

Savannah Bay

By Marguerite Duras
Théâtre de l'Atelier, Paris
Directed by Didier Bezace

DATES: NOV 11—14 at 7:30pm

LOCATION: BAM Fisher (Fishman Space)

RUN TIME: Approx 1hr 10min
(no intermission)

TALK: On Truth (and Lies) in Suicide
With Kay Redfield Jamison and
Andrew Solomon
Hosted by Simon Critchley
Co-presented by BAM and the
Onassis Cultural Center NY
Part of the Hellenic Humanities
Program
Sat, Nov 14 at 5pm
BAM Fishman Space

#SAVANNAHBAY
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Savannah Bay

NY Premiere

In French with English titles

DIRECTOR

Didier Bezace

ARTISTIC MANAGEMENT

Dyssia Loubatière

PERFORMERS

Geneviève Mnich

Marie Vialle

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Sandra Choquet

SET DESIGN

Jean Haas

TITLES

Fanette Barraya

STAGE MANAGER

Guillaume Lepert

COSTUME DESIGN

Cidalia da Costa

MAKEUP

Cécile Kretschmar

LIGHTING DESIGN

Dominique Fortin

LIGHTING ENGINEER

Léo Thévenon

SOUND ENGINEER

Pierre Bodeux

Laura Pels, former director of Théâtre de l'Atelier, wishes to thank the new artistic team for their cooperation in presenting the play at BAM.

French Tour Operator
Scène Indépendante Contemporaine
Frédéric Franck, Director

The actors are appearing with the permission of Actors' Equity Association. The American stage manager is a member of Actors' Equity Association.

AMERICAN STAGE MANAGER

R. Michael Blanco

ABOUT *Savannah Bay*

Two women in a pristine white room: one young, one old. "Who was she?" one asks the other, referring to a third who had long ago met a boy, fallen in love, and bore his child before drowning herself.

Unfolding in the melancholic half-light of memory, *Savannah Bay* is a mesmerizing two-character drama by the revered French feminist writer Marguerite Duras (1914–1997)—author of *The Lover* and screenwriter of *Hiroshima Mon Amour*—whose stage works are rarely produced in the US. In this New York premiere, Paris' Théâtre de l'Atelier brings the play's lyrical dialogue to life, creating an impressionistic tapestry of loneliness and connection in which two people form a special bond in the space left by forgetting.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

The overarching subject of *Savannah Bay* is the union of two women and the role play in which they engage—perhaps daily—to recognize one another. Stemming from a hidden and buried traumatic event, which they bring to the surface from a shred of memory, they attempt to win each other over, to recognize and to love one another. The ritual they invent and constantly reinvent allows them to affirm the identity and strength of their relationship and mutual love, which for the duration of their fleeting interaction, demands that they restart every day. In a mental space in the absence of memory, time stops and she is left with infinite solitude. Little by little, through the rhythm of writing, the void fills as love and recognition are built between one unknown woman and her grandmother on the edge of an abyss.

—Didier Bezace

Who's Who



Didier Bezace

Director

Didier Bezace co-founded the Théâtre de l'Aquarium (Cartoucherie de Vincennes) in 1970, where he attended every performance and managed the company until July 1997, at which point he took the reins of the Théâtre de la Commune à Aubervilliers, where he directed pieces by both contemporary and classic authors.

His work has been recognized with a number of awards: in 1995 he was awarded a Molière for his direction of *La Femme Changée en Renard* by David Garrett. In 1997 he received the Grand Prix de la critique for directing *La Noce Chez les Petits Bourgeois* and *Grand-peur et Misère du IIIe Reich* by Bertolt Brecht. In 2004 he received the Prix de la critique for scenography for *Avis aux Intéressés* by Daniel Keene. In 2005 l'Académie des Molières awarded him two prizes: one for best direction and one for best adaptation of *La Version de Browning* by Terence Rattigan. In 2011 the SACD (Society of Dramatic Authors and Composers) awarded him the distinguished Prix du Théâtre for his lifetime achievements.

Didier Bezace has also acted in films by Claude Miller, Bertrand Tavernier, Jeanne Labrune, Claude Zidi, and Rémi Bezançon, and has worked alongside Marion Cotillard.



Geneviève Mnich

Actress

With a degree in literature and two years of study under Henri Rollan at l'École de la rue Blanche, Geneviève Mnich has acted in a number of plays from the repertoire of Molière, Marivaux, and Gorki. She worked with Jean Dasté and Hubert Gignoux at the time of "theatrical decentralization" in France, an innovative program which was initiated by André Malraux to produce theater for a broader audience throughout France. She has appeared in cinema and television alike and alternates

between them, yet always holds a preference for the theater. In cinema she has worked with Bertrand Tavernier (*Un Dimanche à la Campagne*), Alain Resnais, Bertrand Blier, Raoul Ruiz, Claude Lelouch, Robert Enrico, Michel Spinosa, Martin Provost (*Séraphine*), and Stéphane Brizé. In theater she has worked with Jean-Pierre Vincent and has since played roles written exclusively by contemporary authors: Jon Fosse with Jacques Lassalle and Frédéric Belier Garcia, Jean-Claude Grumberg and Daniel Keene; *Brassaï* with Maurice Benichou; Fabrice Melquiot with Emmanuel Demarcy Mota; and other contemporary authors with Gilberte Tsai and Zabou Breitman.

She worked with Peter Brook in *La Berceuse* by Beckett (French version) at Les Bouffes du Nord Theater. From there, she met Didier Bezace and acted in Kureishi's script adaptation of *May* and Daniel Keene's *Un Soir Une Ville*, in which she played a woman confronted with Alzheimer's disease.

Photo: Marie Vialle
by Richard Schroeder



Marie Vialle

Actress

Marie Vialle is delighted to be making her US debut at BAM. Favorite theater credits include *Ivanov* by Anton Chekhov at the Théâtre de l'Odéon, directed by Luc Bondy (2014—15) and *La Double Mort de l'Horloger* by Odön von Horvath at the Théâtre National de Chaillot, directed by André Engel (2013). She is also a director, having directed *Les lois de l'hospitalité* by Olivia Rosenthal (2008, 2011).

Other credits include *Une Petite Douleur* by Harold Pinter at Théâtre Vidy (Lausanne), Théâtre de la Ville (Paris), and Théâtre des Célestins (Lyon), directed by Marie-Louise Bischofberger (2012—13); and *Oncle Vania* by Chekhov at Théâtre des Amandiers (Nanterre), directed by Alain Françon (2011), which toured in theaters around France. She directed and acted in *Triomphe du Temps* by Pascal Quignard (2006) which also toured in France. Cinema credits include *Baby Blues*, (directed by Diane Bertrand 2007), *Les Inséparables*, (directed by Christine Dory 2007), and *Avant l'Oubli* (directed by Augustin Burger, 2003). She studied at the Conservatoire National Supérieur d'Art Dramatique (1997) and École de la Rue Blanche—ENSATT (1994).

FANETTE BARRAYA

Titles

After living in the US for five years while studying sculpture, Fanette Barraya returned to Paris at age 23 and began working in the theater by assisting artistic director Bob Meyer on several productions with his theater group, the Gare St. Lazare Players. In 2005 she worked with Bob Meyer again on his first feature film *Drunkboat* with John Malkovich and John Goodman. Barraya has worked with directors Bernard Murat, Christophe Lidon, and Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt. She was trained as an actor at Angel Magnétic Theatre under the direction of Antoine Campo.

PIERRE BODEUX

Sound Engineer

Since 2012 Pierre Bodeux has been a sound operator at the Musical Theatre of Paris Châtelet, working on musical comedies (*My Fair Lady*, *Into the Woods*, *Singin' in the Rain*). He has also worked as sound manager for opera (*Il Re Pastore*, *La Belle Hélène*), and concerts (Joe Lovano, Stacey Kent, Jean Louis Aubert, Camille, Henri Texier, *Les Parapluies de Cherbourg*, *Le Petit Prince*). Since 2014 Bodeux has worked as sound manager for the Compagnie Théâtre des Nuages de Neige and has been on various tours throughout France.

SANDRA CHOQUET

Assistant Director

Sandra Choquet attended the Théâtre National de Strasbourg (TNS) and has since worked with directors Stéphane Braunschweig, Antoine Caubet, Michel Cerda, Yann-Joël Collin, Ludovic Lagarde, Eric Louis, Etienne Pommeret, François Wastiaux, and Nadia Xerri. In film and television, she has worked with Nathalie Boutefeu, Bruno Chiche, and Frédéric Tellier. Choquet is also a singer and has sung for Arte since 2000. She has also worked as assistant to Nathalie Baye on *Hiver* by Jon Fosse and assistant to Dominique Blanc on *La Douleur* by Marguerite Duras, directed by Patrice Chéreau and Thierry Thieû Niang, both at le Théâtre de l'Atelier.

CIDALIA DA COSTA

Costume Design

After studying fine arts Cidalia da Costa started working in film but was quickly pulled into theater. While working in theater, she has created costumes for Pierre Ascaride, Didier Bezace, Vincent Colin, Gabriel Garran, Daniel Mesguich, Jacques Nichet, Philippe Adrien, Yves Beaunesne, Hubert Colas, Charles Tordjman, Chantal Morel, Michel Didym, David Géry, and Gilberte Tsai. She has also worked in contemporary dance, having collaborated with Jean Gaudin, Catherine Diverrès, and Bernardo Montet. In opera, she has worked with Hubert

Colas, Emmanuelle Bastet, and Christophe Gayral. She has also collaborated on productions by James Thierrée and Jérôme Thomas.

DOMINIQUE FORTIN
Lighting Design

Dominique Fortin has been the technical director of the Théâtre de l'Aquarium since 1987. He has worked at that theater with a number of directors including Didier Bezace (most notably on *Avis aux Intéressés* by Daniel Keene for which he won the Prix du Syndicat de la Critique in 2005 with Jean Haas for the best set and lighting design). He has worked with Jean-Louis Benoit, Chantal Morel, Catherine Anne, Jacques Gamblin, Christian Benedetti, Gloria Paris, Sandrine Anglade, Sonia Wieder-Atherton, Julie Brochen, David Géry, Tatiana Valle, François Rancillac, Antoine Caubet, and Claire-Sophie Beau.

JEAN HAAS
Set Design

After graduating from the École des Arts Décoratifs de Strasbourg, Jean Haas began by teaching art and working as a graphic designer at the Théâtre National de Strasbourg under the direction of Jean-Pierre Vincent until 1975. He then became a scenographer and set designer for the theater. He has been living in Paris since 1981 and works in France and abroad (Germany, Switzerland, Japan, Portugal, Italy, and

Belgium). He has collaborated with many theater directors including Bruno Bayen, Louis-Charles Sirsacq, Hans Peter Cloos, Alain Françon, Bernard Sobel, Jean-Louis Thamin, Jacques Nichet, Didier Bezace, Jean-Louis Jacopin, Claude Regy, Chantal Morel, Joel Jouanneau, Christian Colin, Pierre Strosser, Jérôme Savary, Brigitte Jacques, Guy Delamotte, Vincent Goeathals, Philippe Adrien, and Patrick Kerbrat. Between 1980 and 1990 Haas worked in the music industry designing sets for various artists: Philippe Chatel, Michel Berger, France Gall, Barbara, Veronique Samson, Johnny Halliday, Diane Dufresne, Yves Duteil, Francis Cabrel, and Jacques Higelin. Aside from his work in theater and music he has also created spaces for fashion shows (Emmanuel Ungaro, Jean-Louis Scherber, Olivier Lapidus) and exhibitions (Galerie des jouets, Musée des Arts Décoratifs de Paris). Haas has been nominated three times for the Molière prize and received the Critics prize for the play *Avis aux Intéressés* under the direction of Didier Bezace at the Théâtre de la Commune in 2004.

CÉCILE KRETSCHMAR
Makeup

Cécile Kretschmar is a makeup artist who has also made wigs and prostheses for a number of directors, notably Jacques Lassalle, Jorge Lavelli, Dominique Pitoiset, Jacques Nichet, Jean-Louis Benoit, Didier Bezace,

Philippe Adrien, Claude Yersin, Luc Bondy, Omar Porras, Charles Tordjman, Alain Milianti, Alain Ollivier, and Marc Paquien. In opera, she has worked with Jean-Claude Berutti, Klaus Michael Gruber, Pierre Strosser, Joëlle Bouvier, Luc Bondy, Jean-François Sivadier, and Jean-Yves Ruf.

GUILLAUME LEPERT
Stage Manager

Guillaume Lepert has worked as stage manager at Théâtre de l'Atelier for 10 years and has been a part of most performances staged there. He has also worked on a number of performances at the Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord, including *The Suit*, directed by Peter Brook. He has toured with many productions, both in France and internationally.

DYSSIA LOUBATIÈRE
Artistic Management

Over the past ten years, Dyssia Loubatière has worked as stage manager with Jacques Nichet, Matthias Langhoff, Yannis Kokkos, Ruth Berghaus, Wladyslaw Znrko, André Engel, Jacques Rebotier, and as theater and opera designer for Christian Bourrigault, Dominique Lardenois, and Jean Lambert-Wild. For the past 15 years she has worked in collaboration with Didier Bezace as assistant director on more than 20 productions and tours. She has also translated two of his productions: *May* after the screenplay of *The Mother* by Hanif

Kureishi and *Conversations avec ma Mère* after the screenplay of the same name by Santiago Carlos Ovés. In May of 2014 her translation of *Conversations avec ma Mère* was directed by Pietro Pizzuti with Jacqueline Bir and Alain Leempoel at l'Espace Delvaux in Brussels. She has also worked as assistant director to Laurent Laffargue and Alain Chambon. From 2007 to 2013 she programmed all Théâtre de la Commune exhibitions.

LÉO THÉVENON
Lighting Engineer

From 2007 to 2014 Léo Thévenon worked at the Festival d'Avignon as a mobile lighting engineer. He has worked on various theatrical, dance, and classical music tours throughout France with Sandrine Anglade touring *Le Cid* (2013—14); with Alain Françon on *Les Gens* (2013—14); with Sonia Wieder Athertone on *Odyssee* (2013-14); and internationally in Moscow with Sébastien Lefèvre (2013). Over the years he has worked on several productions at Opéra de Versailles, Théâtre Athénée, Théâtre de la Madeleine, Athénée, TEP, and Bouffes du Nord.

Laura Pels

Producer

Laura Pels is a French-born American whose conviction is that “a play must be performed.” She believes that the theater is a powerful way to bring awareness and joy to people—provided the work is of high quality. From her earliest involvement in theater, beginning with the Laura Pels International Foundation for Theater and the Roundabout Theatre Company in New York, then through her direction of le Théâtre de l’Atelier in Paris, Pels has worked tirelessly to introduce important plays to international audiences and breathe new life into the theater. Encouraged by the positive response to her French theater productions performed in English, she has also endeavored to present American theater-goers with French plays in French. In doing so, the magic and integrity of the original language is revealed and a whole new world of theater is made accessible to new audiences.

Laura Pels Productions has brought the following plays to the US to a number of prestigious venues, including the Lincoln Center Festival, Kennedy Center, the Shakespeare Theatre Company, and BAM: Roland Topor’s *L’Hiver sous la Table*, directed by Zabou Breitman with Isabelle Carré and Dominique Pinon, Théâtre de l’Atelier production, 2003—04; *La Maladie de la Mort* by

Marguerite Duras, directed by Bérangère Bonvoisin with Fanny Ardant, Théâtre de la Madeleine production, 2006; *Premier Amour* by Samuel Beckett, directed by Sami Frey, Théâtre de l’Atelier production, 2009—10, 2012; *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* by Choderlos de Laclos, adapted by Christopher Hampton, directed by John Malkovich, Théâtre de l’Atelier production 2013; *La Vénus au Phacochère*, directed by Christophe Lidon, Théâtre de l’Atelier production 2013; and *Savannah Bay* by Marguerite Duras, directed by Didier Bezace, Théâtre de l’Atelier production 2014.

Théâtre de l’Atelier, Paris

Nestled in the heart of Montmartre, the Théâtre de l’Atelier has become a cultural icon of Paris, cherished by artists and the public alike. Laura Pels assumed leadership of this historic theater in 1999, joining an impressive roster of artistic directors since its creation in 1922 by Charles Dullin. Over the years, the theater has become known for its adventurous programming and diverse offering of plays, giving audiences the power to discover important works by French, English, and American authors, directors, and designers.

During her tenure as Director of the Théâtre de l’Atelier, Pels produced more than 45 plays including: *La Controverse de Valladolid* by Jean Claude Carrière; *Poèmes à Lou* by Apollinaire; *Trahisons* by Pinter (translated by Eric Kahane); *La Ménagerie de Verre* and *Baby Doll* by Tennessee Williams (translated by Jean-Michel Desprats); *Hilda* by Marie N’diaye; *Le Désarroi de M. Peters* by Arthur Miller (translated by Isi Beller); *Les Braises* by Sandor Marai (adaptation by Claude Rich); *L’Hiver Sous La Table* by Roland Topor (winner of six Molière Awards in 2004); *Créanciers* by Strindberg; *La Musica* and *La Douleur* (directed by Patrice Chéreau and Thierry Thieü Niang) by Marguerite Duras; *Caligula* by Camus; *Adultères* by

Woody Allen; *Fin de Partie* by Beckett (directed and starring Charles Berling), *Premier Amour* also by Beckett (adapted and played by Sami Frey), and *Oh les beaux jours* by Beckett (directed by Marc Paquien); *La Nuit juste avant les forêts* by Bernard-Marie Koltès (directed by Patrice Chéreau and Thierry Thieü Niang); *L’année de la pensée magique* by Joan Didion (adapted by Christopher Thompson); *La Fontaine*, adapted and directed by Fabrice Luchini; *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* by Choderlos de Laclos (adapted by Christopher Hampton and directed by John Malkovich); *La Locandiera* by Carlo Goldoni (directed by Marc Paquien); and *Marguerite Duras: Les Trois Âges (Le Square, Marguerite et le Président, and Savannah Bay)*, directed by Didier Bezace.

In January 2015, esteemed director and actor Didier Long took over the role of artistic director of Théâtre de l’Atelier.



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