Olivier Py Sings
Les Premiers
Adieux de Miss Knife

Music by
Stéphane Leach &
Jean-Yves Rivaud
Text by Olivier Py
Costume design by
Pierre-André Weitz

Featuring Guest Artists
Joey Arias (Sep 20)
Angélique Kidjo (Sep 21)
Ute Lemper (Sep 22)
Jo Lampert (Sep 23)

DATES: Sep 20—23 at 7:30pm
LOCATION: BAM Fisher (Fishman Space)
RUN TIME: 85 mins, no intermission

#BAMNextWave
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Les Premiers Adieux
de Miss Knife

Music
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Olivier Py: Singer
Julien Jolly: Drums
Olivier Bernard: Sax, Flute
Stéphane Leach: Piano
Sébastien Maire: Double bass

Program
Musical Introduction
La vie d'artiste
Dans un théâtre noir
Le rôle est trop court
Par la fenêtre
La paradis perdu
Les cafés du Vème*
Valse d'espérance musicale

Martyre sous les roses
Ne parlez pas d'amour
L'éternité
Les amours sans promesses
La vie en rose (Louigy / Piaf) **
Padam (Glanzerg / Contet) **
Dans les jardins de pampelune *

Two Songs by Guest Artists

J'ai bien roulé ma bosse*
Le tango du suicide*
La vie est brève

All music by Stéphane Leach
except as noted
* Music by Jean-Yves Rivaud
** French songs

Produced by Les Visiteurs du Soir
with the support of the Cultural
Services of the French Embassy
in the United States.
Miss Knife

It is because I am in harmony with myself since my childhood that I am able to disguise. When you have lost many feathers in your fights, you find a solution: put these feathers on your buttocks! All this suffering to be a man, I wanted to make something of it. Without falling into the mad monkey house of castration, I wanted to get rid of this production of male desire that created the desire. I was thus transformed into woman, into Miss Knife. She is a dream creature in every sense of the word. I love her because she represents all the lives behind all the faces of the women I have met, admired, or imagined.

I was brought up in a fashion shop with my mother who sewed and cut fabrics; she appreciated jewels a lot. Miss Knife inherited this: she changes costumes; jewels cover her. It seems to me today that actresses have a difficulty in accepting their femininity. They are rather tomboys doubtless because men make up the majority of stage directors. And they do not know how to approach feminine desire: they program the girls as the boys. In any case, for me, it was inevitable that I would invent and embody this character of the cabaret singer. I had it in the depths of myself. I did not play Miss Knife; she was a member of me. She was in me. When I was disguised, I did not make a case of my sexual identity. We are not assigned to our sexual identity when we become a transvestite.

—Olivier Py
Who’s Who

Olivier Py
Texts, Singer

Author, director, and actor Olivier Py was born in 1965. After studying at the National Superior School of Theatre Arts and Techniques (Ensatt), he entered the National Conservatory of Dramatic Art Paris in 1987, while studying theology.

Olivier Py’s first play, Oranges and Nails, was produced by Didier Lafaye at the Essaïon Theatre in 1988, and the same year he founded his own company and staged his own plays, including Gazpacho, a Dead Dog; The Adventures of Paco Goliard; The Servant; an endless story, a 24-hour cycle performed at the Festival 16 Avignon in 1995; and The Face of Orpheus, created in Orléans and presented at the Festival d’Avignon in the Cour d’honneur of the Popes’ Palace in 1997. During this time, Py also staged the texts of Elizabeth Mazev and Jean-Luc Lagarce.

Appointed in 1998 as the director of the Orleans National Drama Centre, he created Requiem for Srebrenica (BAM Next Wave 2000), The Water of Life, The Joyful Apocalypse, Epistle to Young Actors, and To the World as it doesn’t exist... Other directors mounted his plays, including Theatres by Michel Raskine, The Exaltation of the Labyrinth by Stéphane Braunschweig, and The Servant by Robert Sandoz. In 2003, Olivier Py staged Soulier de Satin (The Satin Shoe) by Paul Claudel, and he wrote and directed a trilogy, The Winners, in 2005. The same year, he directed A Cry from Heaven by Vincent Woods in Dublin. In 2006, at the invitation of Jean-Michel Ribes, he presented The Great Py Parade in Paris at the Théâtre du Rond-Point—six shows of which he is the author and director, five restagings, and a new work, Comedy Illusions, also performed across France.

In 2006, on the occasion of the closing of the 60th Festival d’Avignon, Olivier Py staged a tribute to Jean Vilar, The Vilar Enigma, in the Cour d’honneur of the Popes’ Palace. It was also at the Festival d’Avignon in 1996 that he performed for the first time the character of Miss Knife, whose singing tour was subsequently presented in Paris, Lyon, New York, Brussels, Madrid, and Athens and was the subject of two discs produced by Actes Sud. In 2012, Miss Knife went on the road again in France and internationally with a new show.

As an actor, Olivier Py has also starred in shows by Jean-Luc Lagarce, François Rancillac, Éric Sadin, Pascal Rambert, Nathalie Schmidt, as well as in the films of Jacques Maillot, Cédric Klapisch, Michel Deville, Laurent Bénégui, Peter Chelsom, Martin Provost, and Noemie Lvovsky. He has also directed two films, Eyes Closed (1999) for Arte and Mediterraneans (2011) for Canal +.
Appointed in March 2007 as the head of the Théâtre National de l’Odéon, he presented the Oresteia by Aeschylus (2008), The Water of Life, The Girl, the Devil and the Mill, and The True Fiancée. From 2009 to 2012, he translated, adapted, and directed a trilogy of Aeschylus (Seven Against Thebes, The Suppliants, and The Persians), played outside the theater walls as street theater for the public. In 2009, he re-staged The Satin Shoe at the Odéon and also created The Children of Saturn at Ateliers Berthier. In 2011, he created Adagio [Mitterrand, the hidden things and his death]; presented Romeo and Juliet at the Odéon and on tour in France and abroad; and created, in German, Die Sonne, commissioned by the Volksbühne in Berlin. In 2012, he completed the full works of Aeschylus with Prometheus Bound.

From March 2012 to September 2013, in addition to a new album and a tour of Miss Knife, he staged Vitrioli by Yannis Mavritsakis in Athens, at the request of the National Theatre of Greece, and several operas in Europe with, among others, The Tales of Hoffmann by Offenbach, Tristan and Isolde and Tannhäuser by Wagner, Britten’s Curlew River, Pelléas et Mélisande by Debussy, The Rake’s Progress by Stravinsky, Hindemith’s Matthias the Painter, Meyerbeer’s The Huguenots, Carmen by Bizet, Claude by Robert Badinter and Thierry Escaich, Alceste by Gluck, Verdi’s Aïda, Poulenc’s Dialogues of the Carmelites, and Manon by Massenet.

Beginning with the 2014 season, Olivier Py has been the director of the Festival d’Avignon, a position he has held since September 2013. For the 68th Festival d’Avignon, he created a new comedy Orlando or Impatience (also touring in Europe), presented Vitrioli, and produced a new version of The Girl, the Devil and the Mill. In 2015, for the 69th Festival d’Avignon, he created King Lear, performed in the Cour d’honneur of the Popes’ Palace, and presented Hacia la alegría within the framework of Villes en Scène / Cities on Stage.

Most of his work is published by Actes Sud, including a Complete Works in three volumes, translated into English, Italian, German, Slovenian, Spanish, Romanian, and Greek. With Actes Sud he published a political essay, Cultivate Your Storm (2012), The Thousand and One Definitions of Theater and Siegfried by Night (2013), Excelsior (2014), and Le Cahier Noir (2015).

As an artist and citizen, Py has taken a stand and engaged in many political and social issues, whether the war in former Yugoslavia, the plight of illegal immigrants, or the Russian atrocities in Chechnya. He has denounced the Sarkozy bill on immigration, the “intolerable sexual intolerance of the Church,” supports personalities like José Bové, Jovan Divjak, Mahmoud Darwish, Denis Robert, and Florence Hartmann in their struggles, and he provides a forum for Romas, prostitutes, anti-globalization militants, and the Syrian resistance.
STÉPHANE LEACH
Music

The pianist, choir director, and composer Stéphane Leach has devoted himself to the composition of incidental music and has worked with singers and actors for more than 15 years. He has created music for the stage works of Olivier Py at the Théâtre National de l’Odéon, including Orestia by Aeschylus, for which he received the Prize of the Association of Critics in 2008 for the best composition of incidental music. He also composed the music of Soulier de Satin by Paul Claudel and Les Vainqueurs which were performed at the Festival d’Avignon, the Festival of Edinburgh, at the Théâtre du Rond-Point in Paris, and Théâtre de l’Odéon.

JOEY ARIAS
Guest Artist (Sep 20)

A fixture of the vibrant downtown performance scene for 30-plus years, Joey Arias is a bona fide New York City icon. He has performed at venues including Carnegie Hall, The Freedom Theatre in London, and on a world tour to the cabaret clubs of Paris, Tokyo, Moscow, Germany, Finland, Estonia, Canada, and England. On film and TV, he has appeared in Mondo New York, Big Top Pee Wee, Elvira, Mistress of the Dark, the Saturday Night Live episode with David Bowie and Klaus Nomi, Elvira’s MTV Halloween Special, and HBO’s Dragtime, among others. Arias has produced several of his own recordings including Arias on Holiday, Strange Fruit, Jazzo Lozo, StarLust in Berlin, Arias with a Twist, and Bar D’o in New York.

ANGÉLIQUE KIDJO
Guest Artist (Sep 21)

Three-time Grammy Award winner Angélique Kidjo is one of the greatest artists in international music today, a creative force with 13 albums to her name. Time magazine called her “Africa’s premier diva.” The BBC included her in its list of the continent’s 50 most iconic figures, and in 2011 The Guardian listed her as one of the Top 100 Most Inspiring Women in the World. Forbes magazine has ranked Kidjo as the first woman on their list of the Most Powerful Celebrities in Africa. Kidjo’s music cross-pollinates the West African traditions of her childhood in Benin with elements of American R&B, funk, and jazz, as well as influences from Europe and Latin America.

UTE LEMPER
Guest Artist (Sep 22)

Ute Lemper’s career is vast and varied. She has made her mark on the stage, in films, in concert, and as a unique recording artist of more than 30 CDs over 30 years. She has been universally praised for her interpretations of the Berlin cabaret songs, the works of Kurt Weill and Berthold Brecht, and the chansons of Marlene Dietrich, Edith Piaf, Jacques Brel, Léo Ferré, Jacques Prévert, Nino Rota, Astor Piazzolla, and also her own compositions. She is equally renowned for her performances in musicals and plays on Broadway, in Paris, Berlin, and London’s West End. Lemper was born in Münster, Germany and completed her studies at the Dance Academy in Cologne and the Max Reinhardt Seminary Drama School in Vienna.
JO LAMPERT
Guest Artist (Sep 23)

Jo Lampert is a Brooklyn-based performer, producer, and DJ who most recently headlined Joan of Arc: Into the Fire (David Byrne, Alex Timbers) at The Public Theater. She has toured with the band tUnE-yArDs. Lampert has appeared in Jo Lampert in the Lounge—a solo cabaret at Ars Nova; Rimbaud in New York at BAM (2016 Winter/Spring); New York Animals directed by Eric Tucker at Bedlam; Iphigenia in Aulis directed by Rachel Chavkin at CSC; Dance, Dance Revolution directed by Alex Timbers; The La MaMa Cantata written by Liz Swados, performed in Tokyo; Marie Antoinette at A.R.T. and Yale Rep; Prometheus Bound at A.R.T.; and The Last Goodbye in Williamstown. Lampert is a Civilians Associate Artist, and received a BFA from NYU/Tisch.

Les Visiteurs du Soir
Producer

Under the management of Olivier Gluzman and Joëlle Belmontea, Les Visiteurs du Soir (Nighttime Visitors) is unique in its presentation of international artists. An unrelenting champion of artists to whom he dedicates himself, Olivier Gluzman has been a manager and an agent, producing shows with Joëlle Belmonte, who has been building up this area.

This artistic uniqueness comes from having produced and promoted not only French and international artists and singers (Jane Birkin, Rufus Wainwright, Agnès Jaoui, Paolo Conte, Caetano Veloso, Angélique Kidjo, Lura, Pink Martini, Nana Mouskouri, Woody Allen and his New Orlean’s Jazz Band, artists in development (Luce, Cyril Mokaiesh, Théodore Paul et Gabriel, Philippe Uminski), and theater (Le livre de ma mère—Albert Cohen/Dominique Pitoiset/Patrick Tilsit), but also readings (Isabelle Huppert, Fanny Ardant, Charlotte Rampling, Isabella Rossellini) as well as quirky shows (Les Ballets Trockadero, Miss Knife, Prima Donna, Ingrid Bergman Tribute (BAM, Fall 2015), Lambert Wilson in Wilson chante Montand, and very soon the tribute to French superstar Barbara by Juliette Binoche and Alexandre Tharaud—Vaille que Vivre.

The passionate and dynamic team at Les Visiteurs du Soir works day in and day out to offer theaters, promoters, concert halls, and distributors in France and abroad the artists, projects, and shows which they truly love.

Olivier Gluzman is also programming consultant for certain festivals, large event management agencies, and audiovisual production companies which regularly call upon his expertise to design communication operations or to carry out their artistic programming.
BAM thanks our friends and supporters who have paid tribute to Harvey Lichtenstein’s visionary leadership by making a charitable contribution to the BAM Harvey Fund. To join them in honoring Harvey, please visit BAM.org/Harvey. Your support ensures that daring contemporary work continues to flourish at the institution he loved so much.
Honoring the late BAM President and Executive Producer Harvey Lichtenstein

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