

Maurice Béjart's personal Archives



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1. BÉJART Maurice

Three original childhood photographs of Maurice Béjart, and his birth announcement

N. D. [AFTER 1927], 12,2x17,2 CM

Three original photographs of Maurice Béjart as a child beside his mother, taken in Mougins.

We attach the birth announcement, dated 1 January 1927, printed with his name “Maurice Jean Berger.”

Provenance: Maurice Béjart’s personal archives.

[+ see more](#)



2. BÉJART Maurice

First draft of the title page of his autobiography "Mort Subite"

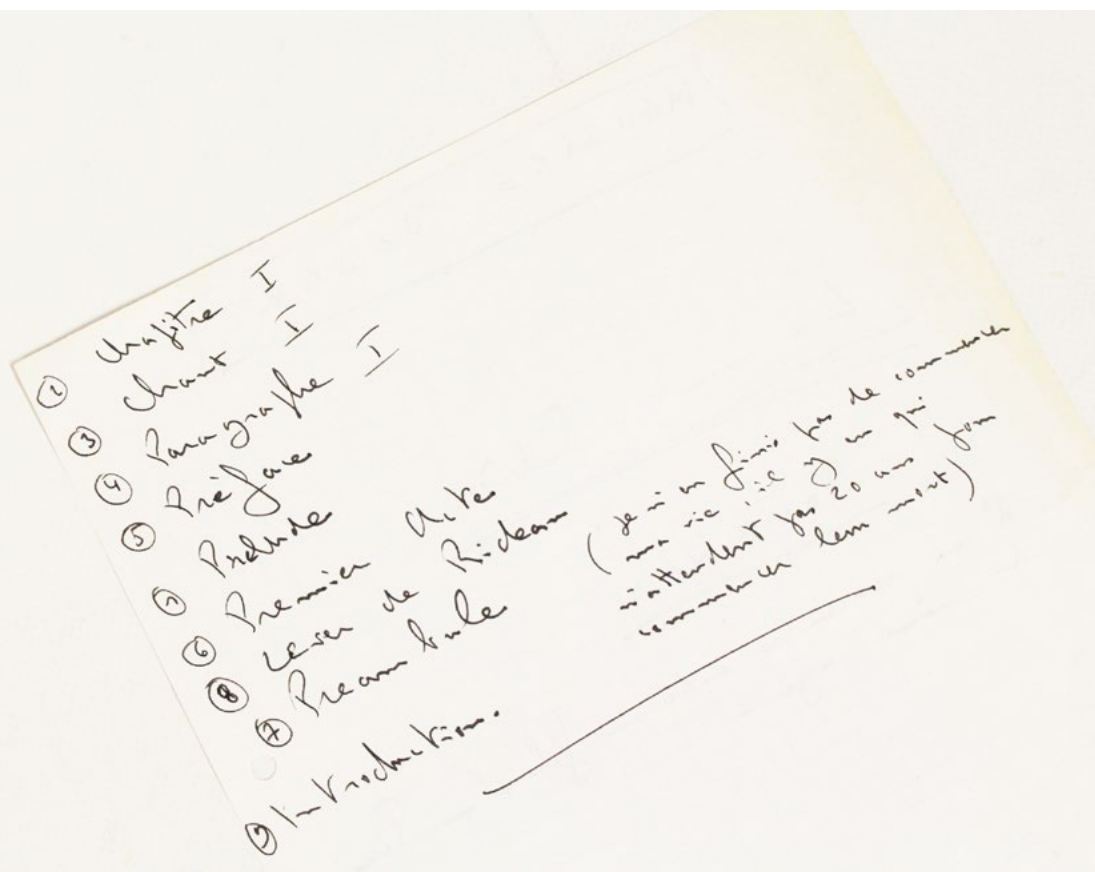
N. D. [CA. 1991], 21x29,7 CM, ONE QUADRILLE LEAF

Handwritten, signed first draft of the title page of *Mort subite*, the autobiography of choreographer Maurice Béjart, published in 1991.

On the reverse there is a summary of his book and a note: "je n'en finis pas de commencer ma vie, il y en a qui n'attendent pas 20 ans pour commencer leur mort" "I have not finished starting my life, there are some who don't wait 20 years to start their death."

Provenance: Maurice Béjart's personal archives.

[+ see more](#)



3. BÉJART Maurice

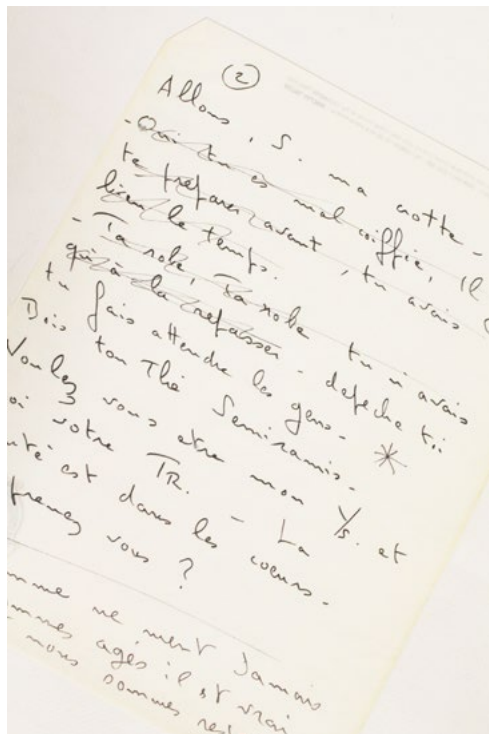
Handwritten manuscript
Manuscrit autographe,
notes about "Les Chaises"
by Eugène Ionesco

N. D. [1981], 21,5x27,8 CM, 5 LEAVES

Handwritten manuscript by Maurice Béjart, written on the verso of 5 Hotel Gloria (Rio de Janeiro) headed leaves. 46 lines in black ink, with handwritten pagination.

This text, written in Brazil, is a collection of notes taken on *Les Chaises* by Eugène Ionesco, that Béjart adapted into a ballet with music by Wagner at the Rio de Janeiro Teatro Municipal in April 1981. Béjart offers a series of humorous thoughts and aphorisms: "**Le temps est passé aussi vite que le train. Il a tracé des rails sur la peau. Vous croyez que la chirurgie esthétique peut faire des miracles?**" "**Time passed as quickly as a train. It drew train tracks on the skin. Do you think cosmetic surgery can perform miracles?**" There is a certain melancholy running through the leaves, dealing with old age, loved ones dying, the inevitable passing of time. There are also literary allusions: "**Bois ton thé Sémiramis. Voulez-vous être mon Ys.[eult] et moi votre Tr.[istan] - La beauté est dans les coeurs. Comprenez vous ?**" "**Drink your tea Semiramis. Do you want to be my Ys.[eult] and my Tr.[istan] - Beauty is in the heart. Do you understand?**"

Provenance: Maurice Béjart's personal archives.



[+ see more](#)

4. BÉJART Maurice

Handwritten signed manuscript on the operetta "Die Fledermaus": "recherche éperdue de notre identité à travers les mensonges d'un rêve de pacotille"

N. D. [CA. 1985], 21x29,7 CM, 6 LEAVES

Handwritten manuscript from the choreographer Maurice Béjart, signed with his initials.

6 leaves, 93 lines written in blue marker.

Magnificent text by Béjart on the power of music and performance, doubled up as a study of Johann Strauss II's operetta die Fledermaus (La Chauvre-Souris - The Bat).

In 1985, Maurice Béjart had produced and choreographed la Chauvre-Souris at the Cirque Royal in Brussels. The manuscript constitutes a series of notes and commentaries on the work, highlighting the operetta's high sociological value: **"Dans la Fledermaus, le premier acte est l'image de la prison conjugale bourgeoise dont les murs conventionnels et ennuyeux ne seront abolis que par le mensonge des époux qui choisissent leur liberté [...] Un univers triangulaire (oui... c'est aussi le mari, la femme et l'amant), construit autour de ces trois prisons: la prison conjugale, la prison bancaire et la prison tout court". "In Fledermaus, the first act is the image of the conjugal bourgeoisie prison whose conventional and boring walls will only be demolished by the lies of the spouses who chose their freedom [...] A triangular universe (yes... it's also the husband, the wife and the lover), built around these three prisons: the conjugal prison, the banking prison and the simple prison."**

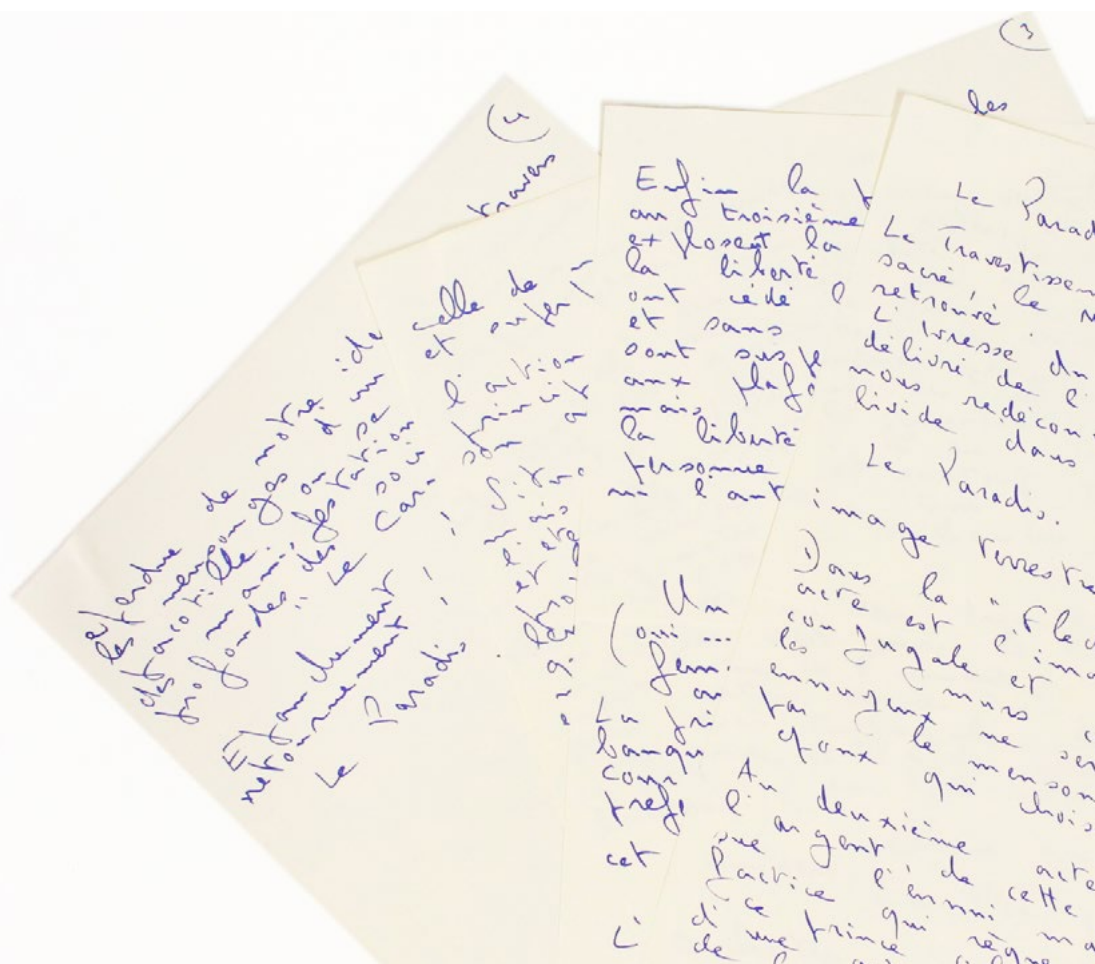
Taking another look at Ribaud's famous paradigm (**"Le Paradis... Je suis un autre!" "Paradise... I am another!"**), Béjart praises the salutary virtues of the show, of the performance, that make it possible to escape the **"l'Ego impitoyable que nous redécouvrons chaque matin livide dans le miroir," "heartless and livid ego that we find each morning in the mirror."** His adaptation of Strauss' Chauve-Souris gives an opportunity to dive back into the world of the popular performance, the world of **"travestissement," "dressing-up."** In contrast to his plain tights and skirts, Béjart will opt for starched costumes, overrun with feathers, gloves and masks for this ballet: **"le masque final que les protagonistes vont poser sur leur visage n'est-il pas qu'un des travestissements multiples de cet art qui nous endort nous stimule, nous fait rêver, marcher au combat, faire l'amour, pleurer la mort, chanter la vie et son image bachique ?"**

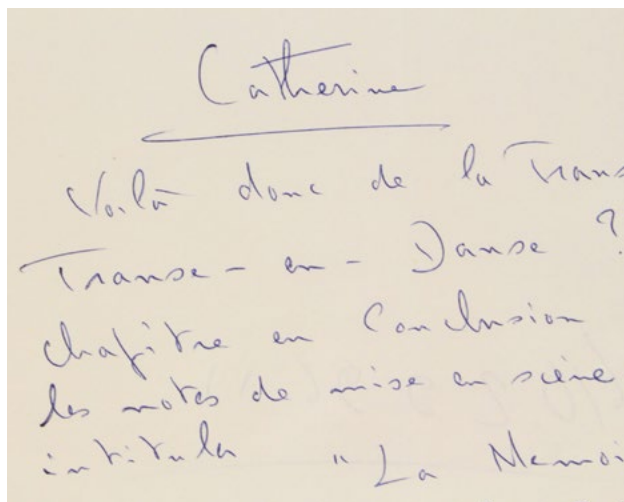
“the final mask that the protagonists will put on their faces, is it not one of this art’s many distortions that sends us to sleep, stimulates us, makes us dream, march in combat, make love, cry over death, sing about life and its Bacchic image?” Attempting a very different genre, he masterfully demonstrates the paradox of the work: “Fledermaus. Pièce légère, inconsistante, divertissement pour les fêtes de fin d’année... ou miroir profond d’une époque, une société, d’une façon de vivre...”

”Fledermaus. A piece that is light, shallow, entertaining for the holiday season... or a deep mirror of an era, a society, a way of life...”

Provenance: Maurice Béjart’s personal archives.

[+ see more](#)





5. BÉJART Maurice

Handwritten manuscript regarding the memory and his play "A-6 Roc"

N. D. [CA. 1991],
21x29,7 CM, 9 LEAVES

Handwritten manuscript signed by the choreographer Maurice Béjart, sent to his publisher with a handwritten letter on two leaves.

9 leaves, 145 lines written in blue pen. Hand-pagination of the manuscript (1-7) and the letter to his publisher (a-b).

Maurice Béjart's handwritten reflections, entitled "Mémoire" "Memoirs," make up the last chapter of his work *Béjart-théâtre: A-6-Roc* (Editions Plume, 1992), regarding his eponymous play that was created the same year in Lausanne.

After the foundation of "Béjart Ballet Lausanne" and his definitive departure from Belgium in 1987, Béjart continues to stage operas, produce films and publish several books (novel, memories, personal diary...). In addition, he writes and stages three plays: *La Reine Verte*, *Casta Diva* and finally *A-6-Roc*, to which dedicates a book. The play features seven characters in search of a lost paradise, and calls for a deep reflection on memory.

The last chapter of his book on *A-6-Roc*, the manuscript of which we have here, is a mixture of philosophical thought and commentaries on the play: **"La première idée de décor pour A-6-Roc était une immense bibliothèque [...] où les deux personnages acteurs d'un drame qui se nomme la vie, ne savent plus si les mots qu'ils prononcent sont les leurs ou ceux des générations qui les ont précédés dans cette prison de la connaissance"** **"The first idea for the scenery for A-6-Roc was an enormous library [...] where the two characters in a drama called life,**

no-longer know if the words they say are theirs or those of the generations who preceded them in this prison of knowledge.” Implicitly, the author-choreographer maintains that the memory, although salutary for Man, harms the creative faculties. A series of questions on “Moi” “Me,” where one can detect Montaigne’s influence, follows: “Je suis une succession d’instant, de regards, d’émotions, d’attentes. Je suis le fruit que je mange, l’air que je respire, le chat que je caresse, le livre que je lis, le regard dont je me souviens” “I am a series of moments, of looks, of emotions, of expectations. I am the fruit that I eat, the air that I breath, the cat that I stroke, the book that I read, the look that I remember.”

Provenance: Maurice Béjart’s personal archives.

[+ see more](#)

6. BÉJART Maurice

Typescript with handwritten comments on the Messe pour le temps présent

N. D. [CA. 1967], 22,3x27,9 CM, (24) F., 24 LEAVES BOUND WITH BRASS FASTENERS

Final script of Maurice Béjart’s show, *Messe pour le temps présent*, created at the Avignon festival on 3 August 1967.

24 leaves of laid paper bound with a flexible board and two brass fasteners, bearing the SACD (Société des Auteurs et Compositeurs Dramatiques) stamp. 9 leaves entirely handwritten, 15 leaves typed. Several passages crossed out with blue marker.

A precious handwritten and typescript notebook of the texts recited during Maurice Béjart’s famous dance ceremony, the *Messe pour le temps présent*, with choreographic and philosophical explanations written by the choreographer.

The typescript recitals between the scenes, alternately taken from Nietzsche, from *Cantique des Cantiques* and from *Bouddha*, are abundantly annotated by Maurice Béjart, who adds in pen indications concerning the dancers’ movement, the music, the percussion, as well as moments of silence. A summary, also written by the choreographer, is featured on the upper cover board.

In 1967, Maurice Béjart, under Jean Vilar’s guidance, the director of the Avignon festival, produces a remarkable avant-garde work, which, throughout this career, remains one of his greatest successes: the *Messe pour le temps présent*. An immense saga of an era haunted by the thermo-nuclear war and fascinated with Indian spirituality, this “Célébration en 9 épisodes” “Celebration in 9 episodes” sanctifies modernity and the fears

of the contemporary world. Pierre Henry's electroacoustic "rock" music and Béjart's audacious cultural syncretism initiative in dance and texts were highly appreciated by critics and audiences, leading to a new series of performances at the Palais des Papes the following year.

It is through this precious annotated typescript of the *Messe pour le temps présent* that Béjart reveals the key to a *complete show* - a ceremony bringing all of the performing arts and all of the beliefs together, thanks to the recitals and musical sequences that punctuate the performance.

The 15 typewritten leaves provide the details of the texts that accompany the show's nine tableaux - an eclectic and scandalous selection bringing together Nazi military marches, a book from the bible (the *Cantique des Cantiques*), textes by Nietzsche and nursery rhymes. Exploring the phenomena of mystic thought, philosophy and dictatorial propaganda, Béjart annotates the texts and the chosen music in his handwritten notes: **"Nazisme omniprésent. Destruction de L'individu au nom de l'Idéal héroïque et patriotique contestable"** **"Ompresent Nazism. Destruction of the Individual in the name of the questionable heroic and patriotic Ideal"**; (6th tableau, *Mein Kampf*); **"Plénitude et cri d'angoisse qui aboutit sur la Recherche Divine"** **"Fulfilment and an anxious cry that results in Devine Research"** (5th tableau, *Le Couple*). **"Lente liturgie silencieuse. Le Voyage s'achève. Le Souffle renaît"** **"Slow silent liturgy. The Journey ends. Inspiration is born again"** (8th tableau, *Le Silence*).

The unquestionable spiritual dimension of the show owes a lot to Buddhism and Hinduism, with which the choreographer was obsessed at the end of the 1960s. Bringing the audience into a state of almost mystical concentration, Béjart will attempt, in the *Messe pour le temps présent*, to recreate the union of the body and the spirit accomplished in the Indian ancestral culture. He begins the *Messe* with a half-hour meditation session: **"Un musicien hindou improvise sur scène entouré de tous les danseurs et acteurs assis. Et se concentrent jusqu'au début du spectacle"** **"A Hindu musician improvises on scene surrounded by all of the dancers and actors sitting down. And they gather until the beginning of the show"** he notes in the margin of the prologue. Reflection continues in the second tableau, entitled *"Le corps"* *"The body,"* dancing to a Buddhist founding text, an extract from *Satipatthana sutta* highlighting the importance of bodily introspection and the full awareness of being.

The notebook's plentiful handwritten notes also constitute a unique choreographic archive document, detailing the running of the dance sequences, the number of dancers or actors on stage and the general atmosphere of the scenes. The grace of academic ballet stands alongside



M. Byart

MESSE POUR LE
TEMPS PRESENT

MAURICE BEJART.

Ceremonie en 9 Episodes -

Durée - 1 heure 55.

Permissions originales de M. Byart

TEXTES D'APRES - LE BOUDDHA -
- NIETSCHE
- CANTIQUE DES CANTIQUES
- COMPTINES enfantines

Adaptés par M. BEJART -

Sequence musicale de P. Henry -

fashionable *rock* dances and the violence of the contemporary world: **“Deux garçons se battent / Combat rapide réaliste Brutal”** **“Two boys fight / Brutal fast realistic combat”** (5e episode, *Mein Kampf*) **“la danse classique comme un moyen de concentration et construction du corps humain”** **“classic dance as a means of concentration and construction of the human body”** (2th tableau, *Le corps*). Throughout the pages we find the highlights of the show, particularly Paolo Bertoluzzi’s solo, star ballet dancer of the 20th century, and the masterful group dance scenes performed in front of the Palais des Papes: **“14 danseurs exécutent à la barre des exercices de danse classique”** **“14 dancers perform classic dance exercises on the barre”** (2e tableau, *le Corps*) **“Avec des Lampes Balises les danseurs construisent une piste d’atterrissage pour avions”** **“Dancers create a runway for aeroplanes with Beacon Lamps”** (9th tableau, *l’Attente*).

This perfectly preserved working document is a unique testimony of a choreographic masterpiece and one of the general public’s best known contemporary works: the *Messe pour le temps présent*.

Rare privately owned manuscript from Maurice Béjart, the choreographer’s archives being shared between his house in Brussels, the Béjart foundation in Lausanne and the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie.

Provenance: Maurice Béjart’s personal archives.

[+ see more](#)

7. BÉJART Maurice

Manuscript explaining his play “A-6-Roc” first performed in Lausanne

N. D. [CA. 1991], 21x29,7 CM, 10 LEAVES

Handwritten manuscript signed by the choreographer Maurice Béjart.

10 leaves written in blue pen. Handwritten pagination.

Maurice Béjart’s handwritten proofs for his book *Béjart-théâtre: A-6-Roc* (Editions Plume, 1992), about his play *A-6-Roc*, first performed in the same year at the Vidy theatre in Lausanne.

After the foundation of “Béjart Ballet Lausanne” and his definitive departure from Belgium in 1987, Béjart continues to stage operas, produce films and publish several books (novel, memories, personal diary...). In addition, he wrote and directed his third play *A-6-Roc* performed in Lausanne in 1992, which he published with commentaries in a book entitled *Béjart-théâtre: A-6-Roc*. The play features seven characters in search of a lost paradise, and calls for a deep reflection on the choreographer’s me-

M^{re} A. et G sont semblables et
contradictoires - Unis et opposés -
Ils ne sont en réalité qu'un seul
être en deux corps et c'est justement
pour cette raison qu'il est très important
que leurs différences physiques et
psychiques soient très affirmées.
G doit avoir au moins le double
l'âge de M^{re} A. - Cette différence
de génération crée leur tension et
aussi leur complexité -
Le Sexe n'a aucune importance -
Les rôles peuvent être joués par des
hommes, comme ce fut le cas à
la création, ou par deux femmes
mais dans cette alternative, toute
la distribution doit être féminine
Les êtres peuvent aborder toute les
étapes et tous les âges de la vie
sans transitions. Spontanées
comme des enfants surtout quand
ils devraient

memory and childhood. Béjart takes the leading role and gives the lines to Gil Roman, his favourite dancer during the period in Lausanne, who will succeed him as the head of his company in 2007.

A-6-Roc was probably Béjart's favourite play and it will be the only one that he will agree to publish. Largely inspired by Jean Anouilh's theatre, and even more so by that of Eugène Ionesco, the play makes use of his childhood in the south of France. This manuscript, which provides valuable information on the staging and scenery, was published with the original play in 1992. The present, the past and the future come together in this play through three characters - a patriarchal figure played by Béjart himself, another embodying youth played by Gil Roman ("6 must be at least twice the age of Mr A. This generational difference creates their tension and also their bond.") and a clown, called Roc, played by the actor Phillipe Olza. The influence of the theatre of the absurd is easily detected here, as much in the scenery choices as in the psychology of the characters: "cette première séquence de la pièce, qui peut durer de 3 à 6 ou 7 minutes, n'est qu'un mouvement mécanique de corps [...] évoquant l'activité inutile et vaine des univers concentrationnaires" "the play's first scene, that can last from 3 to 6 or 7 minutes, is nothing but mechanical movement of the body [...] conjuring up the useless and empty activity of the world of concentration camps."

The playwright Béjart nevertheless remains faithful to the "spectacle total" "complete show" idea, for which he was well known as a choreographer. The play is inundated with dance and movement - particularly in the theatre choir ("four characters I should say, since nothing pleases me less than the uniformity of the Greek pseudo-choirs and other aestheticizing corps de ballet") and Béjart devotes the last four leaves to the music ("elle joue tout au long de la pièce comme les dauphins qui suivent un bateau" "it plays right through the play, like dolphins following a boat") ranging from Nino Rota to the syrupy music of Jackie Gleason. Beyond the theatre, Béjart wanted, with A-6-ROC, to create a complete work of art, including all performance genres, and in this manuscript he demonstrates his talent as a playwright and a producer.

Invaluable [RE2] manuscript on the last play that Béjart wrote, produced and performed. It features amongst the choreographer's very rare, privately owned documents, his archives being shared between his house in Brussels, the Béjart foundation in Lausanne and the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie.

Provenance: Maurice Béjart's personal archives.

[+ see more](#)

8. BEJART Maurice

Handwritten personal diary

1969, 16,8x21,6 CM, SPIRAL-BOUND NOTEBOOK

Personal diary handwritten by Maurice Béjart, written in a 1969 diary celebrating the centenary of the birth of Mahatma Gandhi.

52 handwritten leaves, written in red and blue pen in a spiral-bound notebook. This diary features amongst Béjart's very rare, privately owned manuscripts, the choreographer's archives being shared between his house in Brussels, the Béjart foundation in Lausanne and the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie.

The choreographer Maurice Béjart's diary written during the year 1969. An extremely rare collection of thoughts, questions and introspections from the point of view of Hinduism and Buddhist wisdom, which Béjart adopts following his first trip to India in 1967.

The diary is an emblematic testimony of the indo-hippie era of the 1960s, spiritual and artistic renaissance that inspired numerous ballets of the choreographer (*Messe pour le temps présent*, *Bhakti*, *Les Vainqueurs*).

A selection from this diary was published by Maurice Béjart in the second volume of his memoirs (*La Vie de Qui ?* Flammarion, 1996).

During the year 1969, Béjart wrote daily notes in a diary published in memory of Mahatma Gandhi. Fascinated by Hindu mysticism since his trip to India in 1967, he filled in this spiritual journal with numerous mantras and prayers (*Krishna guide mon char, la lumière est au bout du chemin. OM* "Krishna guide my chariot, the light is at the end of the path. OM"; "Le Bouddha est partout présent" "Buddha is everywhere"; "Laisser Dieu entrer, mais comment ouvrir la porte ?" "Let God enter, but how to open the door?") and he calls upon the Hindu deities as well as the Bodhisattvas Mañjuśrī and Tārā - soothing figures of the Buddhist pantheon. Béjart's "période indienne" "Indian period" was particularly rich in choreographic masterpieces, the progress of which can be followed in his diary (Baudelaire at the beginning of the year, the first performance of the *Vainqueurs* in Brussels and the

Quatre fils Amon in Avignon, as well as the filming and screening of his *Indan* ballet *Bhakti*). At the crossroads of New Age and the hippie movement, Béjart's "conversion" is symptomatic of an era that refuses progress and has a thirst for spirituality: "Calcutta n'est pas l'Inde mais notre visage occidental. Ce n'est pas la religion ni la pensée traditionnelle qui est coupable mais le capitalisme. L'Inde pays riche avant la colonisation" "Calcutta is not India, but our western face. It is not religion or traditio-

nal thinking that is to blame, but capitalism. India, a rich country before colonisation.” The Beatle’s visit to the ?shram du guru Maharishi and Ravi Shankar’s concert at Woodstock in 1969 marks the beginning of a real western passion for Indian music and culture, which was decisive in Béjart’s ballets at the time.

In Béjart’s eyes, India presents itself as a place where art and ancestral traditions have not suffered the perversions of positivity. In his creations he seeks to express the spirit of a culture that intimately links the body and the spirit, and in which dance plays a major cosmic and spiritual role. Included in his ballets were Indian dance systems and Vedic songs that were discovered thanks to Alain Daniélou - in 1968 he opened the *Messe du temps présent* with a long *vînâ* solo that lasted fifteen minutes: “Béjart est dans son quart d’heure hindou. Et là-bas, les quarts d’heure hindous, ça peut durer des heures...” “Béjart is in his Hindu quarter-hour. And over there, Hindu quarter-hours, can last for hours...” commented Jean Vilar, director of the Avignon festival. A wave of Indian fashion also passes through the costumes of the *Ballet du XX^e siècle* company: large silk trousers, tunics, jewellery and oriental eyes. In the diary, Béjart states that there is “pas de vérité sans yoga” “no truth without yoga,” an art discovered from an Indian master that can be found in many of his ballets in the form of dance exercises on the barre. He also decides to make *Bjakti* “un acte de Foi” “an act of Faith” by filming himself the ballet choreographer, and during the summer he prepares the *Vainqueurs*, an unusual meeting between Wagner and traditional Indian ragas.

Beyond the prolific artist, we also discover the choreographer’s troubled personality in the diary, in the grips of doubt and melancholy: “état vague d’apesanteur physique et de vide moral. Léthargie ou paresse. Faiblesse. Vertige. Torpeur. Inconscience” “vague state of physical weightlessness and moral emptiness. Lethargy or laziness. Weakness. Dizziness. Drowsiness. Unconsciousness.” Despite successes, Béjart will try to calm his fragile state by meditation and the teachings of Indian prophets and brahmins, which can be found throughout the pages of this diary (Ramana Maharshi, Swami Ramdas, the Dalai-Lama, Apollonius of Tyana). His sometimes thwarted romances with his favourite dancer Jorge Donn monopolise him and plunge him into anxiety - on the eve of the *Vainqueurs* premiere, he writes, “Avant-générale. Chaos. [Jorge] Donn PARTI. Tara absente. Moi perdu.” “Before dress rehearsal. Chaos. [Jorge] Donn DISAPPEARED. Tara absent. Me lost.” Torn between enjoyment and self-control, he tours at a frantic pace with his company *Ballet du XX^e siècle*, first to the Netherlands, then to Milan, Turin and Venice in Italy:

Statue, Trafalgar Square, London—India's greatest
 महात्मा ज्योति बाबा—को स्मरण



JULY 1989						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

AUGUST 1989						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
31	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

28 MONDAY

Let's Saint's Month -
 Let's Celebrate -

29 TUESDAY

Meditation -
 Que la volonté de Dieu soit faite -
 S'evade - On ne peut pas être autre
 que la conscience et l'illusion que on
 a en la vie.

30 WEDNESDAY

31 THURSDAY

1 FRIDAY

2 SATURDAY

3 SUNDAY

1) Dans la nuit, j'ai vu un grand feu de camp -
 Ordon et d'annoncer le jour, de
 dans la nuit - OM -
 Rong-fu, Rhogva, Raja, Jambhik -
 Reton un spectacle - Travail - OM -
 Am - Chantre - Dancer - Etre -
 François Rando - Parole - OM -

Death is at any time blessed, it is twice blessed for a warrior who dies for his cause.
 मृत्यु ही सर्व काल में आती है, और वह दो बार आती है: एक तो वह जो अपने देश के लिए मरता है, वह दो बार है।

“Je quitte Venise complètement asservi à la paresse au sexe et à la facilité et pourtant étrange bien-être de la brute qui a bu et baisé” “I leave Venice completely enslaved to laziness, to sex and to ease, and yet a strange well-being of the brute who drank and fucked[RE1] .” However, these happy moments did not go so far as to satisfy Béjart, for whom “Joie a un arrière-goût de mort” “Joy has a dead aftertaste” despite the “vie de travail et de discipline” “life of work and discipline” that he establishes during this richly creative year. At the end of his life, Béjart will look back with humour on his Indian escapades and the resolutely sombre tone of his diary: “Je ne peux pas m’empêcher de rire de cet idiot qui pleure et qui geint, alors qu’il créait des ballets en grand nombre [...] Quand je pense qu’à la fin de ce journal de 1969 je songeais résolument à la retraite !” “I can’t stop myself laughing at this idiot who cries and who moans, even though he created a great number of ballets [...] When I think that at the end of this diary in 1969 I was firmly considering retirement!”

An extremely rare document retracing the meeting of the East and the West in Maurice Béjart’s personal life and choreographic work. This diary embodies an era of counter-culture and cultural syncretism that had long-lasting effects on avant-garde European ballet.

[+ see more](#)

9. BÉJART Maurice (BALANCHINE Georges)

Manuscript, tribute to Georges Balanchine

N. D. [CA. 1983], 21x27,5 CM, TWO LEAVES

A handwritten manuscript by Maurice Béjart, 40 lines written in blue ink on two leaves stapled together.

A poignant eulogy for the choreographer Georges Balanchine, written by his fellow Maurice Béjart some days after Balanchine’s disappearance on 30th April 1983.

Although stylistically they were far apart, both Balanchine and Béjart’s creations revolutionised the art of dance. On Balanchine’s death in 1983, Béjart wrote this moving tribute, which begins as follows: “Where are you tonight Georges Balanchine? I want to write to you and, although the radio, the press and the media are saying that you have disappeared, I know that, like the cats you love so much, you have nine lives and that right now you will be choreographing Stravinsky’s last work or such a stellar concert to that we poor earthlings still don’t know.” He, who was known as “Mr B,” founder of the New York City Ballet, was responsible for ballet’s renewal through its clarity, its breakdown and its relationship to the music. Béjart

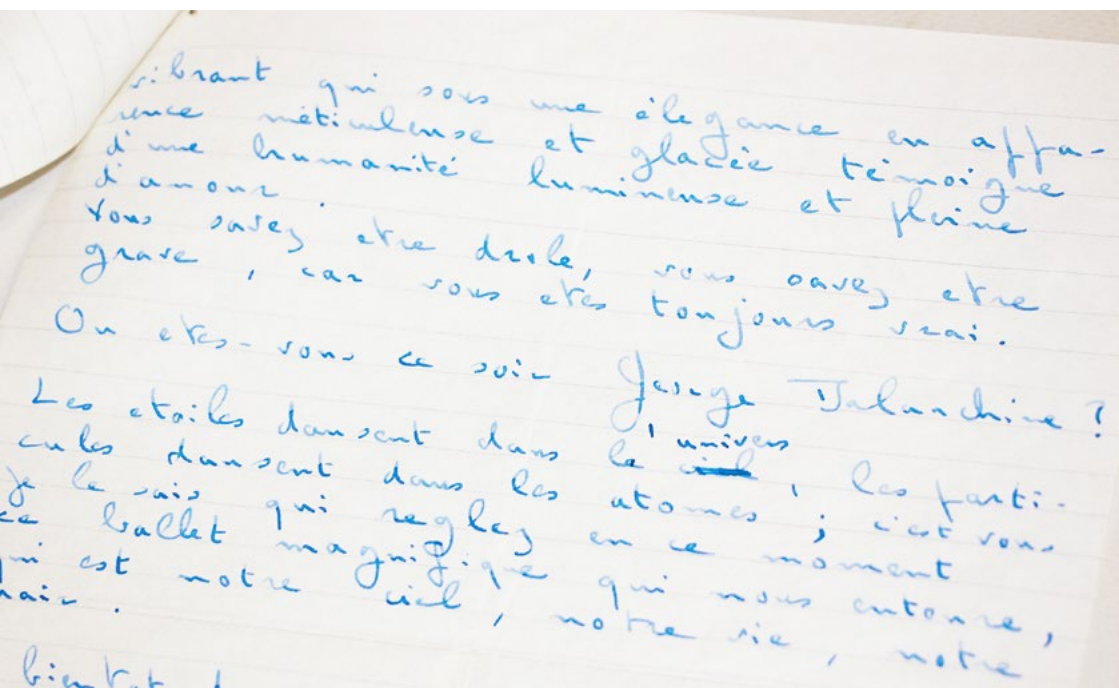
and he shared a taste for costume simplicity, and both advocated in their choreographies the uncompromising purity of the lines.

Béjart summarises the paradox that was Balanchine in a few lines: "but I know that you are the only choreographer because you are unique, always imitated but inimitable, the most classic, the most modern, the most rigorous, the most free, the most abstract, the most lyrical, the most inventive, the most musical, the most precise, the most unusual, the most obvious."

He finishes of this admirable eulogy with a beautiful farewell: "See you soon then, because we have so much to learn."

Provenance: Maurice Béjart's personal archives.

[+ see more](#)



ribrant qui sont une élégance en affa-
rence méticuleuse et glacée témoigne
d'une humanité lumineuse et pleine
d'amour.
Vous savez être dure, vous savez être
grace, car vous êtes toujours vrai.
Ou êtes-vous ce soir
Les étoiles dansent dans l'univers
ciles dansent dans les atomes ; c'est vous
je le sais qui réglez en ce moment
ce ballet magnifique qui nous entoure,
qui est notre ciel, notre vie, notre
bien-être.

10. BÉJART Maurice (NIJINSKY Vaslav)

Handwritten preparatory notes for the “Nijinski: clown de dieu” performance: texts from Nijinski’s diary.

N. D. [CA. 1971], 21x29,7 CM, 3 LEAVES

Handwritten manuscript from the choreographer Maurice Béjart.

Three leaves, 60 lines written in black ink.

Maurice Béjart’s handwritten preparatory notes for the show in tribute to dancer Nijinski, entitled, “Nijinski: clown de dieu.” Here Béjart lists Nijinski’s diary extracts that were intended to be read during the performance, indicating their place in the ballet.

In 1971, Maurice Béjart created the “Clown de Dieu,” a ballet dedicated to Vaslav Nijinski, a famous Russian dancer and choreographer of Polish origin. The work retraces a young man’s slow descent into hell, in search of spirituality, love and truth; it also makes reference to Nijinski’s most famous roles in his short and dazzling career: “Le Spectre de la rose”, “Shéhérazade”, “Petrouchka”, and “L’Après-midi d’un faune”.

The ballet was performed by his faithful company Ballet du XXe Siècle, using music by Tchaikovsky and the electroacoustic composer Pierre Henry. The choreographer thus hoped to contribute to the legacy of this dancer, who went mad in the 1920s, being remembered for his legendary physical grace.

During the performance, Béjart makes use of extracts from Nijinski’s own diary, which were recited by Laurent Terzieff at the time of its creation at the Forest National sports hall in Brussels. In this work manuscript, the choreographer copies each quotation, indicating its position in the ballet (“**before pas de deux**”), and the narrator’s intonation (“**3 times Very loudly, mid-range, then a whisper**”).

Nijinski, then on the verge of madness, had written this diary, incorporating his mystical reflections and introspection during the 1918-1919 winter, shortly before he was detained. Béjart will qualify this in an interview about “upsetting human and social cases” and this also inspired him with the title of the ballet, “Clown of God.”

The passages selected by Béjart in this manuscript return to the happy times in the dancer’s life - his marriage to Romola de Pulszky (“**The love I experienced when getting married was not sensual. It was eternal**”) and they evoke the tragic destiny of a man whose sensitivity caused his loss: “**I am flesh and feeling, God in flesh and feeling... I am a Dove.**”
Provenance: Maurice Béjart’s personal archives.

[+ see more](#)

3) 5.

celui qui meurt

Très fort -
Nogent -

Je suis l'âme
et sentiment sans l'âme
intelligente - Je suis chair
et Dieu en chair et sentiment...
(J.P.35)

Colombe -
était présent bien avant que
il ait aucune mécanique - L'acier
comme l'acier, mais terrible
l'acier et j'ai peur. Sans
pourquoi, j'avais l'impression
qu'il allait détruire les vivants -
(J.P.42)

Je suis un être qui déborde d'amour
Je suis amour et ne tombe ni en
Transe d'amour - Je suis un
être qui déborde d'amour -

1.

le désir d'en posséder,
l'amour, et l'envie
masses de cette chose
essentielle l'argent, de
vies pour leur
les empêcher de
(J.P.46)

religieux de laisser
me - moi donc
de pouvoir me

(130)

avec E.H.
dans

me
si je
ous

ant, e

se

, avant l'il

nt un caractère d'éternité -
que
n'était pas
d'éternité -

parler de
amateur
on !

J.P.144)

à R
ote la, en
le Paquet

Il me
J. n'était
Nove

Je lui
les jours
Il

officiers, les
annon
ais

11. BÉJART Maurice (NIJINSKY Vaslav)

*Handwritten manuscript notebook for the performance
"Nijinski: clown de dieu"*

N. D. [CA. 1971], 17x22 CM, ONE NOTEBOOK WITH SOFTCOVER

Handwritten manuscript from the choreographer Maurice Béjart.

47 pages written in black marker and blue pen, with a drawing in pencil and black marker.

Precious notebook comprising notes written by Maurice Béjart for his show, a tribute to dancer Nijinsky, entitled, "Nijinski: clown de dieu." It has a handwritten dedication to Nijinsky's interpreter, Jorge Donn, the famous star dancer of the Ballet du XXe Siècle and Maurice Béjart's lover.

In 1971, Maurice Béjart created the "Clown de Dieu," a ballet dedicated to Vaslav Nijinsky, a dance and choreography genius who had ten years of shinning career within Diaghilev's Ballet Russes before he turned permanently mad. In this manuscript notebook, a true logbook and choreographic score of the ballet, Béjart details, with extreme precision, the work's sequences, the dances and Tchaikovsky and Pierre Henry's musical extracts. The notebook also serves as a collection of his many questions surrounding the choice of music, the dance steps, as well as his influences ("je ne sais pourquoi c'est toujours à Petrouchka que je pense le plus," "I don't know why it's always Petrouchka that I think of the most"). Béjart dedicates several pages to the deep meaning that he intends to give to each scene, dwelling on Nijinsky's complex and bright personality. On the back of the cover, we can see a handwritten dedication "à J.D," "to J.D," Jorge Donn, his favourite dancer and lover, to whom he entrusted the lead-role of Nijinsky in the Clown de Dieu.

In creating this ballet, Maurice Béjart hoped to contribute to Nijinsky's legacy, a sacred dance figure whose talent for choreography had been forgotten. In the notebook he confesses his desire to pay tribute to Nijinsky's modernity: "surtout abandonner complètement la danse classique. Penser sans cesse au Nijinsky du Sacre du Printemps," "especially to completely abandon classical dance. Constantly thinking of Nijinsky in Sacre du Printemps". The Clown de Dieu evokes Nijinsky's hallucinatory mystical quest after his divorce from Sergei Diaghilev - the Pygmalion-choreographer worked the dancer's inexhaustible natural gift to the point of unreason. In the notebook, the character Diaghilev is described as "dieu

12)

Tours.
PAOZO

→ 2 AIR
"le danseur
sans maître"

Encore le cercle - Obsession.

13)

Detire' - Ecarte'

Certainement écartelé - la
mort du regicide FOLIE

Ne pas chercher à organiser, à
construire, mais accumuler
des visions où IL existera puis
qu'il existe en moi

Trouver les rapports entre les 5
personnages. (et leurs doubles)
les 5 doums.)

- le père - diaghilev - le diable" "god - the father - diaghilev - the devil," and is represented by an enormous mannequin with a threatening look. Faithful to his ambition of creating a full performance, Béjart uses extracts from Nijinsky's own diary, written during the 1918-1919 winter when his mental state is starting to go seriously downhill. These extracts, of which we find several examples in Béjart's notebook, are recited over Tchaikovsky's *Symphonie Pathétique* and over Pierre Henry's tangible music. Béjart carefully copies the diary extracts, their incoherent mix of autobiographical details and reflections on existence: "Plus d'atrocités! Je veux le paradis sur terre, moi, un homme en qui Dieu s'est incarné," "No more atrocities! I want paradise on earth, me, a man in whom God is incarnate." During the course of one sentence, Béjart wonders: "(mais a-t-il été fou ? Je ne crois pas)," "(but was he insane? I don't think so)."

With the "Clown de Dieu", the choreographer also produces a famous historical retrospective and allows the audience to discover some of the great moments of the era of Diaghilev's Russian ballets. He includes four of the Nijinsky's most successful and well-known performances in the show: "Le Spectre de la rose", "Shéhérezade", "Petrouchka" and "Le Faune", each one performed by a different dancer who comes to haunt the hero. These are mentioned several times in the choreographer's notebook: "le corps de Petrouchka, le sourire du Spectre, Lourd comme le faune, léger et élastique comme le nègre de Shéhérazade," "Petrouchka's body, Spectre's smile, heavy like the faune, light and elastic like the negro of Shéhérazade." The Ballets Russes are represented on the stage by a circus under the high authority of Diaghilev, performed by "5 clowns," while a female figure - Nijinsky's wife, the "nymph, sultane, Poupée et Danseuse romantique," "nymph, sultana, romantic doll and dancer," is a reminder of the happy times in the dancer's life.

The ballet became one of Béjart's great successes after his *Messe pour le temps présent*, created four years earlier at the Avignon festival. On the centenary of Nijinsky's birth in 1989, Béjart created a new version of "Clown de dieu" in Milan, limited to his two favourite dancers, marking his ultimate tribute to the genius dancer and choreographer.

An extremely rare document retracing the creation of the Maurice Béjart's masterpieces, "Nijinski: clown de dieu."

Provenance: Maurice Béjart's personal archives.

[+ see more](#)

12. DURAS Marguerite

Thanks signed by
Marguerite Duras to the
choreographer Maurice
Béjart

JANUARY 1970,

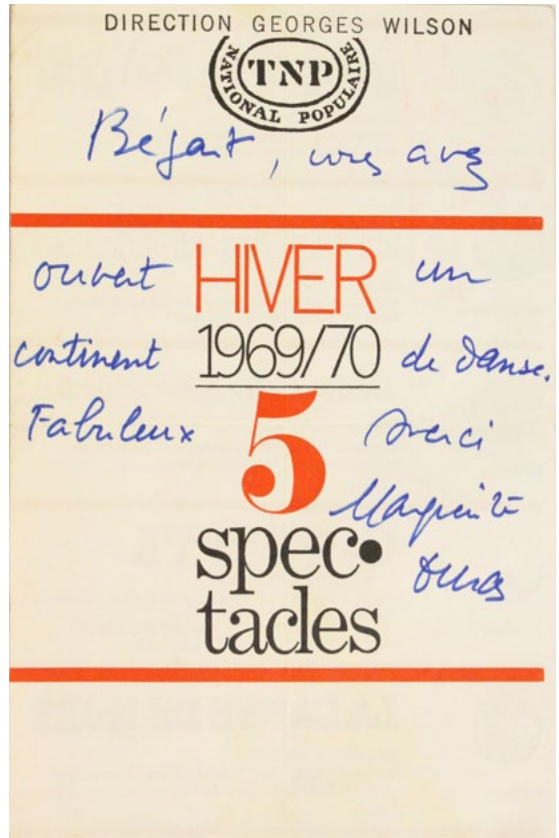
13,5x21 CM, ONE LEAVE

Thanks signed by Marguerite Duras to the choreographer Maurice Béjart, concerning a national popular theatre brochure, dating from winter 1969-1970. She addresses the warm thanks: "Béjart, vous avez ouvert un continent de danse. Fabuleux merci" "Béjart you have opened a dance continent. Spectacular thanks."

In January 1970, Maurice Béjart had brought the ballets "A la recherche de...", "Ni fleurs ni couronnes," "Le voyage," and "Messe pour le temps présent," to the heights of the national popular theatre - today the Théâtre du Palais de Chaillot. Marguerite Duras addresses her thanks to him regarding a prospectus of national theatre, in which she stands alongside Béjart for her play *Amante anglaise*, which premiered in November of the previous year.

Beautiful, very visual, handwritten piece.

Provenance: Maurice Béjart's personal archives.



[+ see more](#)

13. KLOSSOWSKI Pierre

Handwritten letter signed by the writer Pierre Klossowski addressed to Maurice Béjart

PARIS 4 MARCH 1991, 21x29,7 CM, ONE LEAF

Handwritten letter signed by the writer Pierre Klossowski addressed to Maurice Béjart, dated 4 March 1991.

29 lines written in black ink on one leaf.

Just like a poem, this beautiful and passionate letter was written in a long column of text. Klossowski congratulates the choreographer on his autobiography *Mort subite* published the same year and is amazed that Béjart's literary tastes are so similar to his own.

In the letter, Pierre Klossowski highlights the affinities that link him to Béjart. He devotes a long passage to *Mort subite*, Béjart's last book about his famous father, the philosopher Gaston Berger: "**La miraculeuse Anwesenheit [présence] d'un tel père suscitée par un tel fils ! A vous lire, je ressens cette célébration dans sa piété filiale toute de joyeuse certitude, à la cadence goethéenne du *Roi des Aulnes* [...]**" "The miraculous *Anwesenheit* [presence] of such a father sparked off by such a son! To read you, I feel this celebration in his filial piety, all of joyful certainty, to the same rhythm as Goethe's *The Erlking* [...]" He brings up their shared passion for the poet Rainer Maria Rilke, before mentioning an old collaborative project: "**Je n'oublie guère votre visite [...] ni votre idée d'un ballet autour d'un *Baphomet invisible*...**" "I hardly forget your visit [...] nor your idea of a ballet based on *Baphomet invisible*..." Several years earlier, the *Baphomet* had already been the object of an abandoned theatre project with the Biennale de Venise. The letter finishes with an allusion to Klossowski's "**travail pictural exclusif**" "**exclusive pictorial work**": his huge production of drawings that kept him busy until the end of his life.

A letter of admiration by Pierre Klossowski concerning Béjart's writing talent and his literary influences.

Provenance: Maurice Béjart's personal archives.

[+ see more](#)

14. KLOSSOWSKI Pierre

Handwritten letter signed by the writer Pierre Klossowski addressed to Maurice Béjart

PARIS 5 AUGUST 1969, 21x27 CM, 3 LEAVES

Handwritten letter signed by the writer Pierre Klossowski addressed to Maurice Béjart, dated 5 August 1969.

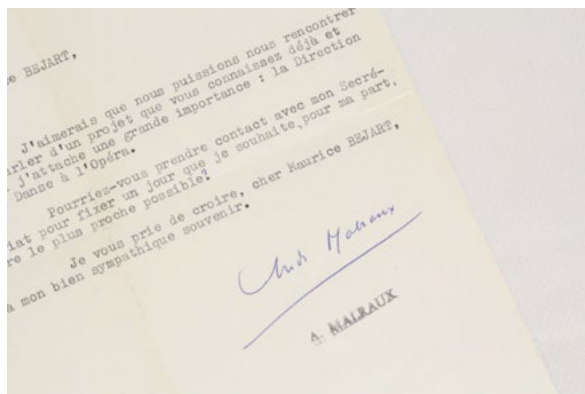
58 lines written in black ink on three leaves.

Interesting letter regarding choreographer Maurice Béjart's project to adapt Klossowski's *Baphomet* into a ballet.

Klossowski had met Maurice Béjart through a mutual friend, the writer and film maker François Weyergans. The idea of a ballet based on Klossowski's book *Le Baphomet* was born out of this meeting. This medieval baroque tale, published four years earlier, recounted the mystical vicissitudes and the religious divides of the Templar. The writer, obsessed by the project, confided his doubts about such an undertaking, which seemed impossible to achieve due to the many pitfalls: "Plus je m'évertue à esquisser quelques ébauches de synopsis, et plus sûrement je m'égare [...] je n'arrive pas à sortir d'une visualisation théâtrale" "The more I strive to sketch out the draft of the synopsis, the more I lose my way [...] I am not able to escape a theatrical visualisation." There are fascinating passages questioning the relative permeability between the literary text and the ballet scene: "It now seems to me that it is not the visual picture but the verbal thread - the movement of the words and their developments that would present the characteristics of the characters that only your expertise can reinvent as you please!" At the end of the letter he writes a list of the three scenes to adapt and shares an idea for a very original production: "(J'avais imaginé que l'on assisterait à l'animation de la statue de Ste Thérèse du Bernin - le page simulant la statue - donc jouant la moniale pour figurer le Baphomet - mais voilà encore du " théâtre ") "(I had imagined that we would see the animation of the Ste Thérèse du Bernin statue - the page resembling the statue - therefore casting the nun to represent Baphomet - well, even more "theatre")."

Despite Klossowski's efforts, the collaboration project with Béjart never happened. Nevertheless, the two artists remained close, and their correspondence, of which we still found examples dated 1991, testifies to their longstanding friendship.

[+ see more](#)



15. MALRAUX André

Letter typed and signed from André Malraux to Maurice Béjart

29 JANVIER 1969, 21x27 CM, ONE LEAF

Letter typed and signed from André Malraux to Maurice Béjart. One leaf headed by the Ministre d'Etat chargé des Affaires Culturelles (Ministry of Culture), bearing a stamp from 29 January 1969.

André Malraux hopes to place choreographer Maurice Béjart in charge of the Ballet de l'Opéra in Paris.

Béjart was at the time very well established in Brussels, as part of his troop *Ballet du XX^e siècle*, performing at the Théâtre de la Monnaie, led by his friend Maurice Huisman. Following a report by Jean Vilar to reform the Opéra in Paris, Malraux takes the decision to call Béjart back to France: **"J'aimerais que nous puissions nous rencontrer pour parler d'un projet que vous connaissez déjà et auquel j'attache une grande importance: la Direction de la Danse à l'Opéra"** **"I would like us to be able to meet to talk about a project that you already know and to which I attach a great significance: the Management of Dance at the Opéra."**

Malraux's idea was to name Boulez and Jean Vilar alongside him, thus forming a solid avant-garde, resolutely oriented towards the future of the arts. The choreographer declined the offer and continued his creations in Belgium. He becomes no less an admirer of Malraux to whom he will dedicate, fifteen years later, a ballet using Beethoven's music, which he entitled *"Malraux ou la métamorphose des dieux."*

A rare testimony to Malraux's request that was not fulfilled by Béjart - he stayed in Belgium for ten years before heading to Lausanne.

Provenance: Maurice Béjart's personal archives.

[+ see more](#)

450

Love

~~Johnnie~~