, 3 October 2020

*“Co-written with the performers, who kept a rehearsal diary from which many of the dialogues were taken, the show is the story of their young lives [...]. These questions are enhanced by a heterogeneous soundtrack made up of the music that the various protagonists favour, from Beethoven to rap, from mainstream R’n’B hits to learned sounds”.*

Hervé Lévy, *Poly Magazine*, 23 September 2020



© Magali Dougados

# Séverine Chavrier

**DIRECTOR**

Director of CDN Orléans/Centre-Val de Loire from 2017 to 2023, Séverine Chavrier is a musician, director, and philosophy graduate. She has been director of Comédie de Genève since 1 July 2023.

After a hypokhâgne class, she began training as an actor at a very young age, taking classes with Michel Fau and François Merle, then taking part in various training courses where she continued to learn from artists such as Félix Prader, Christophe Rauck, Darek Blinski, and Rodrigo Garcia. She also attended musical classes at the Geneva Conservatoire.

Each of her shows is an opportunity for encounters and cross-fertilisation. As an actor and musician, she has worked with many different people while directing her own company, La Sérénade Interrompue. Alongside Rodolphe Burger, she met Jean-Louis Martinelli, for whom she created and performed the music for several shows at Théâtre Nanterre-Amandiers (*Schweyk* by Bertolt Brecht, *Kliniken* by Lars Norén, and *Les Fiancés de Loches* by Feydeau).

Chavrier has developed a unique approach to directing, in which theatre enters into dialogue with music, dance, images, and literature. She designs her shows using all kinds of materials: the bodies of her performers, the sound of the prepared piano, the videos she often makes herself, not forgetting the spoken word—erratic words that she shapes by immersing herself in the world of the authors she loves.

In 2009, her play *Épousailles et Représailles*, based on a play by Hanokh Levin, premiered at Théâtre Nanterre-Amandiers and was then programmed at Le Centquatre – Paris by L’Odéon – Théâtre de l’Europe for the Festival Impatience, dissecting the vicissitudes of the couple with humour, cruelty, and humanity.

In October 2011, Séverine Chavrier, then associate artist at Le Centquatre – Paris, created *Série B – Ballard J. G.*, inspired by James Graham Ballard, for Arte’s Festival Temps d’images, then, at the 2012 Festival d’Avignon, *Plage Ultime*, performed at Théâtre Nanterre-Amandiers and MC2 Grenoble.

Between 2014 and 2016, she was invited to create two plays at Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne, *Les Palmiers Sauvages*, based on the novel *I Forget Thee, Jerusalem (The Wild Palms)* by William Faulkner, and *Nous sommes repus mais pas repentis*, based on *Ritter, Dene, Voss (Wittgenstein’s Nephew)* by Thomas Bernhard. After touring France’s leading theatres (Bonlieu, Scène nationale - Annecy, Nouveau Théâtre de Montreuil, Comédie de Reims, Théâtre d’Arras, L’Apostrophe Cergy-Pontoise, Théâtre Liberté - Toulon, etc.), these two plays were presented as a diptych at L’Odéon – Théâtre de l’Europe in spring 2016. They were then revived at CDN Orléans / Centre-Val de Loire and toured during the 2019/2020 season (Le Monfort Théâtre, Théâtre de la Ville - Paris, Théâtre national de Bordeaux en Aquitaine).

Since 2015, Chavrier has also been developing a long-term project with the creation of *Après Coups, Projet Un-Femme*, the first two parts of which, created in 2015 and 2017, were presented at Théâtre de la Bastille in Paris and toured to Lyon, Rouen and Orléans, bringing together female artists from the circus and dance worlds. A diptych was created in Orléans before being presented at Théâtre national de Bretagne – Rennes, Manège scène nationale-Reims, MC 93 and CDN Besançon Franche-Comté.

Music, which she plays in her own productions or with prestigious improvisers, continues to occupy an important place in her life as an artist. In 2013, she improvised at the piano, in a duo with Jean-Pierre Drouet on percussion for Festival d'Avignon and Opéra de Lille, and in a trio with Bartabas at La Villette. In autumn 2016, at La Pop - Paris, she created the show *Mississippi Cantabile* with Congolese bassist Armel Malonga, a musical encounter between North and South.

In January 2020, at the invitation of Carmen Romero and the Santiago a Mil Festival, Chavrier staged a Spanish version of *Les Palmiers Sauvages (Las Palmeras Salvajes)*, with a Chilean artistic and technical team. This new version of Faulkner's text has been touring Spanish-speaking countries since.

In 2020, her creation about adolescence and music, *Aria da Capo*, premiered at Théâtre national de Strasbourg in partnership with Festival Musica. The show toured during the 20/21 season (CDN Orléans/Centre-Val de Loire, Théâtre de la Ville-Les Abbesses, Centre Pompidou) and in 22/23 (Théâtre des 13 vents – CDN Montpellier, Théâtre national de Bordeaux en Aquitaine, ThéâtrédelaCité – CDN Toulouse Occitanie, Les Halles de Schaerbeek – Brussels, Théâtre Nanterre-Amandiers). In 23/24, the show tours in Festival de Otoño – Madrid in November and will be given at Comédie de Valence, CDN Drôme-Ardèche in March.

In 2022, she created *Ils nous ont oubliés* by Thomas Bernhard at Teatre Nacional de Catalunya in Barcelona, continuing to explore the relationship between theatre, music, images, and literature. The show was then presented at L'Odéon – Théâtre de l'Europe, at Teatro Nacional São João in Porto, at Comédie de Genève and in January 2024 at La Colline, Théâtre national.

In autumn 2023, Séverine Chavrier performed at the Festival Musica in Strasbourg with *KV385*, a staging of Mozart's symphony No. 35 "*Haffner*", created with composer and musician Pierre Jodlowski and performed by the Orchestre Philharmonique de Strasbourg.

She is currently working on an adaptation of Faulkner's novel *Absalom, Absalom!*