

Chin

opera

Jean-Luc Trulès
Emmanuel Genvrin

An industrial dispute in a sugar factory
in La Reunion Island in 1955



**Théâtre
Vollard**

REUNION ISLAND
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Chin opera

Composer and music director : Jean-Luc Trulès
Libretto and director : Emmanuel Genvrin

A Vollard Theatre production

1 hr 50 mins with an interval
with surtitles in English

Contents

A Creole opera	p3
Press.....	p4
Reunionese history : the events of Quartier Français	p5
The characters	p6
The argument	p7
Maloya opera	p8
A Creole tragedy	p8
The 1950s	p9
Performers.....	p10
The choir	p13
The orchestra	p14
Creative team	p15
Technical information	p17
Vollard Theatre	p19

A Creole opera

A remarkable opera due to its historical libretto, *Chin* deals with a little-known part of French overseas départements' history : the important post-war decolonisation movement in the islands which gave rise to independentist, autonomist and Maoist-friendly tendencies. It created a tropical communism, a sugar-cane communism whose imagery found its models in Che Guevara or Fidel Castro. A contemporary opera with a hybrid musical colour, Asian sounds, and Indian Ocean rhythms, *Chin*'s score opens up interesting and unexplored perspectives by integrating Indian, Chinese and Malagasy trends into Western classicism. The performers reflect this cultural mix, originating both from Reunion Island and other overseas French départements (Martinique, Guadeloupe), and from mainland France, Madagascar and China.

The theme

In 1955 on Reunion Island, Mr Roger, a former Petain supporter, appeals to the 'Reds' and to the son of Doctor Papa, Chin (pronounced like «Chine» in French) to help save his Bel Air sugar factory. The factory is saved but the Roger family, in the grip of a curse, breaks apart and Chin has to take refuge in the mountains ... The libretto is inspired by a true story : the 1955 alliance of the communist Paul Vergès and the sugar producer René Payet to save the Quartier Français factory. «Chin» or «Le Chinois (Chinese man)» was Paul Vergès's nickname as a youth because his mother was Asian. The title also calls to mind the Maoist sympathies of the decolonisation movements, as well as the presence on Reunion Island of an influential Chinese community. This theme has already been the object of a 2002 play by Volland Theatre, as well as a TV film screenplay with Yves Boisset.

3



Press reviews

CHIN, world premiere at Champ Fleuri theatre (Saint Denis, Reunion Island) on April 2010, revival on May (Reunion) an October 2011 (Paris).

« With Chin, co-written with the composer Jean-Luc Trulès, Vollard Theater goes to a new level. The music and 57 participants of the opera, sung in French and Creole, are a microcosm of Reunionese society, blend classical, maloya (Afro-Malagasy former slave music), Creole, Asian and Indian melodies, symphonic orchestra instruments as well as the Chinese violin (erhu). »

Marie-Aude Roux, Le Monde

« Faced with the originality - indeed the cheek - of the undertaking one can only but applaud. Emmanuel Genvrin has written a powerful and complex libretto, where public interest and private destinies are intertwined. The enormous progress made by the composer Jean-Luc Trulès since Maraina should be emphasized. The richness and diversity are still there, but the writing has gained in blending, assurance and orchestral variety»

Thierry Guyenne, Opéra Magazine

« Trulès knows how to harmonize the instruments' timbres; he knows how to write for voices. The score puts to advantage several very good duets, ensembles and choruses. Sinuous melodic lines, superimposed rhythms, very present percussion, echoes of Indian, Chinese and Malagasy (maloya) music, this is music which is accessible without demagoguery, which imitates nobody»

Laurent Bury, Forumopéra

« Following «Maraina», Jean-Luc Trulès and Emmanuel Genvrin present a tragic opera which recalls the bitter 1955 sugar conflict on Reunion Island, using an accomplished score that blends contemporary and Reunionese compositions. An opera of musical maturity and exceptional writing.»

Corinne Moncel, Afrique-Asie

« Alternating political and intimate scenes revealing characters' inner torments, Emmanuel Genvrin creates a captivating and harmonious production. Orchestrally Jean-Luc Trulès has delivered a modern score where the musical, almost cinematographic, ambience dominates the heady melodies. A real ode to freedom that could serve as a reference to a Creole classicism. »

Yoan Guilloux, Le Journal de l'Île

« The importance of the two performances of Chin this weekend at Saint Denis can not be underestimated; how can we not draw any lessons from this extraordinary opera ? And how can we not acknowledge the quality and extent of the work accomplished by Emmanuel Genvrin, Jean-Luc Trulès and all of the show's creative performers ? »

Lucien Biedinger, Témoignages



Reunionese history : The events of Quartier Français

The Quartier Français events began in 1953 with the return of sixty year old René Payet as director of the family factory. He was an engineer, a First World War and Cross of Fire veteran, leader of the smallholders in the 1930s and a former Petainist mayor of the town of Sainte Suzanne. He was the son of Yvrin Payet, a poor white man from Salazie who made his fortune in Madagascar. Structured as a cooperative where the Payets held a majority, the factory was known for not owning its own land, and offering planters good conditions. As well as a mediocre output, the company was in trouble after a rash purchase of boilers and thickeners. René Payet called to his side his son-in-law Maxime Rivière, married to his daughter Micheline, and a former Free French Forces (FFL) fighter. He placed himself in receivership but unable to meet repayments, the banks, influenced by his competitors, refused him any more credit. Cornered, he imagined joining forces with his old communist adversaries, and asked his son-in-law to contact his Free French Naval Forces comrade Bruny Payet - general secretary of the St André town council and future head of the CGT trade union in Reunion - to organise a meeting with Paul Vergès. Well-informed, René Payet knew that the young secretary of the Reunionese federation of the French Communist Party (PCF), also a former Free French Forces fighter and leader of the colonial section of the PCF, had recently arrived back from mainland France, needed to make himself known and - as an admirer of Mao and Ho Chi Minh - to establish himself in agricultural circles. He was the son of an Indo-Chinese primary school teacher and Dr Raymond Vergès, founder of the local Communist party. Together they created a defence committee and mobilise the island at impressive rallies and meetings which were held in common. These increased in number across the island with growing success from July 18th-29th 1955. The Prefect announced on the radio the factory's rescue, with a 7-year recovery package and an un hoped-for 3.5% loan. Victory was complete, but René Payet had to hand directorship over to his son-in-law, and Quartier Français became a limited liability company. The communists were euphoric. The sales of the Party's newspaper Témoignages rocketed, the 1956 general elections were won hands down, and Paul Vergès could finally launch his rallying cry of autonomy and create the Reunionese Communist Party. The authorities however took fright. The government dispatched an iron-fisted prefect, Perreau-Pradier, whose job was to block the communists and initiate a departmentalisation process which was shouldered for 20 years by Michel Debré, a former Prime Minister under De Gaulle. Paul Vergès was even forced to run away to the mountains for 28 months in 1964. René Payet died in 1981, the same year the factory was permanently closed due to restructuring. The company Quartier Français, the leading sugar company of Reunion, was sold to the international group Tereos in 2010. The same year Paul Vergès lost the leadership of the county council which he'd held for the past 12 years.



The characters

Chin (Heng Shi)

Baritone, a revolutionary, Eurasian; son of the mythical Doctor Papa, doctor to the poor and founder of the local communist party, and of Thi-Kang a Vietnamese primary school teacher.

Monsieur Roger (Jean-Philippe Courtis)

Bass-baritone, sugar producer, former Petainist, handicapped.

Élisabeth (Anne-Marguerite Werster)

Soprano, Monsieur Roger's daughter, enlisted in the FFL during the war where she met Chin. Mother of a young son and married to Charles.

Héva (Holy Razafindrazaka)

Soprano, factory worker and political activist. Daughter of Darma and step-daughter of Rézéda, in love with Chin.

Charles (Karim Bouzra)

Tenor, from mainland France, Elisabeth's husband, and an engineer.

Darma (Josselin Michalon)

Bass-baritone, of Indian origin, head of the workers at Bel Air, Héva's father, Rézéda's partner.

Rézéda (Aurore Ugolin)

Mezzo, Mr Roger's governess, Darma's partner and stepmother to Héva.

A young boy

Presumed son of Chin and Elisabeth..

Choir

Workers and planters (19 choir members conducted by Landy Andriamboavonjy).



The argument

Part One

Bel Air factory courtyard. A rumour spreads that the factory is bankrupt. The young activist Héva calls on the employees to revolt. Her father Darma calms the situation when Mr Roger's son-in-law Charles suddenly appears. Following an altercation he fires the young worker. The workers declare a strike, and Héva suggests to her father that they call on Doctor Papa's son, Chin, recently returned from mainland France. In the big house, Elisabeth is troubled by Chin's return. Mr Roger puts pressure on his daughter to renew ties with her former wartime lover, and to suggest an alliance to save the factory. Charles, a deep-seated anti-communist, broods his resentment. Chin lives in a caravan by the sea, where Héva joins him and becomes his lover. A delegation of workers led by Darma asks Chin to become their leader. During a picnic in the hills, Elisabeth promises him that her father will open the doors to the world of agriculture and then those of power in exchange for rescuing the factory, before she sinks into his arms. During a meeting in the Bel Air courtyard Chin suggests to the workers that they unite with the farmers to organise demonstrations all over the island. Mr Roger openly joins the movement alongside his daughter. A «revolutionary» ballet celebrates Chin who has become the people's unifier and Doctor Papa's heir.

Interval

Part Two

Faced with the mass mobilisation, the Bel Air factory is rescued, but Rézéda, a soothsayer, informs Mr Roger of the misfortune that lies in wait. Back from the rally, too excited and disturbed by Chin's coldness, Elisabeth shows signs of mental confusion. An angry Chin also suspects that Mr Roger has duped him, a fact which the latter denies, and the two part on good terms. A half-mad Charles erupts on the scene and demands revenge : he dismisses his father-in-law, assumes control of the factory, adopts Elisabeth's son and reveals to her that Chin loves Héva. A disbelieving Elisabeth flees. At the caravan people are bitter and disillusioned. Rézéda sings of Héva's great destiny as a leader of the people, while a drunk and desperate Elisabeth wanders through the camp and goes into a trance, possessed by a demon. Back with Darma and pursued by the police, Chin entrusts Elisabeth to Rézéda and announces that he is running away : he goes into hiding in the mountains with Héva. Elisabeth dies in Rézéda's arms, who evokes the curse of an Indian temple before withdrawing with Darma to an ashram. Preceded by the police, Mr Roger, a broken man, embraces his daughter's body and asks forgiveness.

7



Maloya opera

By Jean-Luc Trulès, composer and conductor

Chin's music is deliberately fusional and operatic. A choir-borne maloya background, mixes simple, clear Creole, Asian and Indian melodies in their moods, underpinned by a free harmony, open to writing techniques from different eras, modalism, chromaticism, serial music, polytonality, going as far as an asserted atonality. The dramatic art, the text preceding the music which in turn creates its own language, is carried by the emotion and the situations : a story is being told, and it is the characters' tensions, their inner turmoil, their intoxication which are portrayed. True to the action, the music is exuberant and excessive, sacred or light, sometimes sober and poignant. The orchestration proposes combinations which suggest a poetic elsewhere, an imaginary Indian Ocean where symphonic music borrows from traditional music. The fusion of brass, strings and erhu (Chinese violin) create a range of new expressions, an Asian-flavoured tone. The characters are defined by their theme and their destiny. They have their instrument of reference. Chin sounds like a Jew's harp to which the ehru (Roger) answers like a fanfare. Elisabeth is carried by the violins, Charles by the horn and Héva by the oboe. Darma and Rezeda sing Indian melodies, and the choir gives rhythm to the maloya - the Afro-Malagasy former slave music.

Creole Tragedy

By Emmanuel Genvrin, librettist and director

Chin is an opera about destiny. That of a « son of heaven », an orphan, whom the war sends to fight in Europe. He allies himself with a class enemy to become a leader, and flees like a maroon into the mountains. That of Mr Roger, who was from a poor white family; now rich, he is a survivor of the First World War who makes a fortune in order to marry the woman he loves, but his wife commits suicide and his daughter Elisabeth dies, sacrificed, unlucky in love and struck down by the family curse. There is Darma, the loyal worker whose life is turned upside down, his wife is dead and his daughter does as she pleases : he retires to an ashram a broken man. There is the young revolutionary Héva, Darma's daughter; she sees Chin as her saviour and senses too late that she too will be sacrificed. Finally Charles, forced to marry a woman who doesn't love him and raise a child who is not his : he will become the big boss, as mainland France wanted. Other characters share the stage. A people's choir in *deus ex machina*, at the heart of the opera, who propel the story's forces, who challenge, link together and free, who make and undo power. What do they want ? Work, dignity, the right to happiness. Rézéda, witch and substitute mother, emissary between life and death, creates the link between the big house and the factory courtyard, between gods and men. Then there is mainland France, the unseen colonial power, which acts underhandedly, cynical and soulless. Finally there is a child of mixed blood, a skiff tossed about by the events, unloved, silent observer, enigmatic. A bastard, an unspoken taboo. Heir to both sides, he has a heavy past, he represents the uncertain future of Reunion Island.

8



The 1950s

By Hervé Mazelin, set designer

At a time when the automobile is more and more popular, what could be more graphic than a Peugeot 203 pick-up to instantly send us back to the post-war years ? The 203 pick-up followed by the 404 model were the favourite vehicles of Reunionese farmers. After the 1980s they were replaced by Japanese pick-ups. On the plantations there were also many jeeps bought from American surplus stores. Chin's caravan is not an invention. Oddly enough there was a campground and caravans on the seafront at La Saline. Newcomers, evicted families, dropouts or artists all lived there. We also drew inspiration from the period's revolutionary iconography. The Cold War and the conflicts of decolonisation froze sides. The working and farming classes were the stakes of the struggle. Videos animated by rising suns, smiling portraits of a leader coming down from heaven and a profusion of red evoke Maoist propaganda symbols. The stage design actively seeks movement. Moving cars, bicycles, the caravan, Mr Roger's wheelchair, the raising and lowering of the factory canvas define spaces, black « guillotine » curtains obstruct the bike at will. A simple white couch and ceiling light signify the bourgeois interior of the sugar producer's big house. For the costumes, white for the bourgeois, blue overalls, khaki for the sugar cane cutters of the 1950s and hats for everyone all refer to the social divisions of the period.



Performers

Heng Shi (Chin)



Baritone, originally from China, lives in Paris and Shanghai, a singing teacher at the Shanghai National Conservatory of Music. Heng Shi graduated from the Paris *Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse* where he studied in the singing class of Peggy Bouveret. He began to study singing in his hometown of Suzhou, the « Venice of the Orient », and in

1998 continued a few miles south at the Shanghai Conservatory. He was awarded a First Prize for opera singing there in 2003. Thanks to a study grant from Hong Kong he enrolled at the *Ecole Normale de Musique de Paris* where he was awarded another First prize for singing. He then started a career in France, China and internationally : he won the Opera prize at the Marmande International Competition. He has been Escamillo in Bizet's *Carmen*, Zurga in Bizet's *The Pearl Fishers*, Figaro in Puccini's *The Marriage of Figaro*, Gianni Schicchi in Rossini's *Gianni Schicchi*, Falke in *The Bat*. In concert he has also performed the solo in Mendelssohn's *The First Walpurgis Night* and Fauré's *Requiem*, Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, Handel's and Dvorak's *Te Deums*, Rossini's *Messa di Gloria*, that of Puccini and Fauré's *Requiem*.

Anne-Marguerite Werster (Elisabeth)



A French soprano and a dancer by training, Anne-Marguerite Werster entered the *Ecole d'Art Lyrique de l'Opéra de Paris* in 1992. She started on stage at the Bastille Opera as an actress under Claude Regy before singing Mme Lidoine in *Dialogue of the Carmelites* at the Garnier Opera in 1994. Marcel Landowski entrusted her with the interpretation of several of his works : *La Prison*, *Un enfant appelle*, *Les Adieux*, *La Messe de l'Aurore*...

She has been the Governess in *A Turn of the Screw* at the Opera-Comique and in Lyon, where she also sang the role of the Countess (*The Marriage of Figaro*) and Musetta (*La Bohème*) alongside B. Hendricks, then sang Donna Anna in the French production of Malipiero's *Don Giovanni* at Nanterre, Annina (*A Night in Venice*), Xanthippe (Finzi's *Dernier Jour de Socrate*) and Mélisande (*Pelléas and Mélisande*, directed by G. Prêtre) at the Opéra-Comique, Vitellia (*The Clemency of Titus*) at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Female Chorus (*The Rape of Lucretia*) at Nantes, Mrs Lidoine (*Dialogues of the Carmélites*) at Tours and at the Bonn Beethovenhalle Under M. Soustrot, Missia (*The Merry Widow*) at Saint-Etienne, Bordeaux and Dijon, Kostelnika (*Jenufa*) at Tours, Lady Sara (*Le Revenant de Gomes*) at the Madrid Teatro de la Zarzuela, Donna Elvira (*Don Giovanni*) at Nancy and Avignon, Cherubini's *Médée* at Metz and at the Nîmes Arenas. Anne-Marguerite Werster also performs concerts, notably in Verdi's *Requiem* at Saint-Etienne and Paris, Rabaud's *L'Appel de la Mer* at Nancy, Berlioz's *Summer Nights* with the Lille Orchestra, Pergolèse's *Stabat Mater* with the National Chamber Orchestra of Toulouse, D. Lesur's *La Reine Morte* with the Radio-France Philharmonic Orchestra. During the 2005-2006 season she sang the title role of *The Merry Widow* at the Opera-comique (directed by J. Savary), a concert at the Chartres Journées Lyriques, a recital tour dedicated to A. Bruneau, as well as Tatiana (*Eugene Onegin*) at the Metz Opera etc.



Jean-Philippe Courtis (Monsieur Roger)



French bass-baritone Jean-Philippe Courtis, after winning a First prize in oboe, musicology at the Sorbonne and orchestra conducting, won a First prize for singing and opera at the Paris CNMS. He entered the Paris Opera school of singing when it was created and made his debut at the Aix-en-Provence festival at the same time as he started at the Paris Opera as a soloist. In his most memorable roles, we can note the Marquis in the *Dialogue of the Carmelites*, Hieros in *The Siege of Corinth*, Mephisto in Gounod's *Faust* (directed by G. Lavelli), Melcthal and Gesler in Rossini's *William Tell*, directed by Pizzi, Brother Bernard in the world premiere of Messiaen's *Saint François d'Assise* with Seiji Ozawa, Arkel in Debussy's *Pelléas and Mélisande*. Since then he has been invited to most theatres in France and abroad, and has had a string of successes : at the opening of Montpellier's Corum in *The Huguenots* directed by Gianfranco Del Monaco, at the Grand Théâtre of Geneva for the world premiere of *The Forest* by Rolf Liebermann, understudying for Ruggiero Raimondi. He sang at the opening of the Bastille Opera in Berlioz's *The Trojans* directed by Pizzi and Myung Chung and the opening of the Lyons Opera in Debussy's *Rodrigo and Ximena* directed by Kent Nagano. His career has led him to the four corners of the world, to Vienna under Claudio Abbado and Antoine Vitez, to Houston in *Romeo and Juliet*. He has made over forty recordings, amongst which *The Trojans* for DECCA conducted by Charles Dutoit. For Deutsche Grammophon, *Pelléas and Mélisande* conducted by Claudio Abbado, *Carmen* for Philips Ozawa, *Oedipus*, *The Pearl Fishers*, *Werther* by the London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Antonio Papano for EMI, etc. For the past six years he has taught singing at the Amiens CRR and continues his international career.

Holy Razafindrazaka (Héva)



A soprano noticed by several choirmasters in Antananarivo (Madagascar), Holy won the 2009 singing prize at the Francis Poulenc conservatory in Paris (Pierre Catala) and trains at the Saint Petersburg conservatory and the Salzburg Mozarteum. She also graduated in Gregorian chant from the school of Gregorian chant in Paris and since 2000 has participated in numerous productions in Europe, Japan, Russia and the Indian Ocean (Gershwin, Orff, Kreutzer, Mozart, Bizet, Malagasy lyrical singing). Founder and president of an association to promote music in Madagascar (LAKA) she created *the Classical music festival* and the Centre for Musical education. She has also created Madagascar's first Gregorian chant choir. Her roles : the Fire and the Princess in Ravel's *The Child and the Spells*, Annina in Verdi's *La Traviata* alongside Anna Samuil and Valerij Serkin, Quatr'épices in Offenbach's *La Créole* with Nicolas Rivenq and Alain Buet. Ravelo in the Madagascar production of Trulès and Genvrin's *Maraina*. In concert : Sandrina in Mozart's *The Pretend Garden-girl*, Zerlina in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, Fanny in Rossini's *The Marriage Contract*.

11



Karim Bouzra (Charles)



A tenor of French-Algerian origin, Karim Bouzra trained as an actor at the Conservatory of Lille and as a singer at the Conservatory of Tourcoing, at the CNIPAL, at the Maitrise of Notre Dame de Paris. He has been a chorus member at the Lille Opera. He has been a soloist in the operas *Dédé*, *La Maréchale sans gene*, *From the House of the Dead*, *The Marriage of Figaro* (Basilio), *Don Giovanni* (Don Ottavio), *Dido and Aeneas* (Phoebus), *Madame Butterfly* (Yakuside). He has been Clem and Alfred in Britten's *The Little Sweep* at the Champs-Élysées Theatre in 2009, Apollo in *Daphne* at the Miami Baroque Festival and at New York's Trinity Church. From 2005 to 2009 he was Louis in Trulès and Genvrin's *Maraina*.

Aurore Ugolin (Rézéda)



Mezzo originally from Guadeloupe. She started learning music at an early age by studying the clarinet. After earning a degree in musicology in 1997 she went to the USA to study singing, piano, and English and German lyric diction at the Montclair State University. In 2000 she was admitted to the Paris Conservatoire (CNSMDP) in singing and as soon as she graduated in 2004 she performed the part of Mercedes in Bizet's *Carmen*, Dido in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* (conducted by Attilio Cremonesi, directed by Sasha Waltz). She has been Zulma in Rossini's *L'italienne à Alger*, and a satyr in the Betsy Jolas' contemporary opera *Cyclops*. She sang under Kurt Masur in the *St Matthew Passion* at the Cité de la Musique and at Radio France, and along with the violist Tristan Dely and the pianist Olivier Yvard is part of the trio Schneeweiss which addresses the works of Loeffler, Bridge and Brahms. From 2005 to 2009 she performed the lead role in Jean-Luc Trulès and Emmanuel Genvrin's *Maraina*. In 2006 she received the Adami Lyric Revelation of the year prize. She has recently performed as Dinah (Bernstein's *Trouble in Tahiti*), the Mother and The Cup in Ravel's *The Child and the Spells*.

Josselin Michalon (Darma)



A bass baritone originally from Martinique and winner of many awards (« Voix Nouvelles » - France Télécom Foundation, Les Maîtres du Chant Français, UFAM...), Josselin Michalon studied under Edith Selig at the Rouen CNR (Gold Medal) and with Christiane Eda-Pierre. He has studied performance with Gabriel Bacquier. He has participated in many concerts and oratorios both in France and abroad. He has performed the parts of Sprecher in *The Magic Flute*, Bartolo in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Masetto in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, Norton in *The Marriage Contract*, Escamillo in Bizet/Constant's *La Tragédie de Carmen*, Don Pedro in Berlioz's *Beatrice and Benedick*, Harmattan in G. Finzi's *Là-bas peut-être*, the Sultan in G. Condé's *Salima sac à ruses*, and Undertaker in G. Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*. From 2005 to 2009 he was Montaubon in Jean-Luc Trulès and Emmanuel Genvrin's *Maraina*. He created and participated in the lyrical theatrical and choreographical performance *Nègres des Lumières* (Salon d'Honneur, Paris City Hall and at the Epée de Bois theatre at the Cartoucherie in Vincennes). In the France Opera Company he has participated in many 18th and 19th century opera-pasticcios both in France and abroad, particularly Rossini's *Il Turco Amorososo* at the Saumur Theatre, and at the Château de Versailles, *Intermezzo* at Prague Castle and at the Château of Champs-sur-Marne, *Diva, mode d'emploi* at the Opéra-comique. He has recorded Vivaldi's *Dixit dominus* for Vérany, and Condé's *Salima, sac à ruses* for Radio France.



The choir

19 choir members

On tour *Chin's* choir is composed of nine professionals from Reunion (Nicole Leichnig, Roselyne Blucker, Stéphanie Miquel, Natacha Rajemison, Damien Lazartigues, Léopold Pauline, Anaïs Monray, Stéphane Allouche, Alix Vienne), four from mainland France or Belgium (Voninavoko Ranosiarilala, Blaise Rantoanina, Ando Razananaivo, Landy Andriamboavonjy), and seven Malagasy from the Laka association of Antananarivo (Ando Rabeson, Rado Tovonjarahariliva, Lova Raelison, Dominique Rakotonirina, Herrick-Hubert Rajaonah, Sahy Ratianarinaivo) coached by Dominique Rakotonirina and Holy Razafindrazaka. The choir is conducted by Landy Andriamboavonjy, from Lyon.



Landy Andriamboavonjy (soliste et chef de chœur)

A soprano originally from Madagascar, Landy is an all-round performer : dancer, harpist (gold medal), musicologist, she studied singing at Lyons under Pascale Reynaud and became a member of Bernard Tétu's professional ensemble. Assistant to Jacques Berthelon in the *Maîtrise de la Loire*, singing teacher at the Lyons maîtrise de l'opéra, she has participated in many experimental and intercultural performances with the following companies : Azanie (*D'une Rive l'autre*), Tempo Cantabile (*Avant que d'apparaître*), Talipot (*Kalla*), contemporary operas with *Eau Forte*, *Le Grand cirque Barberini*. In Jean-Luc Trulès and Emmanuel Genvrin's *Maraina* she was Ravelo.



The Orchestra

24 performers conducted by Jean-Luc Trulès

On tour the orchestra consists of 20 musicians from the Massy Opera Orchestra, and 3 musicians from Reunion, including the Chinese erhu soloist Guo Gan. List of instruments : 1 erhu soloist (Chinese violin), 1 first violin, 6 violins, 2 violas, 2 cellos, 1 bass, 2 flutes, 1 oboe, 1 clarinet, 1 bassoon, 1 horn, 1 trumpet, 1 trombone, 1 accordion, 1 classical percussion, 1 Reunionese percussion (roulèr drum, etc).

The Massy opera orchestra is associated with the productions of the Massy Opera, its base. Dominique Rouits, its artistic director, has contributed to Jean-Luc Trulès's training since 2003. The orchestra's work with the choir members combines cooperation with high artistic standards. Its actions in the vocal world as well as its operatic specificity make this orchestra a key player in the field of voice.

Guo Gan, Chinese violin soloist (Erhu)



Gan started learning with his father Guo Junming, a famous Chinese erhu soloist, and he also learnt the violin, cello and piano. He joined the Shenyang Music Conservatory and in 1991 won a prize for erhu with distinction. He joined the Liaoning Dance and Theatre company and in 1992 won first prize in the province's traditional music competition. Appointed a teacher in 1995 at the Music Conservatory (*erhu and percussion*), he was one of the founders of the jazz group *Gyq* the same year. In 2001 he continued jazz percussion training at the National School of Music in Fresnes. In 2002 and 2003 he participated in the recording of the soundtrack of the film *L'idole* and performed at the opening evening of the 55th Cannes Film Festival. In Paris he created an Asian jazz-band *Dragon Jazz*, and the *Fan Yin Trio* which won a prize in Belgium. In 2004 he performed with the contemporary dance company Gang Peng in the show *Dialogues* and played the drums for the year of China in France. In 2005 he participated in Yvan Cassar's symphonic poem *L'Encre de Chine* with the Paris opera orchestra at the Palais des Congrès, and in promotional concerts for Zhang Yimou's film *House of Flying Daggers*. In 2006 he played with the violinist Didier Lockwood for the *Violons croisés* concert then in the XVIII-21 Musique des Lumières ensemble in France and Spain. He created the Shanghai-Paris-Istanbul quartet and recorded with the Mathias Duplessy Trio. In 2007 he gave concerts with his father Guo Jun Ming à Paris, performed with Didier Lockwood in *Passeport pour un violon*, participated in the recording of Jean-Jacques Annaud's *Sa Majesté Minor* and Gilles de Maistre's *Le Premier cri*. He performed in Mexico, participated in Raphael's new album, played Bach's *Concerto for 2 violins* with the conductor Richard Boudarhamat at UNESCO, and at the Philharmonic Orchestra of Prague in a large *Melody for Peace* concert, at New-York at the Lincoln Centre Avery Fisher Hall with St. Luke's orchestra. In 2008 and 2009 Guo Gan performed a duet with the well-known pianist Lang Lang in Chicago, New York and Los Angeles



Creative team

Jean-luc Trulès

Composer and conductor



Born in Sainte Marie (Reunion Island) in 1956, composer, musician, dancer and actor, Jean Luc Trulès is a university graduate of mathematics and musicology, and graduated in harmony from the Marseilles Conservatory. Member of Vollard Theatre since 1979, he is also the leader of Tropicadero, a tropical rock group which also creates its own shows. An eclectic spirit, resourceful, tireless, Jean-Luc Trulès has written and orchestrated most of Vollard's stage music. He has worked as artistic director for music groups and written film scores. A computer enthusiast and a lover of ethnic music, he's one of the founders of contemporary Reunionese music, and promotes the teaching method of « sound painting' » with his Reunionese pupils. He has trained as a conductor under Dominique Rouits, and conducts the Bourbon Instrumental Ensemble. In 2005 he created the music for the opera *Maraina*, and in 2009 won the Beaumarchais Foundation grant to write *Chin*.

His recordings include : :

Les Creol's (1982), *Colandie* (1984), *Sodron, Barbes, Los Anzélès* (1993), *Les ségas du théâtre Vollard* (1995), *Soulart* (1996), *Solasida* (1998), *Séga Tremblad* (2000), *Maraina* (2010), *Chin* (2011).

Emmanuel Genvrin

Director and libretto writer



Born in Chartres in 1952, Emmanuel Genvrin has family ties with Madagascar and Haiti. Rock musician, he learnt theatre at the university theatre of Caen. He graduated in psychology from Paris, settled and practiced on Reunion Island, where he founded Vollard Theatre in 1979. Junior lecturer in drama at the University of the Indian Ocean, given two grants from the *Centre national des lettres* (National Centre for French language and literature) in 1991 and 1997, *Volcan d'or* winner in 1993 for Lepervenche, award winner for best French overseas show for *Séga Tremblad* in 2000, grant recipient from the Beaumarchais foundation in 2009, with Vollard he inaugurated the Le Tampon theatre, created the Grand Marché theatre, the Cinérama at La Possession and the Espace Jeumon at Saint Denis. As well as musicals he has written over twenty plays, of which a dozen have been published and two of which have been translated into English. In 1982 he directed what was Reunion Island's first opera staging, an open air *Orfeo* by Monteverdi with Cantare. He wrote the first Reunionese opera libretto, *Maraina*, in 2005, followed by *Chin* in 2009 and *Fridom* in 2011.

Main productions :

Marie Desseembre (1981), *Nina Ségamour* (1982), *Torouze* (1983), *Colandie* (1985), *RunRock* (1987), *Étuves* (1988), *Lepervenche* (1990), *Millénium* (1992), *Votez Ubu Colonial* (1994), *Beaudelaire au Paradis* (1997), *Kari Vollard* (1998), *Séga Tremblad* (1999), *Quartier Français* (2001), *Maraina*, Franco-malagasy opera (2005), *Chin* (2010).



Hervé Mazelin



Set designer, video images

Born in Caen in 1956, Hervé Mazelin met Emmanuel Genvrin at the University theatre of Caen. Since 1987 he has regularly worked with Vollard Theatre, with whom he produced his first great scenic exploits : *Lepervenche*, *Millénium*, *Carousel*, *Émeutes*, *Baudelaire au paradis*, etc. Meanwhile, he continued to develop his work in France by creating more than sixty sets for live performances for the Deux Rives Theatre, Theatre de la Presqu'île, Comédie de Caen. Events such as *Barbes tour* in Paris, *La Grande parade* in Caen, *Transit* festival in Sevrans... He has also designed exhibitions : *La mer* at Martigues, *Corps mémoire* at Caen, *La Banlieue s'affiche* in Paris, *De Bucarest à Paris* in Bucharest. Following on from Bizet's *L'Arlésienne*, *Marina* and *Chin* are an opportunity to explore something new artistically : opera set design.

Térésa Small

Set decorator



Visual artist, illustrator, costume designer and stage decorator, Teresa Small was born in San Francisco, schooled in Copenhagen and studied fine art in Caen. Based on Reunion Island since 1988, she has held personal exhibitions in different art libraries and media centres in Reunion, Madagascar and Normandy, but has also created costumes for the Centre Dramatique Régional (Regional Drama Centre), Théâtre des Alberts, Cyclone, Théâtrénfances, Acte 3. At Vollard Theatre she has participated in the productions of *Etuves* and *l'Esclavage des Nègres* (1988), *Amphitryon* (1990), *Lepervenche* (1990), *les Dionysiennes* (1991), *Marie Desseembre* (1991), *Carousel* (1992), *Marina* (2005) and *Chin* (2010).

Laurence Julien

Wardrobe



Trained in Lyons, but originally from Grenoble, Laurence Julien has worked with numerous Reunionese theatre companies (Acte 3, Théâtre Les Alberts, Lady Lafée, Théâtre de St Paul, Nektar, Théâtre Vollard, Cyclones Production) but also in Regional Drama Centre productions (*Dokter kontroker*, directed by Ahmed Madani, 2003, *Combat de nègres et de chiens* directed by Kristoff Langrome, 2005), the Séchoir (*Kabarzinaj* by Patrice Treutard and Lionel Lauret Leu Tempo 2002), for the ODC-Champ Fleuri Théâtre (*Paul et Virginie* musical by Christophe Luthringer, 2002; *La semaine commerciale* directed by Gérard Darier, 2004; *Vent du large* directed by Jean Marc Galéra, 2006). For film and television, Laurence Julien was an assistant for *Les yeux du volcan* directed by Mickaëla Watteaux (France 2), *Joséphine ange gardien* directed by Henri Helman (TF1), *Lumière* directed by Amaury, *La Société* directed by Pascal Singevin, *Les Monos* directed by Denis Berry, and *Le pays des enfants perdus* directed by Francis Girod, etc.



Technical information

Stage dimensions and equipment

- Proscenium opening width : 11m. As much wing space clearance as possible.
(Ideally 3m stage right and 3m stage left).
- Stage depth : approximately 11m.
- Preferred fly gallery clearance : 7m (adaptation possible if less high)
- 1 cyclorama
- Set of black legs to be installed according to the backdrops.
- 1 black drape blocking the cyclorama, preferably one that can be pulled into the flies.
- Same-level access for the decors (Peugeot 203 and motorless Jeep) or an access ramp to the stage.
- The orchestra pit should be available, if possible, as soon as the group arrives.

Scenery transport

- 1 truck carrier for the two vintage vehicles (Peugeot 203 and Jeep).
- 1 utility vehicle (3.5 t)

Lighting equipment

- 60 x PC 1kw (possibility of change with PC 2kw).
- 28 x Par lights : choice of lights according to installation height.
- 8 x asymmetric strip floodlights.
- 12 x profiles
- 2 x 5kW spotlights
- 5 x T10 footlights
- 1 x memory lighting console, 60 circuits.

Video equipment

- 1 Videoprojector 10.000 lumens (7 500 lumens minimum) with a wide angle.

Sound equipment

- Audio returns from stage to orchestra pit and orchestra pit to stage.
- Sound system for the orchestra and singers if necessary (for example, open air performance, or poor acoustics).

17



Load in : 2 days

First day : 3 shifts : 8am-midday and 2pm-6pm : scenery and lighting set-up, video installation (performance recording and surtitling set-up), sound set-up : 2 shifts. 8pm-midnight. Lighting adjustment : 1 shift.

Second day : 3 shifts : 8am-midday : finish scenery set-up, memorisation of lighting plot : 1 shift.

2pm-4pm : finishing. 4pm : technical run-through with the performers.

Evening : performance at the time scheduled with the organisers.

Crew required**Day one :**

- 2 electricians, 3 shifts
- 1 system operator, 3 shifts
- 1 flyman, 2 shifts
- 1 stage manager, 2 shifts
- 1 video projector and surtitles installer, 2 shifts
- 1 sound engineer, 2 shifts

Day two :

- 2 electricians, 1 shift 8am-midday
- 1 system operator, 3 shifts
- 1 flyman, 2 shifts 2pm-11pm with a break
- 1 sound engineer, 2 shifts 2pm-11pm with a break

Crew provided by Volland Theatre

- 1 stage designer/technical director
- 1 stage manager
- 1 video projectionist
- 1 surtitler
- 1 orchestra manager
- 1 wardrobe mistress

Load out after the performance

- 4 staff members, about 3 hours.

Dressing rooms should be provided from the first day onwards.

A large dressing-room should be provided for the orchestra,
a large dressing-room for the choir (16 male and female choir members)
and at least 2 dressing-rooms for the soloists.



Vollard Theatre

Reunion Island

Founded in 1979 in the town of Le Tampon (in the south of Reunion Island), the company took the name of Ambroise Vollard to pay tribute to the Reunionese art dealer, a friend of Alfred Jarry. Based in 1981 at the Grand Marché in Reunion's capital Saint Denis, it then moved to a disused cinema at La Possession in 1987, and returned to Saint Denis in 1990 to the derelict industrial land of Jeumon. Vollard Theatre was the leading light of the 1980s and 1990s revival of theatre in Reunion with over thirty historical or identity-oriented productions written in a festive and colourful style (*Marie-Dessembre*, *Nina Ségamour*, *Torouze*, *Colandrie*, *Run Rock*, *Etuves*, *Lepervenche*, *Carousel*, *Millenium*, *Emeutes*, *Votez Ubu Colonial*, *Baudelaire au Paradis*, *Séga Tremblad*, etc), street festivals and concerts. The company has often toured abroad, particularly in the Paris region with *Lepervenche*, at Trappes and Ivry, *Ubu Colonial* in a marquee place de Stalingrad, *Kari Vollard* and *Séga Tremblad* at the Divan du Monde, a French overseas festival *Pigalle Marron* Boulevard Rochechouart. In 30 years actors and singers have staged 1850 performances in front of 450 000 audience members. Since 2005 the company has devoted itself to the creation of operas : *Maraina*, Indian Ocean opera, was performed 15 times in front of 10 000 people in Reunion, Madagascar, mainland France at the Jean-Vilar Theatre at Vitry-sur-Seine and at the Parisian Silvia Monfort Theatre, in 2009. The world premiere of *Chin* was held at the Champ Fleuri theatre (Saint Denis, Reunion Island) in April 2010, revival in May (Reunion Island) and October 2011 (Paris, France).

Contacts

19

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