

# IT'S SO NICE

LULA BÉRY // BARBARA SYLVAIN

O H M Y G O D A S B L





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## OH MY GOD ASBL

**Concept / Staging / Performance**

Lula Béry / Barbara Sylvain

**Artistic collaboration**

Craig Weston

**Setting conception**

Valère Le Dourner

**Setting building**

Guy Carbonelle

**Costumes**

Cathy Perraux

**Lights**

Maria Dermitzaki

**Sounds**

Julien Van Aerschot / Gaëtan Van den Berg

**Pictures treatment**

Lula Béry / Barbara Sylvain / Valère Le Dourner

**Technical director**

Cyril Aribaud / Léonard Clarys

A performance of Oh My God asbl co-produced by Festival Prémices / la Maison de la Culture de Tournai.

With the support of PBA + Eden / Charleroi ; Theater Marni / Brussels ; Theater Les Tanneurs / Bruxelles (administrative residence) ; Theater Les Bancs Publics / Marseille ; Theater Les Doms / Avignon; Institut Français d'Ecosse, Wallonie Bruxelles Théâtre/Danse ; Wallonie Bruxelles International; French Embassy in Belgium and Cultural Ministry of Fédération Wallonie - Bruxelles (Theater).





## The performance

Two lecturers draw the portraits of two important icons of the 16th century whose destinies are inextricably linked, two queens yet who never met:

Mary Stuart\*, Queen of Scots and Elizabeth I, Queen of England\*.

Two present day actresses, side-by-side on an almost empty stage, play out the lives of two female enemies of the past against the backdrop of a constantly changing world of plots, political conspiracies and extremes. playing out the lives of two female enemies of the past against the backdrop of a constantly changing world of plots, political conspiracies and extremes.

In what is part historical inquiry and part poetic fable Barbara and Lula attempt to unravel this ambivalent relationship, touching lightly on power games and codes of communication, exploring the tenuous line between true and false, between the grandiose and the ridiculous.

This kaleidoscopic drama, broadly inspired by Stefan Zweig's Mary Stuart, duly shuffles the cards of power, identities and time for a burlesque plunge headlong into this right-royal tragedy.

\*Mary Stuart: Queen of Scots at 6 days old. Queen of France at 16 years old. Widow at 18. Condemned to death and Beheaded at 45.

\*Elisabeth Ière: Declared illegitimate at 3 years old after her mother's (Ann Boleyn) execution. Imprisoned at the Tower of London at 21. Queen of England at 25. Reigned until her death aged 70. Ordered the execution of Mary after having kept her captive for 18 years.

Two queens subject to the codes of etiquette, two actresses playing with the codes of theatrical play.

What do they allow to be seen, what do they reveal about themselves?

How to unravel fiction from reality and the true from the false?  
By incessantly crossing back and forth between these two duos,  
a portrait emerges of women in all their states, travelling from  
grace to monstrosity.

Like a female Laurel and Hardy playing a game of cat and mouse, the two actresses walk the boards of their relationships in an attempt to plunge into the quagmire of royal conflict and slide towards dangerous ground, ruled by the abuse of power and trust, the abyss of loneliness, manipulation and betrayal.



It's so nice is in the guise of an audiovisual conference, complete with news reports, dance and video projections, in fact anything to evoke these two cousins who were perfectly used to the limelight.

Their lives are full of mysteries and intrigues .

Each backed by their own conflicting religious traditions (protestant for Elizabeth, catholic for Mary) they embody two radically opposing conceptions in the world of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

One is a leader led by reason, the other one is a romantic led by passion .

Between them lies a destructive labyrinth of power, caused by rivalry and distrust, attraction and fascination. There is an endless, quintessential love/hate relationship where their true nature is revealed in those moments of conflict and perfect antagonism that prove them to be the very best of enemies.

The public is invited to follow an historic road movie through Scotland and England. A guided tour, mixing languages through a real portrait gallery of the 16<sup>th</sup> century showing the pomp and decadence of two conflicting dynasties of Tudor and Stuart

Between digression and fantasy, the two actresses take the stage to unravel the knot of these two tangled destinies and also deal with the portraits of their own demons...



## **Oh my god asbl**

Oh my god is a Brussels-based theatre company founded in 2010 by Lula Béry and Barbara Sylvain as part of an ongoing process of lengthy reflection and experimentation geared to developing a stage language whose diversity of form reflects the contemporary world, history and all its ups-and-downs, the here-and-now of the stage and the troubled ‘stuff’ of human nature. With interests ranging from the anthropological road movie to historical inquiry, body movement and the butterfly effect, the company rummages at will through archives and museums, drawing on whatever is out there, constructing hybrid forms to deliver up to the audience the result of its research and investigations. Its inaugural piece It's so nice is a double act created and performed by its two artistic directors.



**Lula Béry** is a French actress living in Brussels for 20 years.

Graduated from the theatre school INSAS in Brussels, she collaborates with various directors and french and dutch speaking companies: Dirk Opstaele / Ensemble Leporello, Transquinquennal, Xavier Lukomski, Vital Schraenen, Patrice Bigel, Jan Ruts, Carmen Blanco Principal / Monica Klinger, Charlie Degotte, Dominique Tack, Frédéric Roels, Didier Payen / Isabelle Marcellin, Craig Weston, Dominique Serron, Clinic Orgasm Society.

As a director: *La Passion selon...* short film screened as part of the exhibition Les Mystères de la Vie (L'Ecurie / RTT in 2008 ).

Collaboration with Bernard van Eeghem which she filmed for the project *De (E)migranten*, produced by De Werf for Brugges 2002.

**Barbara Sylvain** is a French actress living in Brussels for 20 years.

After studying international law, she took a tangent and trained at the Lassad school. She alternates movement, staging and roles in collaboration with various choreographers and directors:

Etienne Van der Belen, Val Le Dourner, Oriol Gonzalez, Laure Bourghnecht, Davis Freeman, Jean-François Noville / Claude Enuset, Ariane Buhbinder, Craig Weston, Katia Ponomavera.

As director she created *Mémoires Vives* (sponsored by la Maison de la Culture de Tournai).

For several years she has collaborated with the Centre Dramatique de la Wallonie pour l'Enfance et la Jeunesse which develops introductions to theatre in schools (workshops and further training).

# Press

Full article available at [www.ohmygod-cie.be](http://www.ohmygod-cie.be)

*Deux actrices complices pour deux reines rivales, Marie Stuart et Elizabeth 1ère. Un voyage documenté et décalé dans le temps et l'espace, L'Histoire et le théâtre... «It's So Nice» offre un voyage délicieux et instructif dans les zones troubles du pouvoir et de la solitude tout en développant un théâtre fait de jeu, de mouvement, de sons, d'images - et d'une bonne rasade d'autodérision.*

**Marie Baudet pour La Libre Belgique**

*...Loin de toute « britichophilie » ® exaspérante, Barbara et Lula osent être subtiles dans le grotesque et par un regard, un sourire ou une moue démontrent qu'elles savent manier l'humour sauce Worcestershire avec brio. Le rythme est particulièrement bien senti, chose difficile pour une conférence même fictive. Du chant tragique à une forme dansée de l'incommunicabilité, le spectateur suit avidement le parcours qui lui est proposé... Ce dernier contient de très belles innovations formelles et stylistiques (en particulier sur le plan musical et chorégraphique)...Barbara Sylvain et Lula Béry ont définitivement visées juste, il y avait là un territoire valant d'être exploré. H.A. pour Le Bourlingueur du net.*

Radio Campus (*Midi Express*) (*La Conspiration des Planches*)

La chronique dans 50° Nord / Arte Belgique de Barbara Abel

La chronique de Dominique Muche sur Musique 3

Ramdam Musique Charleroi



# **Technical aspects for the show**

The performance can be adapted to any kind of space, big or small.

The stage: Technical equipment necessary for the ‘Conference’ are positioned on stage and are operated directly by the 2 actresses during the show.

The company technician operates sound and light from the tech box.

Videos and photos are projected from a video projector on a screen at the back of the stage.

The performance is partly in French and subtitles in english are projected with a second video projector.  
2 microphones stand are needed on the set and 1 clothes rail for the costumes.

## **Tour**

### **2011**

11 - 15 OCT : Théâtre Marni / Brussels (BE)

15 - 29 OCT : Théâtre Marni / Brussels (BE)

### **2012**

2 FEB : Festival PROPULSE / Les Halles / Brussels (BE)

15 - 17 FEB : PBA + Eden / Charleroi (BE)

12 APR : Small is More / Undercroft Theater / Washington (USA)

18 APR : Festival Prémices / Maison de la Culture de Tournai (BE)

8 - 28 JUL : Festival Avignon / Theater Les Doms (F)

3- 24 AUG : Edinburgh Fringe Festival / Institut français d’Ecosse (UK)

6 OCT : MCA Le Palace / Ath (BE)

20 OCT : La Roseraie / Brussels (BE)

7 NOV : C.C.R / Verviers (BE)

### **2013**

17 & 18 APR : Théâtre de Macouria / Scène conventionnée de Guyane (FR)

27, 29 & 30 APR: Festival Komidi / La Réunion (FR)

19 MAY: Festival V.O. en Soissonnais / Soissons (FR)

21 JUN : Midsummer Festival / C.C. de l’Entente Cordiale / Château d’Hardelot (FR)

10 DEC : Espace des Anges / Mende (FR)

### **2014**

1 APR: Les Midis du Théâtre / Bozar / Brussels (BE)

11 APR : Le Polaris / Corbas (FR)

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**Crédits Photographiques:** Val Le Dourner - Charlotte Sampermans - Robert Frank -

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