

ADISHATZ / ADIEU
Jonathan Capdevielle



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ADISHATZ / ADIEU

conception and performing **Jonathan Capdevielle**

light **Patrick Riou**

stage manager **Christophe Le Bris**

sound manager **Johann Loiseau**

artistic collaboration **Gisèle Vienne**

artistic consultant **Mark Tompkins**

audio assistance **Peter Rehberg**

touring artistic assistant **Jonathan Drillet**

administration and touring **Fabrik Cassiopée – Manon Crochemore, Manon Joly et Isabelle Morel**

with the participation of **ECUME** university choral group of Montpellier – Musical direction: **Sylvie Golgevit** – with **Paco Lefort, Jean-Luc Martineau, Pierre-Yves Bruzzone, Olivier Strauss, Benoit Vuillon.**

thanks to **Aurélien Richard, Mathieu Grenier, Jean-Louis Badet, Barbara Watson** and **Henry Pillsbury.**

with the help of **DACM** and the technical staff of **Quartz, Scène Nationale de Brest**

executive producer **Association Poppydog**

Bureau Cassiopee was the executive producer of Adishatz / Adieu until January 2016:

Production **Anne-Cécile Sibué-Birkeland.** Booking / administration **Léonor Baudoin et Manon Crochemore**

coproduction **Centre Chorégraphique National de Montpellier Languedoc Roussillon dans le cadre de]domaines[(FR), Centre Chorégraphique National de Franche-Comté à Belfort dans le cadre de l'accueil-studio (FR) and BIT Teatergarasjen, Bergen (NO).**

with the support of **Centre national de la Danse (FR)** for the studio during rehearsals

Poppydog is supported by **DRAC Ile de France – Ministère de la culture et de la communication.**

When I was a teenager, in addition to being an avid imitator, I would often learn and sing the big hits, especially those by Madonna.

In 2007, as a guest artist of the Tanz im August Berlin Dance Festival, I put together a “Madonnesque” repertoire, interweaving other pop hits along with traditional Pyrenean songs. This song spree, performed in various locations after Berlin, was sung a capella and in a spontaneous fashion, thus giving an intuitive slant to the content.

I wish to use this experience as a springboard for devising a new show. My aim is to create a self-portrait shaped by a blend of sung material and imitation. Drawing on the self-fiction style, a sort of confessional documentary that highlights a character’s wanderings between real life and fantasy/dream life, I intend to write this show based on songs and conversations that, much like private notes, evokes roots and family.

SONGS AS BACKBONE

How can songs, the seemingly superficial and common kind, express profound and personal questionings?

Songs are the show’s backbone; they are the main character’s central mode of expression, first coming across as musically and rhythmically coherent, and then gradually revealing his obsessions, emotions, and nostalgia. The songs are sung a capella, and thus right from the start they convey a sense of the boy’s vulnerability and authenticity. The absence of musical instruments lays emphasis to the actual words, which resound like a self-contained language. Some of the songs are translated from English to French, and undergo diverse treatments: distortion, repetition, time-lag, sung musical accompaniment, intermixed styles (from Madonna to Francis Cabrel). I like the idea of giving a “tinkering” feel to the score of hits (cut-and-paste of the song clips).

IMITATION AS TRIGGER

Adishatz hinges on the technique of imitation that is often used to entertain. I warp this technique to the point of muddle, much like a blank tape upon which I record bits of the world that surrounds and constitutes me.

My goal is to multiply contrasts, to compose through different modes of expression in order to depict diverse identities and to cloud the issues, so that the interplay of humor and seriousness creates a distancing effect.

Imitation is one of my core triggers as an actor pursuing the quest to resemble x...and thereby to both believe and be x.

It is interesting to expose the pathways to appropriating another’s deeds and gestures, as well as the devices for either excelling or failing in this endeavor. This applies not just regarding “known” figures, but also members of my close entourage, family and friends. It also involves copying video-clip postures and appropriating pop codes, while always striving for truthfulness.

AN AMBIVALENT CHARACTER

At a certain point in the show, a male choir appears onstage. Performing traditional songs with them enables me to accentuate popular stereotypes of south-western France, while evoking my roots and tradition. Pop culture, Tarbaise culture (of the Tarbes region), as well as nightclub culture, are the nuts and bolts of my obsessions and personal history. This odd blend of local and international culture makes up the landscape that I find unsettling to explore. Throughout the show, the main character is ridden with multiple attitudes, evoking fragility, adolescence or virility.

The ambivalent character I'm interpreting wavers between gracefulness and gruffness. The use of transvestism allows me to delve into the notion of solitude, while conveying delicacy and sensitivity. Transvestism is common to both men and women, and can be used for both genders. It emits a sense of strangeness, of uneasiness, that enables many different kinds of reversal and alteration.

Solitude is perceptible: sad and melancholic but never tragic. I wish to work on the nostalgia of things, in order to summon pivotal memories of identity from childhood or adolescence; the nostalgia for yesterday's hits that marked my background and continue to resound today... I want to rekindle memories, and to stimulate the audience's memory.

The show thereby takes on a cathartic dimension, as the character's identity is gradually revealed, but will probably never be clear: ambivalent, complex, funny or sad, man or woman, powerful or fragile, somewhere between real life and fantasy.

PAST TOUR

A NOUS DEUX MAINTENANT (creation 2017)

Base on the novel Un crime by Georges Bernanos

Conception, adaptation and direction Jonathan Capdevielle

november 2017 La Quai CDN Angers Pays de la Loire (FR) / **december 2017** Nanterre-Amandiers CDN - Nanterre (FR) / **december 2017** CDN Orléans (FR) / **january 2018** Théâtre La Vignette, scène conventionnée - Montpellier (FR) / **february 2018** Théâtre Garonne, scène européenne - Toulouse (FR) / **march 2018** Arsenic, Centre d'art scénique contemporain - Lausanne (CH) / **april 2018** Le manège, scène nationale de Reims, co-accueil avec la Comédie de Reims (FR) / **may 2018** Kunsten festival des arts - Bruxelles (BE) / **may 2018** Le Quai CDN Angers Pays de la Loire (FR) / **october 2018** Le Liberté, scène nationale de Toulon (FR) / **january 2019** Théâtre de Lorient, Centre dramatique national (FR)

CABARET APOCALYPSE (creation 2017)

Conception et direction Jonathan Capdevielle

april 2017 Le Quai CDN Angers Pays de la Loire (FR)

LES CORVIDES (creation 2016)

In the frame of *Sujet à vif*, Festival d'Avignon

conception and performance Laetitia Dosch et Jonathan Capdevielle

juily 2016 Festival d'Avignon, Les Sujets à vif (FR)

SAGA (creation 2015)

conception, direction Jonathan Capdevielle

february 2015 Le Parvis, scène nationale Tarbes-Pyrénées (FR) / **february 2015** Théâtre Garonne, scène européenne, Toulouse (FR) / **march 2015** Les Spectacles Vivants, Centre Pompidou – Paris (FR) / **march 2015** Le TAP, scène nationale de Poitiers (FR) / **march 2015** L'Arseenic – Lausanne (CH) / **march 2015** Théâtre d'Aurillac, scène conventionnée, scène régionale d'Auvergne (FR) / **march 2015** Les Salins, scène nationale de Martigues (FR) / **april 2015** L'apostrophe, scène nationale de Cergy Pontoise et du Val d'Oise (FR) / **april 2015** Le Manège – Maubeuge-Mons (FR) / **april 2015** Maison des Arts de Créteil (FR) / **april 2015** Scène nationale d'Orléans (FR) / **may 2015** Le Quartz, scène nationale de Brest (FR) / **june 2015** La Rose des vents, scène nationale Lille Métropole Villeneuve d'Ascq, en coréalisation avec le Festival Latitudes contemporaines (FR) / **september 2015** La Bâtie – festival de Genève (CH) / **september 2015** La Friche la Belle de Mai, Festival actoral.15 - Marseille (FR) / **october 2015** Meteor festival, BIT Teatergarasjen - Bergen (NO) / **december 2015** Pôle sud, Centre de développement chorégraphique - Strasbourg (FR) / **january 2016** Maison de la culture d'Amiens, centre européen de création et de production (FR) / **march 2016** Théâtre la Vignette co-accueil avec la Saison Montpellier Danse 2015-2016 -Montpellier (FR) / **april 2016** Le Carré Les Colonnes – Saint Médard en Jalles (FR) / **october 2016** Les deux scènes, scène nationale de Besançon (FR) / **december**

2016 Le Quai CDN Angers Pays de la Loire (FR) / **february 2017** Nanterre-Amandiers CDN - Nanterre (FR) / **april 2017** Théâtre Garonne, scène européenne - Toulouse / **november 2018** Le Lieu Unique, scène nationale de Nantes (FR) / **march 2019** Théâtre du Bois de l'Aune, Aix-en-Provence (FR)

SPRING ROLLE (creation 2012)

creation commissioned by far° festival des arts vivants-Nyon (CH)
conception, stage direction **Jonathan Capdevielle** created in collaboration with and performed by **Marlène Saldana et Jean-Luc Verna** sound creation **Jérémie Conne**

august 2012 far° festival des arts vivants – Nyon (CH)

LA COUPE BRUCE (creation 2012)

conception **Jonathan Capdevielle et Marlène Saldana** choreography **Angèle Micaux** created in collaboration with and performed by **Jonathan Drillet, Marlène Saldana, Jean-Philippe Valour, Jonathan Capdevielle, Robin Causse et Angèle Micaux** referee & music **Alexandre Maillard**
administration-production **Guillaume Bordier**
executive producer : **THE UPSBD** with the support of **CND** (accueil studio) and **Ménagerie de Verre** in the framework of Studiolab.

march 2012 Centre Pompidou Paris (FR) in the framework of *TEENAGE HALLUCINATION - Un Nouveau Festival* 3eme édition / **october 2012** Le printemps de septembre – Toulouse (FR) / **june 2013** Latitudes contemporaines – Lille (FR)

POPYDOG (creation 2011)

Creation commissioned by Centre national de la danse – Pantin (FR)
conception and performing **Jonathan Capdevielle et Marlène Saldana** camera and film making **Vincent Thomasset** sound **Guillaume Olmeta**
production **Centre national de la danse**

november 2011 Centre national de la danse – Pantin (FR)

ADISHATZ / ADIEU (creation 2009)

conception and performing **Jonathan Capdevielle** light **Patrick Riou** artistic collaboration **Gisèle Vienne** artistic consultant **Mark Tompkins** audio assistance **Peter Rehberg**

november 2009 dans le cadre de Domaine, Centre Chorégraphique National de Montpellier Languedoc Roussillon (F) / **janvier 2010** Festival « C'est de la danse contemporaine 2010 », CDC – Toulouse (F) / **march 2010** Festival Antipodes, Le Quartz – Scène Nationale de Brest (F) / **july 2010** Festival d'Avignon, la vingt cinquième heure (F) / **january 2011** Le Parvis, Tarbes (F) / **january 2011** BIT Teatergarasjen– Bergen (NO) / **february 2011** Festival Antigél / ADC – Genève (CH) / **march 2011** Centre Pompidou, dans le cadre du Nouveau Festival – Paris (FR) / **march 2011** Festival Ardanthé, Théâtre de Vanves Scène Conventiionnée pour la Danse (FR) / **april 2011** Danae Festival (IT) / **april 2011** Festival TUPP, Uppsala stadsteater - Uppsala (SE) / **may 2011** Maison des Arts de Créteil (FR) / **october 2011** Théâtre Cai / Institut Français de Tokyo, dans le cadre de Festival/Tokyo – Tokyo (JP) / **november 2011** Kyoto (JP) / **january 2012** Pôle Sud, en coréalisation avec le Maillon – Strasbourg (FR) / **march 2012** CIRCUITS Scène conventionnée Auch - Gers- Midi Pyrénées / **march 2012** Espace Jéliote, Oloron-Sainte-Marie / **april 2012** L'Usine C – Montreal (CA) / **april 2012** Festival [à corps], Scène Nationale de Poitiers (FR) / **july 2012** Festival Rayon Frais – Tours (FR) / **september 2012** Short Theatre Festival, Rome (IT) / **september 2012**

Contemporanea Festival, Prato (IT) / **october 2012** Actoral, Marseille (FR) / **october 2012** C'est comme ça, le festival de L'échangeur, CDC Picardie, Fère-en-Tardenois (FR) / **january 2013** Santiago a mil – International Festival, Santiago del Chili (CL) / **march 2013** festival Via-focus théâtre, Le Manège, Maubeuge-Mons (FR) / **april 2013** Scène Nationale d'Orléans (FR) / **may 2013** CNDC Angers, Le quai forum des arts vivants, Angers (FR) / **may 2013** L'Arseenic Lausanne (CH) / **june 2013** Pronomades en Haute-Garonne, Centre national des Arts de la rue (FR) / **january 2013** Santiago a mil – International Festival, Santiago del Chili (CL) / **march 2013** festival Via-focus théâtre, Le Manège, Maubeuge-Mons (FR) / **april 2013** Scène Nationale d'Orléans (FR) / **may 2013** CNDC Angers, Le quai forum des arts vivants, Angers (FR) / **may 2013** L'Arseenic Lausanne (CH) / **june 2013** Pronomades en Haute-Garonne, Centre national des Arts de la rue (FR) / **august 2013** Festival d'Aurillac (FR) / **january 2014** Théâtre d'Arras, scène conventionnée musique et théâtre (FR) / **january 2014** Théâtre des Salins, scène nationale de Martigues (FR) / **april 2014** Théâtre de la Vignette, Montpellier (FR) in collaboration with l'ONDA, Réseau en scène Languedoc-Roussillon et l'IETM / **may 2014** SPRING Performing Arts Festival – Utrecht (NL) / **october 2014** Dublin Theater Festival (IRL) / **november 2014** Le Manège de Reims, Scène nationale (FR) / **november 2014** Théâtre de Clermont L'Hérault (FR) / **january 2015** Festival Tendance Europe, Maison de la culture d'Amiens, centre européen de création et de production (FR) / **january 2015** Festival Vivat La Danse, Le Vivat, scène conventionnée danse et théâtre, d'Armentières (FR) / **september 2015** Bitef festival – Belgrade (RS) / **october 2015** Festival 4+4 Days in Motion – Prague (CZ) / **december 2015** Nouveau Théâtre de Montreuil, CDN (FR) / **january 2016** Coil, PS122 – New York (US) / **april 2016** Le Carré Les Colonnes – Saint Médard en Jalles (FR) / **september 2016** Culturegest, Gestao de Espaços Culturais - Lisbonne (FR) / **october 2016** Les deux scènes, scène nationale de Besançon (FR) / **november 2016** Théâtre Les Halles - Sierres (CH) / **december 2016** Le Quai CDN Angers Pays de la Loire (FR) / **january 2017** Théâtre Garonne, scène européenne - Toulouse (FR) / **october 2017** Théâtre du Bois de l'Aune - Aix-en-Provence (FR) / **december 2017** Théâtre du Rond Point - Paris (FR) / **january 2018** Théâtre du Rond Point - Paris (FR) / **january 2018** POC d'Alfortville (FR) / **may 2018** Centre socio-culturel Derrière le Hublot - Capdenac (FR) / **june 2018** Naves Matadero, Centro Internacional des artes vivas - Madrid (ES) / **september 2018** Black Box Teater, Oslo (NOR)

Jonathan covering, tour de chant a capella (creation 2007)

conception **Jonathan Capdevielle** light **Patrick Riou** performers **Jonathan Capdevielle, Elie Hay et Guillaume Marie**

august 2007 Summer bar, Festival Tanz im August – Berlin (D) / **november 2007** Le club, Festival Les Grandes Traversées – Bordeaux (F) / **march 2008** Le Vauban, Festival Antipodes – Le Quartz de Brest (F) / **june 2008** TJCC, Theatre2gennevilliers – Gennevilliers (F) / **august 2008** GÖTEBORGS DANS & TEATER FESTIVAL – Göteborg (SE)

PATHWAY

Jonathan Capdevielle was born in 1976 in Tarbes, France. He lives in Paris.

He studied drama in Tarbes from 1993 to 1996, then he entered the Ecole Supérieure Nationale des Arts de la Marionnette. Director, actor, puppeteer, ventriloquist, dancer and singer, Jonathan Capdevielle is a unconventional multitalented artist.

He has been involved as an actor in several performances such as: *Personnage à réactiver*, (by Pierre Joseph) (1994), *Performance* with Claude Wampler (1999), *Mickey la Torche* by Natacha de Pontcharra, translation Taoufik Jebali, directed by Lotfi Achour, Tunis (2000), *Les Parieurs* and *Blonde Unfuckingbelievable Blond*, directed by Marielle Pinsard (2002), *Le Golem* directed by David Girondin Moab (2004), *Le Dispariteur*, *Le groupe St Augustin*, *Monsieur Villovitch*, *Hamlet and Marseille Massacre* (atelier de création radiophonique - France Culture), directed by Yves-Noël Genod (2004-2010), *Bodies in the cellar*, directed by Vincent Thomasset (2013). He performs the role of Nicolas in the film *Boys like us* directed by Patric Chiha (release scheduled in Autumn 2014).

Gisèle Vienne's collaborator since the beginning, he has been performing in almost all her plays: Jean Genet's *Splendid's* (2000), *Showroomdummies* (2001 and rewriting 2009) and *Stéréotypie* (2003), directed by Etienne Bideau – Rey and Gisèle Vienne. And *Apologize* (2004), *Une belle enfant blonde / A Young, Beautiful Blond Girl* (2005), *Kindertotenlieder* (2007), *Jerk, a radioplay* (2007,) *Jerk* (2008), *Eternelle Idole* (2009), *This is how you will disappear* (2010) and *LAST SPRING : A Prequel* (2011), directed by Gisèle Vienne. Gisèle Vienne, Dennis Cooper, Peter Rehberg and Jonathan Capdevielle published, in March 2011 an audio book in 2 versions French and English: *"JERK / Through Their Tears"*, editions DIS VOIR.

In August 2007, he presented for the first time the performance-show *Jonathan Covering* during the Festival Tanz im August in Berlin, starting point of his first solo creation *Adishatz / Adieu*, created in 2009 at CCN de Montpellier in the frame of]domaines[. In November 2011, he presented *Popydog* at the Centre National de la Danse in Pantin, that he created in collaboration with Marlène Saldana. In August 2012, commissioned by the Far° Festival (festival of arts vivants/living arts), he created *Spring Rolle*, an in situ project with two performers, Jean-Luc Verna And Marlène Saldana.

In *Saga*, created in February 2015, Jonathan Capdevielle has opened new chapters of the autobiographical stories, continuing to deal with this mysterious lines between fiction and reality, present and past. In November 2017, he presented his last piece, *A nous deux maintenant*, based on the novel *Un Crime* by Georges Bernanos.

His last piece, *Rémi*, created in november 2019, is accessible from 8 years old, adapted from Hector Malot's novel *Sans Famille*.

Jonathan Capdevielle is associate artist at Théâtre Garonne, scène européenne, Toulouse and at Centre Dramatique National Orléans / Centre-Val de Loire.

PRESS

La Montagne, August 2013, Julien Bachelier

« This child of the Pyrenees invites listeners to an intimate tale using nothing more than his powerful voice. He starts off his show singing all sorts of pop songs and traditional chansons populaires: a lot of Madonna, but also Francis Cabrel, bawdy songs... Then another voice, more spoken, is used to imitate conversations and situations with loved ones. This is how Jonathan conjures up his own hazy autobiography. And, through an abrupt metamorphosis on stage, the performance feels unfinished, where the border between identity and fantasy is blurred.... The spectator is ultimately mesmerized by this live documentary, this oral tale where a voice sketches out the limits of intimacy. »

Télérama, March 2013 – Mathieu Braunstein

« For the past three years, Jonathan Capdevielle has been skimming the stages of France and Navarre with his singing self-portrait.... With this enormously talented actor, choreographer Gisèle Vienne (his loyal stage sidekick) says he can learn to do anything with equal ease: acting, ventriloquism, and singing.... Using only the strength of words, Jonathan Capdevielle resurrects his late teenage years, interspersed with his pathetic outings to nightclubs. Wearing a platinum blonde wig and stumbling on high heels, this runaway from the Pyrenees never overdoes it. And yet, he blows us away with his metamorphoses. »

Le Devoir (Canadian newspaper), April 2012, Philippe Couture

« Actor, puppeteer, and ventriloquist, Jonathan Capdevielle is known for his collaborations with Gisèle Vienne, a rising star of French theatre, whose morbid and fantastical style is always destabilizing. Montrealers were able to see Capdevielle in Jerk in 2010: a macabre show where his unsettling use of ventriloquism terrified us. In Adishatz/Adieu... he explores the ambiguous identity of a character who was moulded by pop culture, scintillating sequins, and the rural textures of his Pyrenees childhood. Like a virtuoso, he modulates his malleable voice bringing different characters to life and tracing the path of his influences. With irony, perversion and off-kilter humour.... his mastery of the stage, his body, and his voice is phenomenal. A rare bird, indeed. »

Les Inrockuptibles, January 2011, Patrick Sourd

« And so is born Adishatz/Adieu, a larger-than-life solo show where Capdevielle confronts a massive and empty stage for a medley of disco and baroque music, brightening the corners with a collection of hits by Madonna and Francis Cabrel. Both splendid and desperate, he is like a night bird trying to reach the stars. The tribulations of this child of the century are woven together on a make-up table through a conversation with his father, while he transforms into a bleached blond vamp right before our very eyes. »

Tétu, November 2009, Oscar Heliani

« Jonathan Capdevielle is frank and deadpan. And, in Adishatz (“Adieu” in a Pyrenees patois), this 33-year-old actor, singer, excellent performer, ventriloquist, and puppeteer, frees himself from his obsession with Ciccone, whom he imitates to the point of schizophrenia, with a whiff of the French Southwest that poisoned his teen years. »

Les Inrockuptibles, February 2009, Philippe Noisette

« As a neo-Madonna in Jonathan Covering – his performance art-song recital, where he covered the pop star’s hits – Capdevielle wore his wig with panache. In Jerk, a text by Denis Cooper and staged by Gisèle Vienne, Jonathan Capdevielle dressed up more as a metalhead teenager. A permanent stretch that makes this exceptionally gifted alumnus of the Ecole Nationale des Arts de la Marionnette (national school of puppetry) a complete artist. A countertenor and talented ventriloquist, as a bonus! »

Exeunt Magazine, January 2016, Molly Grogan

Even in a city like New York (or maybe, especially), it's not so often that you see raw talent. When Jonathan Capdevielle takes the stage in *Adishatz/Adieu*, a joint presentation by American Realness and COIL, it's hard to know what to expect. He looks like he's 16, in new jeans and a grey hoodie, with big eyes and floppy bangs. Is he scared, or just looking like it? He clears his throat and falteringly begins to sing the chorus of "Holiday." Then "Lucky Star," and "Papa Don't Preach" and "Open Your Heart" and "Like a Prayer," and pretty soon the songs are too many to tally. As his voice gains strength, mimicking Madonna's soprano into a surprisingly convincing impersonation, a performer is born before our eyes.

So when he changes into a blonde wig, a black mini-dress and white stilettos for the rest of the show, it's no surprise, really. What is a constant amazement, however, is Capdevielle's vocal skill; in the middle of his Madonna best-of, he launches into a convincing Francis Cabrel ("*La Corrida*") and will later do Lady Gaga's "Poker Face." He can also tell a story in a six-voice polyphony (in a scene about a clubbing night that ends badly) and mimic the labored respiration and speech of his dying sister (even with a lollipop in his mouth): there's no need to see the sorry figures in these stories; the vocal variations, that also allow for regional particularities, capture them as well as any image. *Adishatz/Adieu* is the fragmented, bumpy, just barely outlined story of Capdevielle's growing up gay in Tarbes, a town of 48,000 people about 12 miles from the Catholic pilgrimage site at Lourdes, in agricultural, conservative southwest France. *Adishatz* means hello – or goodbye – in Occitan, the language of his forefathers in the region, so the show's title can read as a farewell to his roots. The show's most powerful sequence for me was when Capdevielle does a conversation between himself in a neutral French accent and his father in a heavily inflected Gascon one; his father is asking about Jojo's plans to come home and says he's putting flowers on his wife's and daughter's graves for the Toussaint holiday. Jonathan is telling him he is working in New York now, and trying to cut the conversation short while he sits at a dressing table putting on makeup and the wig. It's clear he's cut ties with the routines and obligations his father evokes, and when he does his Gaga number a few minutes later under a disco ball, we know he's never going back to the life in the sticks.

The Francis Cabrel song may not resonate with American audiences but it's a powerful choice that sums up Capdevielle's struggle to find his way in the world (especially as Cabrel is another native son of France's southwest). "*La Corrida*" is told from the point of view of a bull, hunted down in the ring while the public cheers. If *Adishatz/Adieu* had a refrain, it would be Cabrel's in "*La Corrida*," which asks: "Is this world for real?"

Another surprising musical choice comes in the show's finale, when a five-member male chorus suddenly appears to sing "Oh Shenandoah" while Capdevielle lies in a crumpled mess on the floor. The chorus' harmonizing is thrilling to hear (especially after so much Madonna...) and while they seem out of place, they offer a deeply moving send-off: "Away, I'm bound away / 'Cross the wide Missouri". We hope the talented Capdevielle finds his way, too.

Divers Alarums THEATER AND ITS (DIS)CONTENTS, January 2016, Helen Shaw

While I do love a snap decision, your first thought is rarely your best. When I'm being pompous (this ranges from "always" to "when I'm teaching"), I say that asking "Do I like this?" is the most boring way to watch something—it's much more exciting to ask, "What is this doing?" instead. I stand by that, but I can't always live by it, because my preoccupation with instant pleasure keeps shouting down my better self.

Jonathan Capdevielle's *Adishatz/Adieu* (co-produced by the COIL Festival and American Realness) wound up being a helpful corrective. It's an extraordinary show, but the first section nearly drove me into fits. Nearly the first third of the hour-long piece is Capdevielle, as his teenage self in hoodie and jeans, singing snippets of Madonna songs. Capdevielle is French, and for the first few numbers, it's sweet to hear his accent carefully navigating "Spanish Lullaby" and "Vogue." That quickly sours. Occasionally he sings a song in French, sometimes with lyrics that are intentionally shocking (about a ten-year old's "white ass" for instance), then swivels back to Madonna. Oh dear—I sniped to myself—here's yet another instance of the avant-garde mixing 'shock' with 'pop,' pretending critique but nonetheless leaning on the craft of the derided object. How expected! How disappointing! Tut, I thought. Tut tut.

I couldn't have been more wrong. The piece then takes a series of turns—emotional and aesthetic—that demolish those early thoughts.

First, still a cappella, Capdevielle sings Purcell's setting of Dryden's lyric, "Music for a while / shall all your cares beguile," his voice soaring into a countertenor polished on Madonna's glassy notes. Dryden's song imagines music as the balm that can soothe anything, even the Fury Alecto ("Till the snakes drop from her head, And the whip from out her hands")—and we wonder what awful guilt this awkward boy needs to "beguile." As he turns away from us, suddenly Capdevielle begins speaking both sides of a conversation. We hear what seems to be a verbatim exchange with his father, awkward and sweet—and we're brought up short when his father says he'll visit "mum and Nathalie's graves" the next day. By now, Capdevielle has begun to change. He puts on a blonde wig, short sparkly dress and heels. A second conversation recalls the young Jonathan trying to comfort Nathalie in the hospital. The light barely reaches him at a makeup table far upstage as Capdevielle hacks and coughs; he spits phlegm.

The final "act" of the short work continues to use the heavily miked sound of Capdevielle's imitations, though now we're slewing between announcements at a raucous club and Jonathan trying to coax a drunk friend to leave. Staggering through the now-smoky space, slinging a broken disco ball around, Capdevielle (as himself? as the blitzed friend?) seems at risk. He looks so slim, so vulnerable in his beautiful, leggy drag that when five men appear dimly in the fog, a chill goes through you. It's a long moment, watching him swaying at the edge of his spotlight, the men watching. Violence feels close by. And then—amazingly—the men break into an exquisite rendition of "Shenandoah." Their voices hang in the air as the piece ends.

Adishatz/Adieu is a beautiful show, one that completes several swift journeys while on a single path. It moves from an ugly, empty stage to a painterly *mise-en-scène*; it moves from coolness to an almost unbearable pitch of concern. It's possible, certainly, that everything is Capdevielle's invention, but it seems as though we're hearing confessions of real guilt, real pain and fear.

The awfulness of these remembered moments would be unbearable, but music lets

Jonathan first imitate it, then escape into it, then evaporate past it. The Purcell is a key, but the key opens a maze, and Capdevielle moves by deliberate steps from clarity into mystery. And why should a picture painted of oneself be clear? In this strange, frightening, revelatory show, we see in one body a self which is male and female, young and old, imitative and creative, defiant and afraid all at once. This is what makes it feel so understandable, even universal. For a show about someone else's memories, it's strange how much the performance has wound up haunting me. It's been a week since I saw it, but it's has been hard to say adieu.

ARTFORUM, Proof of life, January 2016, Jennifer Krasinski

For performer/ventriloquist Jonathan Capdevielle, mouth, breath, and voice are the instruments on which he composes an aural self-portrait in his entrancing and eerie solo piece, Adischatz/Adieu. Simmering just below the surface are questions about what it means to realize oneself in the light and in the shadow of others—about which aspects of ourselves are created in imitation, and which are received as inheritance.

Capdevielle begins downstage center, looking shaggy and unnerved while singing sweetly: "Holiday / celebration / come together / in every nation." And then: "You must be my lucky star / 'cause you shine on me wherever you are." And then: "Papa don't preach / I'm in trouble deep," and so on until his medley of Madonna hits twists into far darker arrangements, moving from pop to Pop. "No, papa! No, papa!" he cries out in a gruff and ugly French ditty about a ten-year-old boy who gets fucked in the ass as the audience either giggles or goes quiet. A few songs later, he gives a near-angelic interpretation of Henry Purcell's haunting composition for John Dryden and Nathaniel Lee's 1679 Oedipus: "Music for a while / shall all your cares beguile..."

In part two, Capdevielle sits at a dressing table, putting on makeup, a mini dress and a blonde wig, and all the while ventriloquizing conversations with his father (distant, disconnected, on the telephone), his sister Natalie (dying in the hospital), and his childhood friend Virginie (drunk outside a dance club near his childhood home). His seamless performance of self and others is brilliant, terrifying, and heartbreaking, because Capdevielle is somehow always second to the people he's parroting. His father makes awkward small talk, which he mostly answers in monosyllables. When Natalie asks in a choking, wheezing voice whether he will return to visit her later, he quietly replies that he can't because he has a shift at McDonald's. "This town's a real shithole," he sobs as Virginie as we understand that in this place called home, Capdevielle was anything but.

Adieu/Adischatz doesn't cohere the way it could. Capdevielle puts no fine point on his becoming, a choice which in some moments feels as though he's breaking himself wide open, in others as though he's just falling apart. Yet what condition is more essential to a great performer—living in the push-pull of the voices who at once made and unmade you, so that you can stand onstage, forever unbecoming to remain ever-present and wildly applauded for.