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# ENCYCLOPÉDIE DE LA PAROLE



## *Suite N°2*

Piece for 5 performers, 2015

### **administration / production**

Échelle 1:1 / Edwige Dousset

+ 33(0)6 13 43 11 29

[administration@echelle1-1.org](mailto:administration@echelle1-1.org)

### **projects development**

Ligne directe / Judith Martin

+ 33(0)6 70 63 47 58

[judith.martin@lignedirecte.net](mailto:judith.martin@lignedirecte.net)

# CREDITS

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## Encyclopédie de la parole / Joris Lacoste

### *Suite N°2*

**Conception** Encyclopédie de la parole

**Composition and direction** Joris Lacoste

**Music** Pierre-Yves Macé

**Cast** Vladimir Kudryavtsev, Emmanuelle Lafon, Nuno Lucas, Barbara Matijevic, Olivier Normand

**Assistance and collaboration** Elise Simonet

**Light and video design, Technical management** Florian Leduc

**Sound** Stéphane Leclercq

**Costumes** Ling Zhu

**Video coder** Thomas Köppel

**Video assistant** Diane Blondeau

**Translation – project manager** Marie Trincaretto

**Proofreading and corrections** Julie Etienne

**Vocal coaches** Valérie Philippin et Vincent Leterme

**Language coaches** Azhar Abbas, Amalia Alba Vergara, Mithkal Alzghair, Sabine Macher, Soren Stecher-Rasmussen, Ayako Terauchi Besson

**Invited archive collectors** Constantin Alexandrakis, Mithkal Alzghair, Ryusei Asahina, Adrien Bardi Bienenstock, Judith Blankenberg, Guisepepe Chico, Manuel Coursin, David-Alexandre Guéniot, Léo Gobin, Haeju Kim, Monika Kowolik, Federico Paino, Pauline Simon, Ayako Terauchi Besson, Helene Roolf, Anneke Lacoste, Max Turnheim, Nicolas Mélard, Tanja Jensen, Ling Zhu, Valerie Louys, Frederic Danos, Barbara Matijevic, Vladimir Kudryavtsev, Olivier Normand, Nuno Lucas

**Production and administration** Dominique Bouchot et Marc Pérennès

**Project development** Judith Martin / Ligne Directe

**Production** Echelle 1:1 (with the support from Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication /DRAC Ile-de-France).

**Coproduction** T2G Théâtre de Gennevilliers / Festival d'Automne à Paris, Asian Culture Complex - Asian Arts Theater Gwangju, Kunstenfestivaldesarts, Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne, Steirischer Herbst Festival, Théâtre Agora-Seinendan, La Villette - résidences d'artistes 2015, Théâtre national de Bordeaux en Aquitaine, Rotterdamse Schouwburg.

*Suite N°2* is co-produced by NXTSTP with the support of Creative Europe Program. With the help of l'Institut Français and its programs Théâtre Export and CIRCLES, and the Nouveau Théâtre de Montreuil. This show has benefited from the support from the residence program of l'Usine, Scène conventionnée (Tournefeuille).



**Creation** Kunstenfestivaldesarts, Brussels, May 2015.

**Duration** 1h25

**Languages** English, Japanese, French, Arab, Dutch, German, Portuguese, Spanish, Russian, Croatian, Lingala, Chinese, Danish, Sanskrit, Ourdou.

**Website** [www.encyclopediedelaparole.org](http://www.encyclopediedelaparole.org)

# PRESENTATION

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In 2013, the Encyclopédie de la parole initiated a cycle of four "Choral Suites" all based on the same principle: the live reproduction of documents taken from the Encyclopédie de la parole's audio collection.

The Suite N°1 'ABC' was devoted to putting on stage some of the basic distinguishing features of human speech : how we speak, how we learn to speak, the babbling, the blabla, the hubbub, the basic vocabulary, the joy of talking for talking's sake, the game of translation and the pleasure of languages that we don't understand : an ABC of ordinary speech in nine languages, 45 scenes, and twenty-three actors (including 11 guests and a conductor).

The second Suite of Encyclopédie de la parole, for its part, orchestrates speeches that all *do* something, speeches that are actions. Words that do some good and words that scare the world. Words that fight, words that suffer, words that hope. Words that rejoice, rebel, reassure you. Words that dance and words that make love. Words that decide, threaten, condemn and kill. Words that bring people together and words that come between them. Words that say thank you. Words that ask for mercy. Words kept, given, betrayed. Words in crisis, words in debt, words in panic, words on strike. Words that crumble and rise from the dust. Words that struggle. Naked words and words dressed in Versace. Words that put their feet in their mouths. Words that stop talking when there's nothing more to say. Words that play with fire. Words that fly away and disappear up above the ocean.

All of these words are real. Each and every one of them has been pronounced some day, somewhere in the world, then collected by the Encyclopédie de la parole. They meet for the first time in this piece, carried by a quintet of outstanding performers, composed by Joris Lacoste and harmonized by Pierre-Yves Macé.

Since its creation in 2015, *Suite n°2* has traveled the world : Brussels (BE), Lausanne (CH), Gwangju (KR), New-York (USA), Philadelphia (USA), Rotterdam (NL), Gennevilliers (FR), Graz (AT), Bordeaux (FR), St Jacques de la Lande (FR), Lisbon (PT), Buenos Aires (AR), Porto (PT), Rakvere (EE), Göteborg (SE), Ljubljana (SI).

# ENCYCLOPÉDIE DE LA PAROLE

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L'Encyclopédie de la parole is an artistic project exploring the spoken word in all its forms. Since 2007, this group of musicians, poets, directors, visual artists, actors, sociolinguists, and curators have been collecting all sorts of recordings of words and then indexing them on its website according to their particular properties or phenomena such as cadence, chorality, emphasis, saturation or melody.

What do the following have in common : the poetry of Marinetti or Allen Ginsberg, a sport commentary, a lecture by Jacques Lacan, an excerpt from South Park, the flow of Eminem and Lil Wayne, a message left on an answering machine, a TV game show, an Adventist sermon, an excerpt from *The Young and the Restless*, a speech by Léon Blum or Bill Clinton, an auctioneer selling horses, a shamanic incantation, a lawyer's closing arguments, a commercial for shampoo and casual conversations recorded in the local café ?

From this collection, which now includes about 800 sound documents, L'Encyclopédie de la parole produces sound pieces, performance and shows, lectures, games and exhibitions.

Currently in 2016, the Encyclopédie de la parole is : Frédéric Danos, Emmanuelle Lafon, Nicolas Rollet, Joris Lacoste, David Christoffel, Valérie Louys et Elise Simonet.

**[www.encyclopedielaparole.org](http://www.encyclopedielaparole.org)**

## JORIS LACOSTE

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Born in 1973, Joris Lacoste lives and works in Paris. He has been writing for theater and radio since 1996 and has been performing his own shows since 2003. He created *9 lyriques pour actrice et caisse claire* in 2005. with Stéphanie Béghain and *Purgatoire* at the Théâtre National de la Colline in 2007, and was also associate author. From 2007 to 2009, he was co-director of Les Laboratoires d'Aubervilliers. Taking his inspiration from literature, theater, dance, visual arts, music, sound poetry, his work is always deeply researched. He initiated two group projects, the W project in 2004 and the Encyclopédie de la parole in 2007, resulting notably in 2009 in a solowork *Parlement*, starring Emmanuelle Lafon. In 2009 he launched the project "Hypnographie" to explore artistic uses of hypnosis: he produced the radio play *Au Musée du sommeil* (2009), the exhibition-performance *Le Cabinet d'hypnose* (2010), the exhibition *12 prepared dreams* (GB Agency Paris 2012), the play *Le vrai spectacle* (2011) and the performance art pieces *Restitution* (2010), *La maison vide* (2012), and *4 prepared dreams (for April March, Jonathan Caouette, Tony Conrad and Annie Dorsen)* in New York in October 2012. He starts two collective projects, le projet W in 2004 and L'Encyclopédie de la Parole in 2007 with which he has created the shows *Parlement* (2009) and *Suite N°1* (2013).

**[www.jorislacoste.net](http://www.jorislacoste.net)**

# PRODUCTIONS 2007-2013

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## SUITE N°1 (show, 2013)

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Conceived and directed by Joris Lacoste, the first of the Suites chorales presents a selection of extracts from the Encyclopédie de la parole's collection of sound documents, performed by a chorus in unison. How we learn to speak, how we take the floor, the abc's, the babbling, the blabla, the hubbub, the basic vocabulary, the joy of talking for talking's sake, the game of translation and the pleasure of languages that we don't understand. An ABC of ordinary speech in 45 scenes, nine languages, with twenty-two actors (including 11 volunteers/guests) and a conductor.

## PARLEMENT (show, 2009)

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Directed by Joris Lacoste, Parlement is a solo performance that stems from the corpus of the sound archive of L'Encyclopédie de la parole. Recordings from the archive provide the material for an original style of theatrical writing, through the editing and composition of sounds, rather than texts. By having a hundred or so voices emerge in a flow from one single body – actress Emmanuelle Lafon's – Parlement creates a mutating, poetical discourse, flooded by the diversity of human speech acts.

## CHORALE (performance, 2009)

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Chorale is a twenty-minute performance made up of 7 or 8 documents from Encyclopédie de la parole's collection performed in a chorus by a group of actors or performing artists. Chorale is played in different languages in different countries; its repertory and interpreters change according to latitude, custom and season. *Chorale* is directed by Nicolas Rollet and staged by Joris Lacoste.

## LA CONFÉRENCE-MARABOUT (performance, 2011)

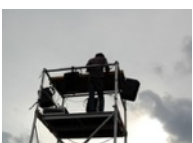
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Part lecture-performance part conference, Marabout enables visitors to discover the collection of L'Encyclopédie de la parole. Indexed to the map that presents the Encyclopédie's website, Marabout functions as a series of displacements from one document to the other.

## PIÈCES SONORES (concerts, 2007)

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L'Encyclopédie de la parole has been commissioning pieces from composers, sound artists or radio writers on a regular basis since 2007. Each time, the latter are to create a piece from the archive of recordings included in one entry of the encyclopédie, i.e., a specific speech phenomenon.

## COLLECTION (exhibition, 2011)

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The art center of La Villa Arson in Nice offered L'Encyclopédie de la parole the opportunity to exhibit its sound collection as a whole. The installation designed to this end took the form of a 300 square-meter floor-map, on which the approximately 500 documents making up the collection at the time were outlined. Each visitor was able to listen to each document with a specific device, as he/she walked from one entry to another.

## TO COME

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### Tours

#### *Suite n°2*

' **29th September 2016**

BITEF Festival, Belgrade (RS)

' **23rd to 25th November 2016**

Le Maillon, Strasbourg (FR)

' **29th November to 2nd December 2016**

La Comédie de Clermont-Ferrand, Scène nationale (FR)

' **9th December 2016**

Le Manège, Maubeuge (FR)

' **13th to 15th December 2016**

Festival Mesure pour Mesure, Nouveau Théâtre de Montreuil (FR)

' **10th to 14th January 2017**

Théâtre Garonne, Toulouse (FR)

' **31st March 2017**

Espaces Pluriels, Pau (FR)

#### *Parlement*

' **29th to 30th January 2017**

Festival Écritures partagées / Centre chorégraphique national et Centre dramatique national de Caen (FR)

### Creations

#### *Suite n°3 'Europe'*

' **May 2017**

PREMIERE - Kunstenfestivaldesarts, Brussels (BE)

' **Fall 2017**

Festival d'Automne à Paris (FR)

#### *Blablaba*

' **Fall 2017**

PREMIERE - Festival d'Automne à Paris / Grande Halle de la Villette - Théâtre Paris Villette - Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (FR)

#### **Contact us regarding availability**

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**Ligne Directe** : [info@lignedirecte.net](mailto:info@lignedirecte.net) / [www.lignedirecte.net](http://www.lignedirecte.net)

**Distribution** : Judith Martin + 33 (0)6 70 63 47 58 - [judith.martin@lignedirecte.net](mailto:judith.martin@lignedirecte.net)

Marie Tommasini + 33 (0)6 50 26 42 03 - [marie.tommasini@lignedirecte.net](mailto:marie.tommasini@lignedirecte.net)

**Administration & production** : Edwige Dousset +33 (0)6 13 43 11 29 - [administration@echelle1-1.org](mailto:administration@echelle1-1.org)

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# INTERVIEW WITH JORIS LACOSTE

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*Interview by Marion Siéfert for the Festival d'Automne à Paris 2015*

***Suite N°1 'ABC'* presented a different approach to learning language. In *Suite N°2*, you're interested in words that have a meaningful effect on reality, speaking as a way of doing. What exactly are you looking for in this shift towards action coming from words?**

*Suite N°1* functioned for me like an introduction to the *Suites chorales* series in *Encyclopédie de la parole*: I wanted to come up with something like an ABC of ordinary words, using around fifty very different situations. In *Suite N°2*, the challenge is to enter into the drama or action etymologically, allowing words to be heard that are part of the world and that make something, 'performative' words that act on or attempt to act on reality. I thought there might be a theatrical challenge in creating a show out of them that contains action, yet with the action coming entirely through the voices. A piece in which events would happen in and through the word itself: declarations of love or war, break ups, verdicts, threats, encouragements, exhortations, prayers, crises of all kinds. When you think of the proliferation of recorded videos, speeches and messages around us, you might say that words have never had as much influence on the world as they do today, and perhaps even that it is taking over again from the written word. And what interests me in particular is not just to make spoken words heard, but also the way in which they are spoken. The whole purpose of the *Encyclopédie* project is to believe that the form of the word, its inflexions, its accents, its silences, are just as meaningful – sometimes even much more so – as what is actually being said.

**What methods do you use to find and select the recordings that you're going to reproduce on stage?**

For almost eight years working on *Encyclopédie de la parole*, we've been unearthing and collecting of all kinds recordings of words that seem remarkable to us in one way or another. We've got hundreds of them archived on our website. When we start working on a new piece, I define the areas of research with a certain number of criteria, and together we make an initial, very broad selection of documents. I then choose and organize the documents that will be in the piece. I'd say that the documents impose themselves thanks to a combination of chance, intuition and stubbornness. The objective is to find words that in themselves have a kind of perfection, that stand alone outside the context in which they were produced. You have to listen to them until you get the feeling that you intimately understand them. When some impose themselves as possible characters, we invite them to be part of the show, we give them a role, a body, partners. We hear them enter into a dialogue with the other ones, we identify the sympathies, contrasts, agreements, points on which they clash, we organize encounters, and at a given moment they begin to respond to one another and together tell us something exceptional.

**How do you get the words to coexist when they are so varied in terms of language, situation, register and culture?**

I'm always fascinated by the notion that at this very moment in China, in Colombia, in Austria, in Béziers, in Uganda, people are living, doing things, eating with their family, attending meetings, having rows, talking to their dogs, praying, selling bulls, rotting in prison, making love and fighting to survive. I regularly try – and this is a spiritual exercise I recommend – to imagine as many things as possible taking place in different parts of the world. The whole question of this piece for me is how we get different planes of reality to exist together? I love Johan van der Keuken's films, which are constructed as if they're drifting along and whose exact

logic escapes us, but we still have faith in them. His way of editing has helped me understand how to get such different words to cohabit. I'm not interested in just producing shocks, contrasts, a hubbub; I have no more fascination for chaos than I do for order. What interests me, in this era of multitasking, is the process of harmonization: how our mind manages to handle all the incredibly disparate information it receives every day and, rather than succumbing to exhaustion, how it is able to invent new types of arrangements, new formal structures, new possibilities of meaning. It's essentially about your point of view. Everything's there already. The words exist in the world, my work consists of finding the perspective according to which reality will appear before us in this strange harmony that makes it possible.

***Suite N°1* followed a principle of unison. Why have you reduced the chorus in *Suite N°2* to a quintet? In this new project, you've superimposed some recordings, making different situations encounter one another. How does this more complex composition influence the dramaturgy of the piece?**

Unison made sense in *Suite N°1* as an elementary form of recitation, as the shared expression of certain types of words that in fact belong to everyone. Reciting in a chorus the message of a voice server or an excerpt from TV news is a way of collectively re-appropriating them. For *Suite N°2*, I wanted to go back to an individual principle of speaking, as in *Parlement* (2009), but working differently on the choral nature of it. In music, harmony is the simultaneous coexistence of different sounds. Here it's about getting different words to coexist, but no longer just in a successive montage as in our earlier pieces. There are times when we try to make them exist simultaneously, which produces something very new for me – forms of resonance that allow me to free myself from linear editing. It's no longer about creating a third relationship out of two elements, but a whole host of possible relationships in terms of content, form and situations: their meaning becomes a shifting tonality, a complex agreement consisting of continually changing registers.

**You've invited the composer Pierre-Yves Macé to work on this project. What was the collaboration like and where does the composition come in?**

I wanted to accompany this harmonization of words with a more literal musical harmonization. Pierre-Yves Macé's involvement in *Encyclopédie de la parole* goes back a long way. He was very actively involved at the start and produced lots of sound and radio pieces for us. The two of us also collaborated on *Le vrai spectacle*, for which he composed the music. For *Suite N°2*, I asked him to compose vocal arrangements and accompaniments for certain documents, and more generally to produce the 'sound design' for the piece. The use of music is firstly a way of emphasizing certain formal characteristics of speech, but it can also be a way of shifting how they are heard, for example giving an ordinary word back its dignity, its grandeur even. Conversely, it's sometimes a way of introducing irony to words that take themselves too seriously. All in all, I think the musical dimension of the piece helps find the right distance with regard to scenes that are often very emotionally or politically charged.

**By choosing to reproduce the recordings identically, you're showing a kind of respect of the original documents. What's this respect about? What changes are you allowing?**

It's a question we ask each other all the time with the actors: we reproduce words that have all been spoken some time and somewhere in the world, with motivations that in part will remain inaccessible to us. But what does reproduce mean? What does that involve, slipping into someone's voice and going over not just their words again, but their inflections, their particular rhythm, their breaths and their hesitations? What meaning does the notion of 'respect' have in that case? Paradoxically it's by taking these words out of their original situation in which too



many things came into play that we can hear them in all their reality. What theatre allows, I believe, is not to reproduce reality, but to make it real. It's really hard to believe that the things we hear people talking about – the beheading of the Jordanian pilot, migrants drowning, the death of Michael Brown – are real. Really real. I may be naïve, but I believe theatre can help us – however shifts have to be found that are that effective. Starting with each word, a score is extracted by choosing the parameters we want to emphasize and the ones we want to ignore. You also have to decide on the way in which we're going to work on how they are addressed: what effect is there of speaking words to an audience that were originally addressed to a single person? There's no single strategy: for each set of words you have to find the best way of making what seems important to us heard. Sometimes you have to have a man's words spoken by a woman, sometimes you have to say something individual to several people or change tone, sometimes you have to accompany it with singing, sometimes you have to superimpose others on it etc.

**Of all the recordings that make up the score of *Suite N°2*, are there any that stand out?**

One question I'm obsessed by is what is *true* when people speak? Words that are sincere, authentic and necessary? How can you distinguish them from all the superficial, fake, standardized and rambling collections of words? What specifically is needed for some words to suddenly and spontaneously appear that seem to fit completely with the situation that produces them? There are lots of words about rejection or rebellion in the piece, words in crisis, words that are cornered. What interests me is the contrast between words within a context and the words that break that context.

**I thought of what Barthes wrote about Racine, that tragedy is merely a failure that is spoken. Did you find that dimension of theatre again unexpectedly when you were working on *Suite n°2*?**

In a way, *Suite n°2* is a sound portrait of our world, or at least of the world such as it reaches us through words, voices and languages. And it's easy to see today's world as the monumental failure of all the struggles and utopias it has gone through for, let's say, two centuries. There's definitely a pessimist dimension in the piece, but you can also draw some hope from the simple fact that some words remain alive, whether people say no, say perhaps, say I love you, say again. It's certainly a very, very slender hope. The world has about as much chance of being saved as I do of winning the lottery. Or of life appearing on Earth. But life did appear, didn't it? And people win the lottery every week.

*Translated to English by Claire Tarring*