

NAC FRENCH THEATRE

Wajdi Mouawad, Artistic Director

We are at war

JE VOUDRAIS ME DÉPOSER LA TÊTE

March 4–7, 2009 in the Studio

Written by
JONATHAN HARNOIS

Directed by
CLAUDE POISSANT

With
CHANTAL BARIL
CHRISTIAN BARIL
**SYLVIE DE MORAIS-
NOGUEIRA**
ÉTIENNE PILON
**FRANÇOIS SIMON T.
POIRIER**

Assistant Director
KARINE LAPIERRE

Sets
ROMAIN FABRE

Costumes
CAROLINE POIRIER

Lighting
ERWANN BERNARD

Sound Design
NICOLAS BASQUE

Hair and Makeup
ANGELO BARSETTI

Props
JASMINE CATUDAL

Video
STEFAN MILJERIC

Movement Coach
CAROLINE LAURIN-BEAUCAGE

Stage Manager
MARC-ANDRÉ ROY

Technical Director
PATRICK BELZILE

Production Director
CATHERINE LA FRENÈRE

Produced by
THÉÂTRE PÀP

MARCH 2009

WED	4	8:00 p.m.
THURS	5	8:00 p.m.
FRI	6	8:00 p.m.
SAT	7	8:00 p.m.

NAC STUDIO
53 Elgin, Ottawa

length: 1 hour 25 minutes,
with no intermission

"I don't know how to deal with the world any more."

OTTAWA, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2009 – The next presentation in French Theatre's 2008–09 season (March 4–7 in the Studio) is the culmination of an adventure that began four years ago with the publication of a short novel, *Je voudrais me déposer la tête* ("I want to lay down my head"), by Jonathan Harnois. Among the many readers captivated by the staggering honesty of this deceptively slim work (barely 100 pages) was director Claude Poissant. Instantly attracted to its poetic and touching story of a 20 year old man devastated by his best friend's suicide, Poissant determined to bring the delicate and compelling narrative to the stage.

Bristling with confusion, anger, and clear-eyed insight into the swirling emotions and sharp torments of suburban youth, *Je voudrais me déposer la tête* takes us to the edge of the abyss, the unthinkable. In relating Ludo's inner journey—distracted over the actions of Félix, now forever silent—and his pilgrimage with Andelle, his compass, Harnois forces us to take an unflinching look at our own despair, our most intimate suffering. The premise of the young author's debut novel, shortlisted for the Anne-Hébert Prize, paradoxically inspires a passionate desire to go towards the light.

"There's nothing wrong with being angry, sad or upset," says Jonathan Harnois. *"The trouble starts when we deny those emotions. Refusing to be angry is a lot worse than calmly acknowledging your anger rumbling away inside. Refusing to be sad can create obstacles and problems that are a lot more damaging than tears.... In writing Je voudrais me déposer la tête, I realized that in fact it's not dying we're afraid of: it's living."*

Claude Poissant's direction skilfully echoes the poetry of the words with the poetry of physical movement, images and sounds. He has created a lyrical work as spare and intuitive as the novel, beautifully staged, and performed by a generation of artists who are not afraid to tackle the taboos that still hover around the delicate subject of suicide. Drawing on over 30 years of experience in staging new works, the artistic director of Théâtre PàP has assembled a creative team of young actors and designers driven by a single determination: to close ranks, arm in arm, against futility and despair, and to oppose them through this heartfelt tribute to life, friendship and love.

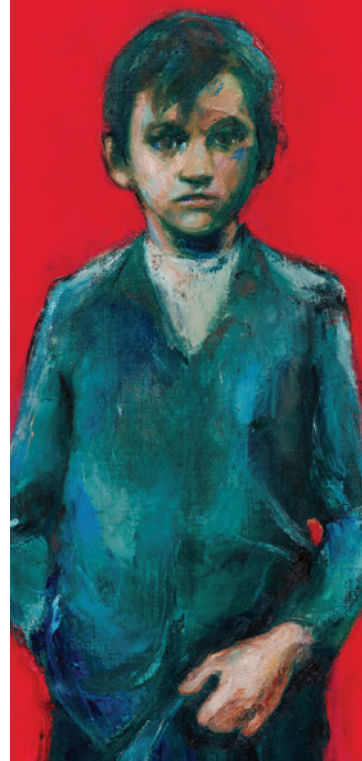
Le Lendemain de la fête

Throughout the process of bringing *Je voudrais me déposer la tête* to the stage, filmmaker Stefan Miljevic shadowed Claude Poissant and his team of actors and designers. The result is a 90 minute independent film, *Le Lendemain de la fête* ("The morning after the night before"). Part documentary, part feature film, and part experimental art film, the work is a tribute to the redemptive power of art. Besides providing a rare glimpse into the process that leads from page to stage, Mr. Miljevic explores the inner landscape of a suicide and the long road from bereavement to acceptance.

Screening: Thursday, February 26, 2009 at 6 p.m.
at the Alliance française d'Ottawa (352 MacLaren Street)

French Theatre thanks Mammoth Films and the Alliance française for making this screening possible.

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"The production reflects all the sensitivity and respect the PàP brought to the adaptation of the novel. Putting the text front and centre and giving it plenty of room to unleash its cry of pain, love and hope, Claude Poissant once again demonstrates his masterful talent for bringing new work into the world."

Alexandre Cadieux, *Le Devoir*



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"Not only has Poissant brought Harnois' words to life on stage, but his adaptation of *Je voudrais me déposer la tête* is a work of art in its own right."

Sylvie St Jacques, *La Presse*

"*Je voudrais me déposer la tête* has a captivatingly restless and poetic energy.... Poissant has transformed the novel into a supple and theatrical work. The imaginative staging by the director of *Théâtre PàP* is crisp and highly visual."

Marie-Claude Marsolais, *Voir Montréal*

"*Je voudrais me déposer la tête* is about suicide, but from the side of life—the life that has to be rebuilt afterwards. Without dismissing any of the anguish, pain and anger, the playwright guides us towards the light.... Claude Poissant interprets the text with great sensitivity, preserving and occasionally amplifying the complex inner voice of the narrator. The three young actors who embody that voice are all very good, and admirably restrained. Three characters impart the unspeakable burden of bereavement, the many faces of grief."

Josée Bilodeau, *Radio-Canada.ca*



© Dominique Chartrand

"A knockout play that resonates with our innermost selves.... A beautiful tribute to friendship and life.... Claude Poissant's direction is outstanding."

Bruno Lapointe, *Le Journal de Montréal*

For more information about *Je voudrais me déposer la tête*, visit the microsite at www.nac-cna.ca/tf. The site includes a profile of director Claude Poissant and his longtime collaboration with Théâtre PàP, an interview with novelist Jonathan Harnois, conversations with the actors, and a philosopher's insights into the troubling question, "Why do so many men commit suicide?"

This production premiered on March 27, 2007 at Théâtre Espace Go in Montreal, produced by Théâtre PàP.

Jonathan Harnois' novel *Je voudrais me déposer la tête* was published in 2005 by Éditions Sémaphore.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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nac-cna.ca/tf

Tickets

\$32.50

Students \$17.50

Live Rush \$11.00

NAC Box Office

(Monday to Saturday,
from 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.)
www.nac-cna.ca

Ticketmaster

613-755-1111

Groups of 10 or more

613-947-7000, ext 384
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