

Comédie de Genève

PRODUCTION FILE

HONDA ROMANCE

A CREATION
BY VIMALA PONS

Creation on 23 September 2025 at Comédie de Genève

Contact

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This creation is about
working to reinterpret,
in real time, the
unstoppable and non-
hierarchical flow of
thought.

Credits

Concept, writing & direction: **Vimala Pons**

Collaborative concept & direction, musical composition: **Tsirihaka Harrivel**

Choral composition: **Rebeka Warrior**

Artistic collaboration on musical direction, adaptation & arrangement: **Fiona Monbet & Romain Louveau /**

Miroirs Étendus

Musical composition for the satellite: **DMRA**

Scenographic research: **Benjamin Bertrand, Marion Flament & Vimala Pons**

Scenographic supervision: **Marion Flament**

Construction of the satellite: **Charlotte Wallet**

Stage management: **Benjamin Bertrand, Marc Chevillon**

Lighting and video design: **Arnaud Pierrel**

Sound design: **Anaëlle Marsollier**

Costume design: **Marie La Rocca**

Costume assistant: **Anne Tesson**

Production collaboration & artistic coordination: **Emeline Hervé**

Production set-up – TOUT ÇA / QUE ÇA: **Adeline Ferrante**

Production relaunch (creation and tour) – Comédie de Genève: **Elena Andrey, Pauline Pierron, Pascale**

Reneau

Prompt script creator: **François Philippi**

With **Sabianka Bencsik, Joseph Decangé, Océane Deweirder, François Gardeil, Myriam Jarmache, Flor Paichard, Vimala Pons, Firoozeh Raeesdana, Vic Requier, Léa Trommenschlager**

Set Construction: **Workshops of Comédie de Genève**

With the full support of the administrative, technical and production teams of Comédie de Genève

Production: **TOUT ÇA / QUE ÇA** and **Comédie de Genève**

Music production: **Miroirs Étendus**

Co-production: **MC2: Maison de la Culture de Grenoble, Les Nuits de Fourvière – International Festival of the Lyon Metropolis, Odéon–Théâtre de l'Europe – Paris, Festival d'Automne – Paris, Centre Dramatique National de Tours – Théâtre Olympia, Malraux Scène Nationale Chambéry Savoie, Le Lieu Unique – Nantes, CDN Orléans / Centre-Val de Loire, CENTQUATRE–PARIS, Les Halles de Schaerbeek – Brussels, 3 bis f Contemporary Arts Centre for Live and Visual Arts – Aix-en-Provence**

With the support of: **Fondation BNP Paribas**

Residency support: **Plateforme 2 Pôles Cirque en Normandie – La Brèche, Cherbourg; Villa Belleville – Paris; La Ménagerie de Verre as part of the StudioLab scheme; MC2: Maison de la Culture de Grenoble – Scène Nationale**

Tsirihaka Harrivel and Vimala Pons are associate artists at Le Lieu Unique (Nantes).

Vimala Pons is an associate artist at the CENTQUATRE (Paris), MC2: Maison de la Culture de Grenoble – Scène Nationale, and the Centre Dramatique National de Tours – Théâtre Olympia.

TOUT ÇA / QUE ÇA is supported by the French Ministry of Culture – DRAC Île-de-France.

Performance in French | Approx. duration: 1h15 | Ages 14

SEASON 25-26

- 23–28 September 2025 – GENEVA, Comédie de Genève (Switzerland)
- 2–3 October 2025 – GRENOBLE, MC2
- 14–26 October 2025 – PARIS, Odéon–Théâtre de l'Europe, for the Festival d'Automne à Paris
- 21–22 November 2025 – RENNES, Opéra de Rennes, for the TNB Festival
- 4–7 December 2025 – PARIS, Le CENTQUATRE–PARIS, for the Festival d'Automne à Paris
- 10–12 December 2025 – NANTES, Le Lieu Unique
- 8–10 January 2026 – BRUSSELS, Les Halles de Schaerbeek
- 15–16 January 2026 – CHAMBÉRY, Malraux Scène Nationale Chambéry Savoie
- 4–6 February 2026 – TOURS, Centre Dramatique National de Tours – Théâtre Olympia
- 17–27 March 2026 – STRASBOURG, Théâtre National de Strasbourg
- 10–12 June 2026 – LYON, Maison de la Danse

PRODUCTION AND TOURING CONTACT

Comédie de Genève

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Statement of intent

This creation seeks to represent the uninterrupted flow of thought and to reveal emotion as energy in motion. It is, quite evidently, a comedy.

Honda Romance is a choreography of the senses, an exploration of imbalance and interconnection. Walking, movement, choreographic gesture, song and gravity all become metaphors for inner motions, i.e. the constant readjustment that shapes our lives. Inspired by Germaine de Staël (*On the Influence of the Passions upon the Happiness of Individuals and Nations*), the piece attempts to capture the movement of emotions that belong to all hearts: the ones we carry, the ones that crush us, the ones that hold us upright, the ones that undo us, and the ones that bind us together.

My work has always explored this interpretation of gravity, that is to say, of balance. Whether emotional or physical, balance is only ever a transitory state. Balance does not exist in itself: it is the continual restoration of imbalance that creates balance. Just as walking is nothing more than a succession of tiny falls, each one caught by the next step. In the same way, happiness is a daily reinvention, a constant readjustment in the face of misfortune. And it is from this struggle, it seems to me, that joy must be drawn.

Today, emotion lies at the heart of almost everything: social networks monetise it. Political marketing steers decisions on emotional rather than rational grounds. Artificial intelligence analyses our emotions in real time in order to predict and “guide” us. Emotion has become a tool, a raw material, a resource to be exploited. For all these reasons, the interpretation of the emotional destabilisations this induces seems to me an important subject. In psychiatry, this is ultimately what is called “insight”.

The title itself, mysterious, plays on polysemy. “Honda” is both the name of a car manufacturer that will launch satellites in 2030 and in different languages it also means: existence, rice field, sling, lively, origin, book, family, or “my close friends”. As for “Romance”, it is often associated with love, whereas its original sense was “a musical piece in a simple style”. Honda Romance probes the richness of language and its capacity to multiply meanings. At a time when algorithms and the drive for speed are leading to the simplification of meaning, the decision to linger on words becomes a poetic choice, a vital impulse.

On stage, a satellite/narrator, symbol of the link between technology and feeling, observes ten performers and their continuous, insolent, fragile, and funny movements. This ceaseless ballet follows a score of 200 emotions, where movement becomes a form of self-defence against the turbulence of feeling. The omnipresent music of Tsirihaka Harrivel and Rebeka Warrior enters into dialogue with three wind cannons that sweep away the performers’ words, actions, objects, and bodies.

This is a show at the crossroads of stand-up (in the literal sense of “standing up”), weightlifting, ancient obstinacy, musical comedy, and emotional chaos. It moves between Adam Sandler and Seneca, between Pandora and artificial intelligence, between Emil Cioran and Michelle Wolf, between the myth of Atlas and WALL-E, between Lena Dunham and *Paris is Burning*, between *The Perfect Human* and the Nine Muses of mythology.

Honda Romance is a meditation on impermanence, the passage of time, and the nostalgia that clings to objects and digital memories. Everything passes, that much is clear. And yet, what should remain is not nothingness, but the love of the fact that everything passes. Emptiness is not a void, but a space of transformation.

Synopsis

ANCIENT OBSTINACY

Sequence 1: ATLAS

A woman lies on the ground, crushed beneath a satellite—symbol of a love that misjudged its own fall. This woman is a new Atlas. In fact, she is called Atlast. The satellite—this clumsy, lovestruck demiurge—both crushes and reveals her. Its name is “Honda Romance” and this damaged, fragile, yet imposing object binds her to the earth even as she holds it back from sinking into it. The satellite is not only a lover, but also a society, a form of pressure, a system. And yet, Atlast rises. Slowly, painfully, with “ancient obstinacy”. Like Atlas, Atlast carries this crushing, dysfunctional love on her back, on her head, then in her outstretched arms. She lifts it, she sings it. She makes of it a ritual. The satellite is no longer a burden: it becomes material for song.

This ancient obstinacy is what unites all the figures in the piece: the ability to keep going, to carry, to sing, even under the weight of oppression.

Sequence 2: PANDORA

Technology seeps in. Atlast reaches for an Amazon box (with the logo replaced by the word PANDORA in the same typography). From it she pulls out a black EEG headset, which she places on her head. This headset captures the neurological traces left by emotions in real time, as well as her cerebral activity. It exposes what the body conceals; it gives form to the invisible—to emotions. The EEG headset captures her mind. Live. Raw. She becomes an interface.

Memories, overheard phrases, déjà-vu situations: she rushes through a score of 100 emotions at breakneck speed. Speaking faster than the normal rhythm of thought can induce a trance state, particularly in the framework of self-induced cognitive trance (SICT). This technique, developed by Corine Sombrun, allows access to altered states of consciousness without the use of substances or instruments such as the drum. Physiologically, accelerating speech flow can overload the cognitive circuits responsible for language and analysis, especially in the left hemisphere of the brain. This overload may reduce activity in those areas in favour of the right hemisphere, associated with intuition and holistic perception.

Atlast becomes the materialisation of what the mind undergoes. She becomes an instrument. She becomes an oracle. She becomes a human score. The EEG headset acts as a technological bridge between her psyche and the outside world: her intimacy becomes spectacle, her emotions become matter—a neurological striptease of feelings that belong to every heart.

Sequence 3: PHILOCTETES

The final sequence—almost liturgical—is a celebration of ordinary life transfigured into the sublime, where every mundane gesture is elevated to the status of sacred ritual. The individual becomes collective, and the disorientation of the modern world finds an answer in song and in the remembrance of forgotten gestures.

Nine people suddenly flood the stage. An inexorable ballet of mesmerising comings and goings unfolds, embodying hope. One must go forward, even when wounded. Philoctetes, the hero bitten in the foot by a

serpent, is cast out, alone on an island. Yet he still walks, he still moves forward despite the pain. He bears his wound and transforms it into strength, when he returns to aid the Greeks at Troy.

Ancient obstinacy is not merely physical or psychological tenacity. It is an existential stance that emerges in myths, in tragedies, in Stoic philosophy, in epic tales. It belongs to the human condition in the face of the absurd—the need to carve out meaning, even where none appears. These nine performers embody the interconnection of acts and hearts, i.e. hope, like the hope Pandora found at the bottom of her jar. The same ancient obstinacy is present in Jennie Livingston's *Paris is Burning*.

This obstinacy is not heroic in the epic sense: it does not conquer. It accepts the tragic—the likelihood of defeat, of pain, of endless repetition. But it refuses submission.

It is an affirmation of the self against a crushing world. It is a vital insistence.

Art and Health

PARTNERSHIP WITH 3 BIS F

Science has always been a reservoir of inspiration for art, and the boundaries are porous: the physician Duchenne de Boulogne wrote *The Mechanism of Human Physiology for the Use of Artists*, and Antoine Vitez described theatre as a “laboratory of human behaviour”.

Personally motivated and deeply interested in these sensitive subjects, I met with Jasmine Lebert, and it is this encounter that shaped the way I would go on to create this project. Lebert is the director of **3 bis f** in Aix-en-Provence: an art centre, a residency for artists and visual artists, and a psychiatric hospital. My wish is to rehearse and to write through numerous, regular encounters in collaboration with an audience whose neurodiversity is as wide as possible.

The support of **3 bis f** is central to me, as this kind of partnership is very delicate. I have long desired to embark on such a path, but until this meeting I had not found a way to put it into practice.

The reflections of the **3 bis f** team on the intersection of health and art have already taught me a great deal. I am certain that this experience, which may well prove to be transformative, will lead me, artistically, to transcend both myself and the subject.

“**The Art, Care, and Citizenship** network project, in which **3 bis f** plays a part, is founded on the conviction that it is essential to forge organic links between spaces for art and culture, society as a whole, other civic practices, other social spheres, and other public services—particularly those connected with care. Drawing on experiences and research into artistic and social practices, it follows in the lineage of the American pragmatist philosopher John Dewey (*Art as Experience*, 1934). Through these experiences, it becomes clear that artistic creation can be articulated alongside care in a way that is distinct from art therapy: by conceiving forms of care rooted in the sharing of artistic gestures, creative processes and sensory experiences, and in encounters between different forms of otherness.”

3 bis f

Excerpt from *Art, Health, Citizenship: Spaces of Art to Care, Spaces of Care to Create*

VIMALA PONS

BIOGRAPHY

Vimala Pons lives and works in Paris. A circus artist and actress, her first training was in competitive sport, followed by studies in art history, cinema, and music.

She began university studies in Art History at Paris IV, then Film History at Paris VIII, before joining the classe libre at Cours Florent. She went on to train at the Conservatoire National Supérieur d'Art Dramatique de Paris (CNSAD), as well as spending a year at the Centre National des Arts du Cirque (CNAC).

Since 2013, Pons has worked in independent and auteur cinema, performing alongside both Nouvelle Vague filmmakers and a new generation of directors, including Antonin Peretjatko, Bertrand Mandico, Sébastien Betbeder, Thomas Salvador, Christophe Honoré, Benoît Jacquot, Jacques Rivette, Alain Resnais, Philippe Garrel, Bruno Podalydès, Paul Verhoeven, Baya Kasmi, Sandrine Kiberlain, Sophie Demoustier, Sarah Mitré, and Lucie Borleteau, among many others.

In 2023, she appeared in *Vincent Must Die* by Stephan Castang. She can also be seen in Baya Kasmi's forthcoming film *Mikado*, Victor Rodenbach's debut feature *Le Beau Rôle*, and Alejandro Jodorowsky's final film *The Essential Voyage*.

Since 2010, together with Tsirihaka Harrivel, Pons has been writing and creating performative circus works. After *De Nos Jours (Notes on the Circus)* with the collective Ivan Mosjoukine, they created *GRANDE* in 2017—a contemporary circus piece that toured for three years until March 2019. They released the soundtrack to the show, *Victoire Chose*, on vinyl and digital via the Teenage Menopause and Murailles Music labels.

In November 2020, Pons released *Mémoires de l'Homme Fente*, a 52-minute audio book—a kind of “short film without images”—with the independent label Transcachette Tapes.

In January 2022, she premiered her first solo show *Le Périmètre de Denver*. Alongside it, she created a sound fiction, *Eusapia Klane*, released as an EP (vinyl and digital) on the WARRIORECORDS and Kythibong labels. *Eusapia Klane* is both an audio book and the instrumental score to *Le Périmètre de Denver*, and the character of Eusapia Klane is one of the central figures in the piece.

In February 2023, Pons directed her first music video, *Feux Follets*, for musician **Flavien Berger**, released on the Pan European Recording label.

That same year, Pons was selected by Villa Belleville for a three-month residency, during which she developed *HEAVEN AND HELL*, an exhibition and sound installation project in collaboration with photographer Nhu Xuan Hua, opening in July 2024.

From 27 April to 8 June 2024, she presented her first video installation, *I PROMISE I'LL COME AND RESCUE YOU*, at **Galerie Anne Barrault**, which represents her work.

In parallel, Vimala Pons is writing her new performance piece, *Honda Romance*, which will premiere in 2025.

TOUT ÇA / QUE ÇA

VIMALA PONS & TSIRIHAKA HARRIVEL

This new performance forms part of the research and creation cycle **Tout Ça / Que Ça (TÇQÇ)**, the project I have been developing in collaboration with Tsirihaka Harrivel within our company. The starting point of **TÇQÇ** was our last duo performance, **GRANDE—**, a “sum-piece”: a survey of multiple situations and lists of actions to be completed. Its narrative unfolded in fragments, through numbers, with a form of writing that was at once premeditated and empirical. Together with Tsirihaka, we wanted to delve into each of the ideas in **GRANDE—** and to take the time to explore them further, in formats that focus on their own specificities. Examples include **La Dimension d’Après**, which closely examines the nature of a fall and the dramaturgical power of music; and **Le Périmètre de Denver**, which grapples with the obsession of linking balance, emotion and storytelling through the objects one carries. These lines of inquiry have been key pillars of our writing.

Our original artistic language and training is in circus. Since our school days, variety has been our mode of writing—variety broken into chapters, lists, titles, and designated acts. Within a single performance, we carry out short physical movements and connect them to meaning, building a fragmented narrative that takes shape live before the audience. Since our time at CNAC, our desire has always been to question circus and above all, the ways in which it is written. In this sense, **Honda Romance** re-examines the relationship to eccentricity and to clowning.

This cycle of creation began in 2019 and will conclude in 2025. Over these five years we have created the performance **La Dimension d’Après**; the performance **Le Périmètre de Denver**; their original soundtracks, released on vinyl and digital through two independent music labels, **La Dimension and Eusapia Klane**; the **Conference on the Impact of Humour and the Theory of Humours on the Régime of Communication in Art and of Play as a Restoration of the Sacred**; the audio book **Mikki, Mémoires de l’Homme Fente**; and the installation **You**, the first in the series **Arcade | Sentimental**.

In 2022, we entered a new phase of research and launched the production of three new projects, which will bring **Tout Ça / Que Ça** to a close.

This cycle has allowed us to reinvent our collaboration, which, since our school days, had always been as co-authors and co-performers of our own work. With each “Que Ça”, we strive to reinvent our partnership. Even when we are no longer both on stage, we remain deeply connected to the writing and direction of each other’s pieces.

In 2024, I presented my first two exhibitions: **I PROMISE I’LL COME AND RESCUE YOU**, a video collection at Galerie Anne Barrault (27 April – 8 June), and **HEAVEN AND HELL**, an exhibition–installation created with photographer Nhu Xuan Hua, presented at the Rencontres de la Photographie in Arles in July 2024.

My new performance **Honda Romance** will premiere in 2025.