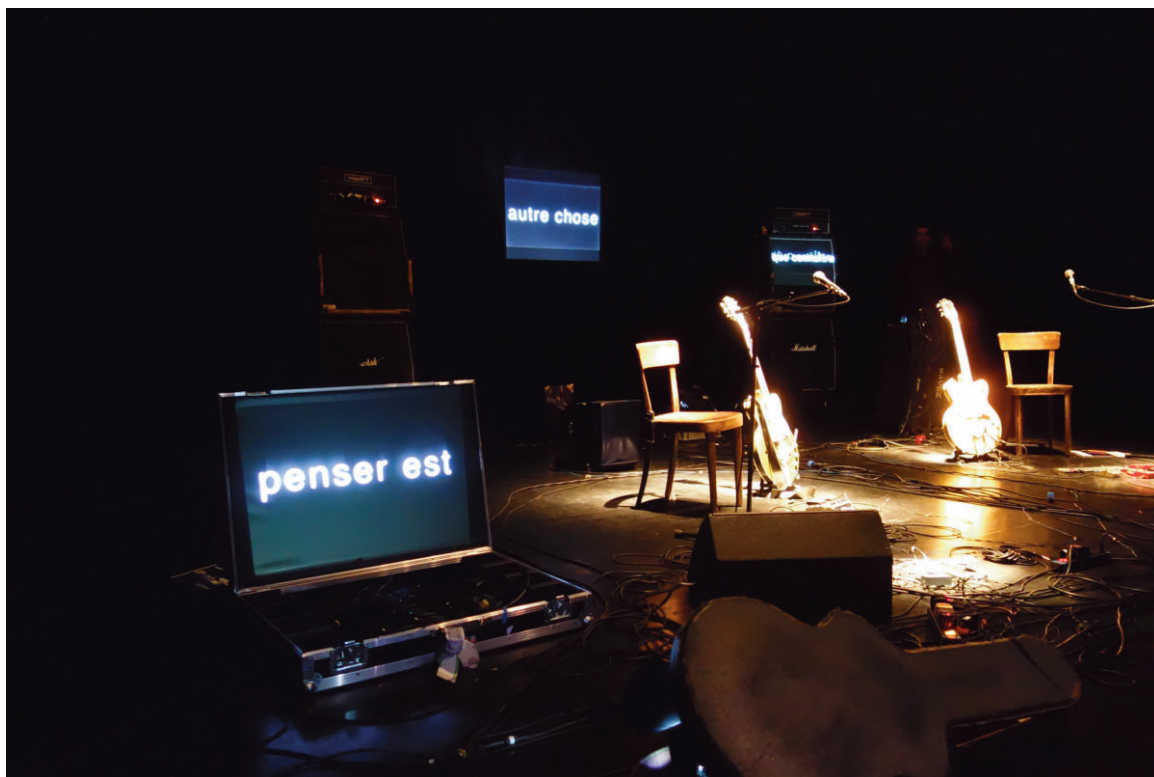


TEENAGE LOBOTOMY

A musical performance about illusions



Distribution Kit / Information Pack

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1. Introduction

Teenage Lobotomy is a musical performance by Christian Garcia (Velma) created in 2012 for two performers. A concert disguised as a theatre piece, or a theatre piece in the form of a concert, it is hard to say. Instead of showing a 75-minute video recording -far from the actual "live" experience- we preferred putting together a written information pack. This seems more clear, eloquent, and loyal to the project, than a video recording.

This pack consists of a chronological description of the visible events and the sought out effects during the performance. For us, this section (number 6, the "Detailed summary") is a good way to mentally represent the project and become aware of its challenges.

2. Note of intent

Teenage Lobotomy fits into and takes its source from a double preoccupation: first the audience member in a theatre, for whom the music seems to be an established element, in the background, and often illustrative; and then the consumer-spectator, constantly exposed to a range of commercial propaganda, political or social, who takes a breather in the soft obscurity of a performance space.

3. Brief description

Two musicians, two guitars, two microphones, two chairs, two amps, cables lying around, guitar cases... The basic situation is realistic, or rather documentary of a small intimate concert. But never mind the situation, as there is no narration. It is actually more coherent to use the space and objects in a functional way.

4. Credits and financial support:

Concept, composition and direction: Christian Garcia. With: Christian Garcia, Eduard Mont de Palol. Costumes: Simone Hofmann. Lighting: Florian Bach. Sound: Jérémie Conne. Images: Keef Botchard. Production Manager: Stéphane Noël

Teenage Lobotomy is a production of association booom, in co-production with Théâtre 2.21 in Lausanne, Théâtre de l'Usine in Geneva, Mousonturm in Frankfurt and Forum Freies Theater in Düsseldorf.

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5. Reviews

30. November 2012, www.Opernnetz.de, von Michael S. Zerban

Wiederholung als Form der Gesellschaftskritik

Das Forum Freies Theater Düsseldorf nimmt an einer internationalen Koproduktionsreihe teil, die sich *Audiotopias – Performing Music* nennt und bis Juni kommenden Jahres vier Produktionen realisiert. Musik als soziale Aktivität jenseits der kommerziellen Verwertbarkeit. Ketzerisch möchte man behaupten, ein wunderbar formuliertes Thema der so genannten Freien Szene, um möglichst alle Förderkriterien zu erfüllen. Inzwischen hat das Thema eine völlig neue Dimension erlangt, wenn man an die „soziale Aktivität“ der Gratisnutzung von Musik im Internet und der daraus folgenden fehlenden Verwertbarkeit für die Musikverlage denkt. Das ist aber nicht das Thema dieses Abends. Christian Garcia hat sich mit *Teenage Lobotomy* zum Ziel gesetzt, im Rahmen einer Theateraufführung ein spezifisches Klangbewusstsein zu entwickeln und für eine gesteigerte akustische Wahrnehmungsfähigkeit zu sensibilisieren. Ausgehend von der Annahme, dass die fortschreitende technische Reproduzierbarkeit der Musik und der Bilder, ihre dauernde Verfügbarkeit und exzessive Nutzung uns in den letzten 10 bis 20 Jahren geprägt hat, scheint es dem Komponisten Garcia unmöglich, sich den kommerziellen und politischen Interessen permanenter Wiederholung zu entziehen. Wer das von Kindesbeinen mit erlebt hat, braucht sich keiner Lobotomie mehr zu unterziehen. Bei dem hat die Hirnwäsche bereits funktioniert. Wie wehrt man sich musikalisch dagegen? Garcias Antwort ist so einfach wie einleuchtend: Durch Reduktion und Wiederholung. Mit der Wiederholung auf einfachster Stufe die Wiederholung als Nonsens und als Gefahr entlarven. Aufwecken, zur Not mit Lautstärke. Auf der Bühne werden zwei Elektrogitarren zu Hauptfiguren erhoben. Zwei Stühle, zwei Mikros, Verstärker, eine Menge Kabel und Technik sowie mehrere Projektionsflächen vervollständigen das Spielfeld der beiden Musiker, die sich im Wechsel von diffusem und streng auf die Personen fokussiertem Licht von Florian Bach bewegen. Garcia versucht, alle Grenzen zu überwinden. Die E-Gitarren lässt er wenige Takte kaskadenartig steigern, mischt mit Spezialeffekten, während im Hintergrund scheinbar zusammenhanglos Videos von Massenszenen laufen. Eduard Mont de Palol und Garcia spielen live. Live? Na klar, bis einer der Musiker aufsteht, um zum Kostümwechsel zu schreiten – und die E-Gitarre unvermindert weiter aus dem Verstärker dröhnt. Es gibt überhaupt nur noch wenige, die überhaupt zu erkennen scheinen, dass die Hirnwäsche viel weiter vorangeschritten ist, als selbst Orwell das jemals für möglich gehalten haben mag. Diejenigen, die das Prinzip der Volksverdummung noch durchschauen, bleiben mit sprachlos aufgesperrtem Maul des Entsetzens vor der schier ausweglosen Übermacht stehen und wissen selber nicht mehr weiter. So fehlt auch diesem Stück der entscheidende Aspekt, jenes winzige Juwel der Erkenntnis, das aus einem guten Stück eines macht, das über den Tag hinaus Bestand hat: Es fehlt der Funke, der das Publikum dazu bewegt aufzuspringen, auf die Straße zu gehen, sich gegen die herrschenden Zustände zur Wehr zu setzen. Vielleicht wäre das auch an diesem Abend nicht so angebracht gewesen. Was vermögen schon gefühlte vierzig Zuschauer auszurichten? Schade, dass es dem Forum Freies Theater nicht gelungen ist, mehr Menschen zu mobilisieren. Der Ansatz aber stimmt. Es ist an der Zeit, dass die Theater der so genannten Freien Szene sich auf ihre politische Funktion besinnen und den Quatsch mit den alternativen Kunstformen vergessen.(...).

Thursday, November 15, 2012, Le Courrier, Samuel Schellenberg (Geneva)

Twelve Strings for a Lobotomy

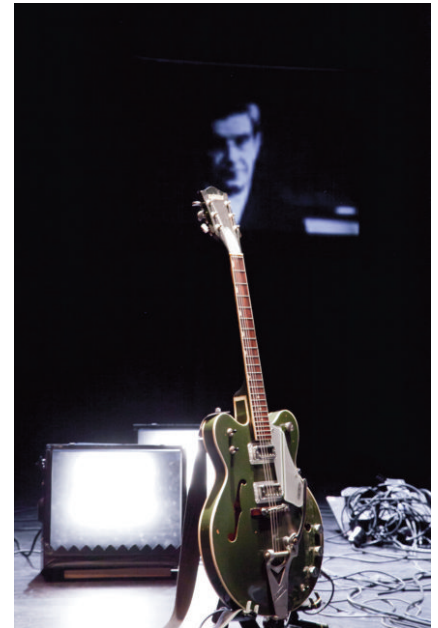
"We never see electric guitars on performing art stages!" For Christian Garcia, in a prologue to *Teenage Lobotomy*, to be seen until Sunday at the Théâtre 2.21 in Lausanne, the central element of his new performance was already found. Was he mistaken: it seems that for many years, on the alternative and independent stages, guitars and their distortion pedals seem to be almost indispensable accessories in all creations. But here, it is true, that these beautiful semi-acoustic instruments, the two protagonists, are more than just ornaments: starting points for *Teenage Lobotomy*, little by little they become the recipient for all the public's fantasies of this instrument. Just as the axis, around which the performance branches off from, does several times. The "lobotomy" in the title refers to what the media subjects us to daily. The proposition written and co-performed by Christian Garcia, former member of the group Velma- already on his fourth solo project- aims to "provoke a moment of sound conscience," while confronting the public with perverted channel-hopping. Thus, after an introduction by Eduard Mont de Palol, the other serving guitar hero- don't be fooled by the flattery on Lausanne-the-beautiful, he did the same thing in Geneva in October...-, we move on to a duel between two guitars, with varied distortions and costumes. On three screens, images stream by, before the Spanish civil war irrupts on stage- in which apparently two of Christian and Eduard's grandfathers fought on opposing sides. The performance ends after more songs, three successive conclusions, and huge fork full of brown-nosing compliments for the local public. Cheerful and funny with varying rhythms, the proposition is sometimes a victim of its own construction: by dint of lining up coitus interruptus, one cannot help but provoke a bit of frustration. But as *Teenage Lobotomy* knows how to get up and start again each time, in the end it's hard not to adhere to it.

6. Detailed summary

In order to associate theory and practice, the underlying manipulations are written in italics if necessary.

The doors open and the audience penetrates the room, greeted quietly by two performers. Slides are being streamed on the background, in which we see more or less famous artists, which we emotionally associate with the current performance (*this implementation proceeds manipulation by association: we identify the performers with the valued artists shown, cognitive manipulation: unfounded causality.*)

Once everybody is seated, the performers disappear backstage; the slides continue streaming. Christian comes back onstage, sits down in a chair, takes his guitar, and strikes up a quite soft, blues/folk song. At the end of the piece, he gets up and returns backstage. (*This song comes back several times during the performance, installing a manipulation by repetition, which we find constantly on the radio and television.*)



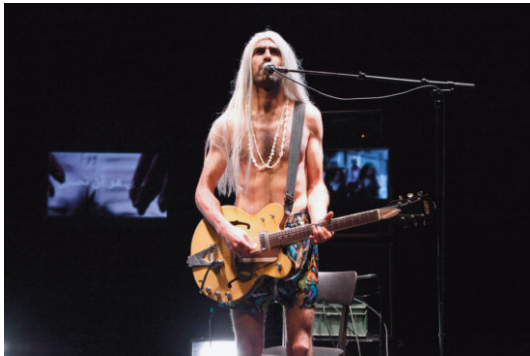
Eduard enters and sits in Christian's place. Holding the microphone, he wishes the public a warm welcome, thanks them for coming, and explains how much he likes to come and perform in this city (*manipulation by valorising the public, a sense of flattery.*)

While he holds this anecdotal speech, he samples certain words, looping them one after the other. At the end of his welcome message, he leaves the stage and we discover the words he was sampling in one simple phrase: "When I hear the word culture, I put my hand on my pistol" (*manipulation through montage; this phrase, pulled from the Nazi propaganda repertoire and falsely attributed to Goebbels, Goehring or Von Schirach, comes from a play by Hanns Johst created for Hitler's birthday in 1933.*)



Christian comes back during the repetition of the loop, cuts it and starts a riff on the guitar. Then Eduard joins him, taking up the same riff, before Christian leaves the stage again. Images are projected on three screens in

the background: on the main screen, visible since the beginning, on an open flight case to the left, and on the Marshall amplifier column to the right. The projected films are images assembled in a choppy fashion showing mainly people on their own or massive crowds, with texts that state "seeing is believing," and symbolic elements (*semi-subliminal propaganda appealing to emotion instead of reflection: hypnosis and synchronisation: looking for a fusional state*).



After a few moments, Christian comes back in another costume and Eduard leaves... This action repeats itself a certain number of times, the sound intensity progressing slowly and the words "seeing" (Christian) and "believing" (Eduard) are chanted in a repetitive manner (*sound brainwashing, hypnosis*).

This action continues until the two musicians find themselves clothed in costumes, which almost completely conceal them. Here there are actually two walk-ons, but no one is able to tell. The two real actors come back wearing their original white costumes, and suddenly there are four characters on stage: after having been warned for the last fifteen minutes that "seeing is believing," there is nevertheless trickery (*visual swindling, making evident illusion by the strategy of distraction*).

Moreover, all these costume changes are a product of assimilation, seduction by style, and affective symbols, (in the bottom image, some will see a Tuareg musician, others an Afghan fighter).

They then take their places to finish the piece, Eduard turning on a video camera pointed at him, as he passes. The light fades slowly and in the dark, Eduard's face is projected, filmed in night-shot mode. While the music diminishes in intensity, we finish by hearing him play this riff, almost completely acoustically. Suddenly the green video image changes to black and white, and without interrupting the long sequence shot, the vision angle

changes, circling around Eduard before moving backwards and revealing that the projected scene is not "live" but recorded (*new visual trickery, this time aided by video images*).

We discover Eduard in a clearing, with the technicians who are holding a black sheet behind him: the camera seems to take some height, and a superimposed target cross appears. This visual change is accompanied with a sound change: Christian replays the piece from the beginning, humming instead of singing, while recorded voices of military radios are added. Then a burst of machine-gun fire explodes, killing Eduard and the two technicians. The music stops but the film continues, the bodies are laid on the ground, surrounded with smoke, in the silence (*a reference to Wikileaks and to the government manipulations to cover up military and police blunders*).





At the end of the shot, Eduard starts talking again in a very real documentary manner and explains that if we wanted to show this film, it is to illustrate a tragic story which happened to his and Christian's grandfather, both killed during the Battle of the Ebro, at the end of the Spanish Civil War, but in opposing sides. The story continues with the destiny of the two grandmothers who immigrated to France and Switzerland. *(Eduard's pseudo-documentary speech is strewn with incoherent elements and information, giving the public the choice to believe or doubt its veracity; this reactivation of questioning is one of the goals of Teenage Lobotomy).*



Eduard explains that his grandmother was put up in a French Catholic welcome centre and that in one of these centres she learned a song which Eduard proposes to sing with Christian: it is a two-voice song coming from the medieval musical repertory, in old French. *(It is a manipulation which turns to taking pleasure in what is "beautiful" and the reassurance which the "old" and "traditional" gives us; conformist leverage.)*

Then Eduard announces that they are going to take up the performance Teenage Lobotomy where they left off. Christian takes his guitar and starts playing the piece from the beginning once more. Halfway through he puts down his guitar and leaves the stage but the music continues *(new trickery, this time with sound, in the form of playback).*

The stage is empty and subtitles appear on the three screens and start a kind of conversation, with considerations on life or art. The right screen calls Eduard to come back on stage, which he does, playing an atmospheric tune. The screens continue their conversation, and then call Christian, who comes back and joins the tune (*the purpose of subtitles is to influence the audience's vision of the performers and to modify the perception of their personalities*).



The music is soft and round, lulling the public; the stage light fades out slowly, and is replaced by a red light on the ground. When the subtitles stop, the tune continues, in the half-light (*here, the sound perception takes over, the images become more aesthetic, the atmosphere poetic, calling on sentiment*).



In the dark, Eduard speaks one last time, informing the public that Teenage Lobotomy is coming to an end. He takes advantage of the situation to thank the public, without whom this performance would not have been possible. He adds that this particular performance, after many run-throughs and other performances, was by far the best one they had done; never had they gotten so close to the ideal they had in mind since the beginning of the project, and it is of course thanks to tonight's public that this happened (*manipulation through flattery, playing with familiar codes*).

He insists for a long time in his thanks, Christian starts to play his initial song. When Eduard stops talking, it is to take up the refrain with Christian. (*Making evident the process of propaganda and thus the questioning to which it is associated. But the fact of insisting too long brings humour directly into play, and so without realising it we fall into another kind of manipulation*).

The light comes back on. The two performers get up, and come forward to bow. The end. Applause.

8. Contacts

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