

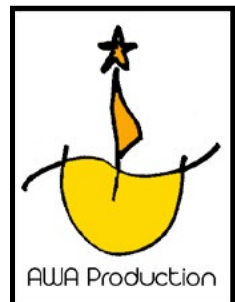
AND IT WAS NOT THAT WE WAS GOIN ANYWHERE



BASED ON *DreamHaïti*
BY KAMAU BRATHWAITE
French translation by **Christine Pagnouille**

Directed by **Frédérique Liebaut**

With **Mylène Wagram**
and other presences



DIRECTOR'S NOTES

« I was sailing toward hope. I imagined myself already there. I had walked to the shore of a dark sea. I was wading in water up to my knees and reciting poetry. »

Assef Husseinkhail Afgan migrant rescued from the ocean near Sangatte – May 10 2014

Kamau Brathwaite's poem (DreamHaïti, composed in 1994) evokes the tragedy of the Haitian boat people (1970's through 1990's). Yet, through one of History's eternal cycles, it also speaks to us of today's tens of thousands of migrants from Africa and the Middle East. Whether war, extreme poverty, political repression or the effects of climate change have driven them to take to the ocean on makeshift crafts, the adults and children who risk their lives for hope of survival carry in themselves the most urgent question that we must face today.

Is this it then? Have we come full circle? Is the probability of drowning for migrants on all the world's oceans the ultimate perspective opened by the transatlantic crossings we still call the discovery of the New World? Does the Conquest forever define our relationship to the other and the slave trades the truth of our economy? Is today's world the term of the journey?

That is the question I have chosen to make resonate by bringing this text to the stage.

It is about revisiting History through the live matter on stage and about finding, perhaps, among the shipwreck debris of a crushing encounter, what could lead us to reconfigure our world together. Making perceptible the luminous vitality of Kamau Brathwaite's dream, a complex story unfolds from a simple gesture, and multiple levels of times and space begin to resonate. On stage, a body is hit full force by the wave of history. Space comes alive, debris serve for play.

Light enhances shadows. Sometimes, flare from above or inner blindness, light rips the sails.

Sound, the sky tears and is swallowed by the ocean. Sound matters from which arises the flapping of a sail, a flame, the past brought to the present via radio waves. Like meteorites, word objects fall on the set in echo of the typographical matter of Brathwaite's text.

Costumes, made of gathered cloths, also travel through history. They cover and uncover in the time-space of the performance.

« A castaway who drifts on a wreck by climbing to the top of an already crumbling mast. But from there he has a chance to give a signal leading to his rescue. »

Walter Benjamin, lettre à Gershom Scholem, 17 avril 1931

RESONANCES

And It Was Not That We Was Goin Anywhere - Based on **DreamHaïti**

A journey through time and space Like folded fans, carried by the water in the poem *DreamHaïti*, literary and historical resonances are woven into the text. I wanted to open these correspondences to deepen the poetic journey. The voices of Césaire, Lowry, Bauchau, join Brathwaite.

And we needed the voice of Christopher Columbus, which anticipates the transatlantic history and the tragedy recounted by Brathwaite. Indeed, it is on the island of

Hispaniola, today's Haïti, discovered by Columbus on December 5, 1492, that is set in motion the gigantic colonial apparatus the shadow of which we still own.

And to hear the voice of Bartolomeo de Las Casas in his Brief account of the destruction of the Indies, an indictment addressed to Charles The Fifth in 1542, enjoining him to put an end to the ravages of colonization, for which Las Casas was a direct witness and against which he was the first to propose the concept of *Droit Naturel*.

insouffler des mots
pour éventer
cette histoire?

for tryin to ghost
words to
holler
this tale?



© AFP/ Getty images

THE CAPTAIN

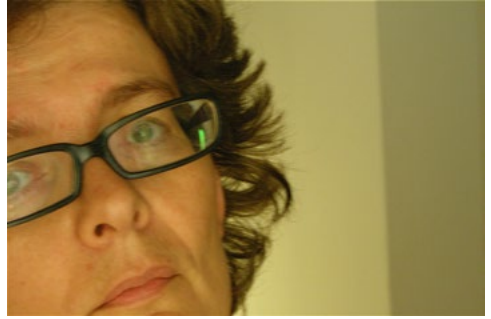
FRÉDÉRIQUE LIEBAUT

DIRECTOR

She comes from the field of cinema, as a documentary filmmaker. Director of post production sound work, she collaborates with directors like Jacques Audiard, Julian Schnabel, Claude Miller, Jean-Paul Rappeneau, Michael Haneke, Tony Gatlif, Christophe Honoré, Jérôme Bonnell, among many.

In theater, she was assistant director for Matthias Langhoff for the production of *Lenz*, *Léonce et Léna* based on Büchner, at the Comédie Française. She directed *Léon Gontran DAMAS A franchi la ligne*, *Le Triangle des Muses*, *Patito et Maryàn – contes de la Caraïbe et d'ailleurs*, *Traversées*.

The first staged version of *And It Was Not That We Was Goin Anywhere* based



on *RêvHaïti* by Kamau Brathwaite premiered in September 2014 at the International Literature Festival of Montréal.

She created *Les Ruisseaux du sensible* in 2016, a musical and literary counterpoint performance as part of the cycle *Memory of dictatorship – encounters between Haiti and Argentina*, funded by Open Society Foundations Latin America Program and FOKAL.



THE CREW

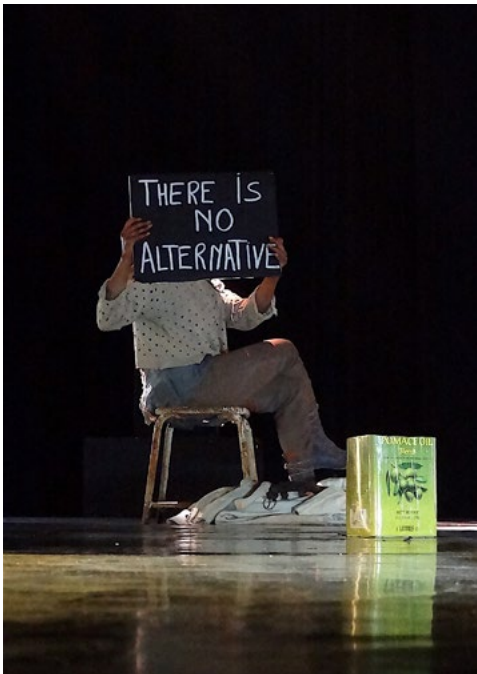
MYLÈNE WAGRAM

ACTRESS

A woman of her word and of the spoken word, in theater she acts under the direction of Denis Marleau, Mohamed Rouabhi, Pascale Henry, Jean-René Lemoine, Gilles Chavassieux, and others. Authors in her repertory are: Genet, Tchekov, Pliya, Trouillot, Diderot, U'Tamsi, among others.

In cinema, she has acted with François Girard, Lucien Jean Baptiste, Thomas N'Gijol, Hervé N'Kashama, Sylvestre Amoussou.

Her passion for poetry led her to interpret *Léon Gontran DAMAS A franchi la ligne* (*Léon Gontran DAMAS Has crossed the line*) directed by Frédérique Liebaut. She conducts workshops in schools and in prisons.



CHRISTOPHE SECHET

SOUND DESIGN

His sounds bring forth far off images and create intelligence.

Trained as electro-acoustic sound composer by the Groupe de Recherche Musicale de l'INA (Musical Research Group of France's National Audiovisual Institute), namely composers Mion, Lejeune and Schwarz, as well as in the field of ethnographic cinema Jean Rouch' s EPHE audiovisual laboratory. He has now chosen the living stage. Winner of the Prix Villa Medicis Hors-les-Murs (1989 New-York), he has been on the road with choreographers Mathilde Monnier, Fattoumi-Lamoureux, Christine Bastin, and directors Yves Beaunesne, Jacques David, Christophe Lidon, Ahmed Madani.

LUC DEGASSART

LIGHTING DESIGN AND STAGE MANAGEMENT

Great reader of Junichiro Tanizaki, he is not afraid of the shadows, he knows how to capture the faintest glimmer of light and to make it vibrate on stage.

Trained at ESRA (French audiovisual professional school), he chose to work in the theater as lighting designer and stage manager. He works with several theater companies including Issue de Secours and Le Porte Voix. He is lighting designer for François Duval and Jean Petrement. Luc is a great traveler.



JEAN GUIZÉRIX

MOVEMENT

Choreographer, star dancer, he is the movement guide for this sea voyage. He has a career as classical dancer at l'Opéra de Paris and also took part in world contemporary creations with Glen Tetley, Merce Cunningham, Lucinda Childs, Andy Degroat among others, always in the company of star dancer, choreographer, creator of the danced movement method *Les barres flexibles*, Wilfride Piolet who is also his wife.



© Pierre Michel Jean

DOMINIQUE LOUIS

COSTUME DESIGN

A passionate career in design. Her costumes always tell a story, elegantly, and are easy to wear. She is a collaborator of Daniel Mesguish, Vincent Goethals, Eva Vallejo in musicals, Véronique Vella, Bruno Lavigne among others. She also joins talents with the paléoplasticienne Elisabeth Daynès.

« I chose to go down the river, because I am scared of the ocean, but I saw death everywhere, in the forests, in the woods. I wanted it all to end, I just wanted to arrive in a country where I could be protected and have a future. »

*Mazhar Syrian refugee Interviewed by
France Terre d'Asile November 2016*

SERGE LAMOTHE

DRAMATURGICAL ADVISOR

Novelist, poet and playwright, he has published over a dozen books and produced as many theatrical adaptations and opera and circus dramaturgies. Close collaborator of film and theater director François Girard, he has, among other things, coproduced with him Richard Wagner's *Parsifal* presented in 2012 at l'Opéra de Lyon, then in 2013 at the NY Metropolitan Opera. In 2016, his adaptation for the theater of Yasuchi Inoue's *The Hunting Gun* toured Japan. He has also created the dramaturgy for Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* presented at Montreal's Théâtre du Nouveau Monde in 2016. His novel *Mektoub* (2016) is finalist for the award Prix littéraire des collégiens.

CHRISTINE PAGNOULLE

TRANSLATOR

Translator of *DreamHaïti*. Now retired, she taught translation, English literature and Post-colonial literature at the University of Liège in Belgium. Her research focused mainly on post colonial literatures, in particular in the Caribbean. With her mother, Annette Gérard, she has translated into French most of the poems in the trilingual Anthology *Words Unbound* (Arbres à Paroles 2006). She is the translator of Michael Curtis (Editions Vanneaux 2009) David Jones, Léonard Schwartz and Kamau Brathwaite. She just finished the translation into English of Léon Gontran Damas' *Black Label*, and into French Lawrence Scott's novel *Witchbroom* for publication this year.

THE AUTHOR : KAMAU BRATHWAITE

Born in 1930 in Bridgetown, Barbados, he studied history in Cambridge (UK), and then lived a few years in Ghana, working at the Ministry of Education.

In 1963, he moved to Kingston, Jamaica, and taught at the West Indies University. In the late 80's he moves to NY and teaches at NYU. A prolific author, he published his first compilation in 1964. *Eleggas* was published in 2010, *Strange Fruit* in 2016.

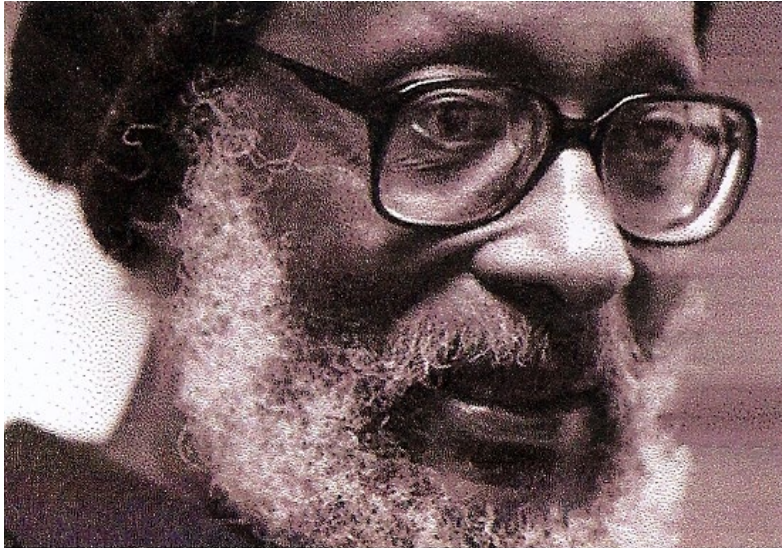
DreamHaiti is one of seven long poems in the compilation *DreamStories* published in 1994.

Kamau Brathwaite belongs to the first post colonial generation, contemporary

of struggles for independence such as the Algerian war, and of assassinations of figures of emancipation such as Patrice Lumumba and Thomas Sankara. His writing is profoundly and intensely committed to the struggle for a world where the central value is solidarity.

He has created a language that questions all the reader's sensory sensibilities in order to invite reflection and work on the relationship between colonizers and colonized.

Recipient of many literary prizes, including the **Griffin Poetry Prize** for **Born to Slow Horses** and in 2015 he received **The Robert Frost Medal de la Poetry Society of America** for his work.



«... As if I was already turnin the leaves
of the waves for a long long history of time...»

**« And when I look up again from
« Et lorsque je relève les yeux de
this crowded boat of my brothers »
ce bateau surchargé de mes frères »**

Kamau Brathwaite



© Massimo Sestini

« A total of about 205.000 individuals crossed the Mediterranean sea until last Monday, against a little over 90.000 in 2015 over the same period. This was indicated on Tuesday by IOM (International Organization for Migrations) in Geneva. Close to 160.000 arrived in Greece. The number of victims is now 2,510 according to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. »

DakarFlash.com, Tuesday May 31, 2016

« You and your landscapes! Tell me about the worms! »

Samuel Beckett - *Waiting for Godot*
Estragon to Vladimir



Our work on Brathwaite led to the first French edition of *DreamHaïti*, under the title *RêvHaïti*, at éditions Mémoire d'Encrier (Montréal) February 2013.

RECREATING AND IT WAS NOT THAT WE WAS GOIN ANYWHERE IN 2017

We are taking on this challenge in order to respond to pressing issues of today and to question further Columbus' journey through the vehicle of Brathwaite's song, weaving into this the voices of the women and men who are knocking at our doors today. Not an encore: it is an act of recreation.

PROGRAMMING 2017

Théâtre de l'Épée de Bois — Cartoucherie de Vincennes — du 26 au 31 mars 2018

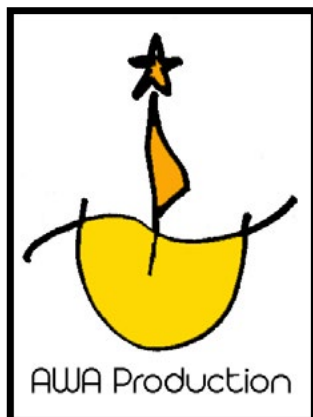
Festival Quatre Chemins — Haïti — novembre /décembre 2018

Invited to the territoire en culture — Tropiques Atrium — juin 2017

Lilas en scène — 20, 21, 23 Octobre 2017



COMPAGNIE AWA
Siège social :
23 rue Etienne Marcel
47300 Villeneuve sur Lot



+33 6 26 76 19 27
cieawa@yahoo.fr
<http://awaproduction.fr>

AWA PRODUCTION
Siret 411 824 691 00033
APE 9001 Z
Licence 2-1061289
Licence 3-1089433

