

SUD OUEST

BIG REGIONAL DAILY OF INFORMATION

South-Gironde

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THEATRE

The sounds of Jacky Craissac

**Chinese artist and playwright Xingjian Gao has chosen
Escaudes musician Jacky Craissac to create a sound-illustration
for his play "To Dialogue/to Take aback", currently being staged in Bordeaux.**

At this time of year, when the southern Gironde region becomes a land of silence around ringdove hunters' huts, there exists a refuge for sound. There in Escaudes, in the calmness of an oak grove, percussionist Jacky Craissac works at the perpetual creation of new sounds on instrument-sculptures he crafts from his own imagination. Once only a percussionist, he has evolved from playing with jazz groups to performing in solo. In addition to giving concerts and making special appearances at various events, he has also created the music for ballets, and evolved a method of discovery and expression of the self through his creative work. Jacky Craissac aspires to a more creative, more respectful universality through his music. It is not surprising then, that he should be brought into this new and unique style of collaboration with Chinese author Xingjian Gao - recording "a melody of sounds" to accompany Mr. Gao's play "To Dialogue/to Take aback".

A PIONEER OF LITERATURE

It was last May that Mr. Trouillet, the director of the Artistic Office for the Aquitaine Region helped the two artists to meet. It was a significant moment for the musician from southern Gironde, since Xingjian Gao, who is all at once a painter, a writer and a theatre director, is known in his country as a great pioneer of avant-garde art and literature. He has been an innovator in experimental theatre; in fact, some of his plays led to his exile in France as a political refugee while in his country his entire works were banned. He was made a Chevalier of the Order of Arts and Letters in France, and has received several other awards. His plays have been translated into ten languages and performed all over the world. When they met, Xingjian Gao immediately opened up to Jacky Craissac's world. Together with Mr. Trouillet and Mr. Wurtz, General Inspector of Theater for the Ministry of Culture, he decided to go visit Mr. Craissac's workshop in Escaudes in order to become closer to his sound universe and instrumental creations. Once there, he discovered instruments of Mr. Craissac's whose ethnic sounds were familiar and suggestive to his oriental sensitivity. Within a few days, his decision to invite Mr. Craissac to create the sounds for his play was confirmed.

A "MELODY OF SOUNDS"

They met again in July 1999 and worked intensely on merging the author's intentions with the percussionist's technique and sensitivity. From this collaboration was born a "Melody of Sounds" which accompanies the action of the play - described by Xingjian Gao himself as "a ritual performed by a mute monk throughout the difficult dialogue between a man and a woman. Words and silence, illusion and clarity create counterpoint to the various games being played". The play stages a hopeless love story enlightened by the spirit of Zen in which the distance introduced by the deceptive interactions accentuates human weariness with existence as a white bare stage highlights the performers' acting. Speaking of his relationship with Xingjian Gao, Jacky Craissac confided, "what we share is silence, difference and art". For Mr. Craissac, this difference is the outcome of a slow maturing and of long hours spent working with the sound of metal, wood and skins - which today paradoxically results in abolishing differences through a creative meeting of East and West

"To Dialogue/to Take aback", a play by Xingjian Gao. Sound creation by Jacky Craissac. Molière Theatre, 33 rue du Temple, Bordeaux. Performances October 20, 21 at 8:30 PM and October 19 at 2:30 PM.



Xingjian GAO comes to Jacky Craissac's workshop in Escaudes to work together on the sound creation for his play. © J. Craissac