



## Opéra de Nice, Guru: between sea and death, the irrepressible, nauseating force of control.



"The victim of mental manipulation doesn't know he's a victim. The walls of his prison are invisible to him, and he thinks he is free". So wrote one of Britain's most famous novelists, Aldous Huxley, author of *Brave New World*.





Dominique Jaussein

<sup>1</sup>Xavier Maurel, writer, scriptwriter and director of some twenty shows, drama teacher, assistant director of the Conservatoire National Supérieur d'Art Dramatique and author of several films for television and cinema, and **Laurent Petitgirard**, composer, conductor and secretary of the **Académie des Beaux Arts**. Two men steeped in culture to deal with a subject that chills the blood: that of a sect isolated on a desert island far from the world, where a "charismatic" guru uses psychological coercion and mental manipulation to obtain everything from his followers, until he convinces them that "what lives too long will become rotten" and that "true life is death, a sublime destiny for which it is advisable to take the path of transparency".

In a deliberately haunting, repetitive language designed to brainwash enslaved disciples, the grip never lets up until the extreme, inescapable outcome. From the sea to death.





Dominique Jaussein

Armando Noguera, whom we have often appreciated in the operetta repertoire (so formative because you have to be an excellent actor!): Danilo in *La Veuve joyeuse* in 2012 at the Opéra d'Avignon, Raoul de Gardefeu in *La Vie parisienne* in 2015 at the Opéra de Marseille, Gabriel von Eisenstein in *La Chauve-souris* in 2017 at the Folies d'O in Montpellier, gives a stunning performance here (fascinating actor-singer) as this uncompromising, extremist predatory Guru. It's true that since then, much darker roles have come to lend the right dramatic color to this

The Guru is the "priest" of a sect: Eugène Onéguine at the Paris Opéra, Guillaume Tell in Melbourne, Simon Boccanegra at the Dijon Opéra and Hamlet at the Massy Opéra. This Guru is the one who can only be the vector of an irrepressible conviction: "*I am the superior force*" and "*We are here to find the truth... to accept the ultimate act and leave one life for another, immortal and sublime*".





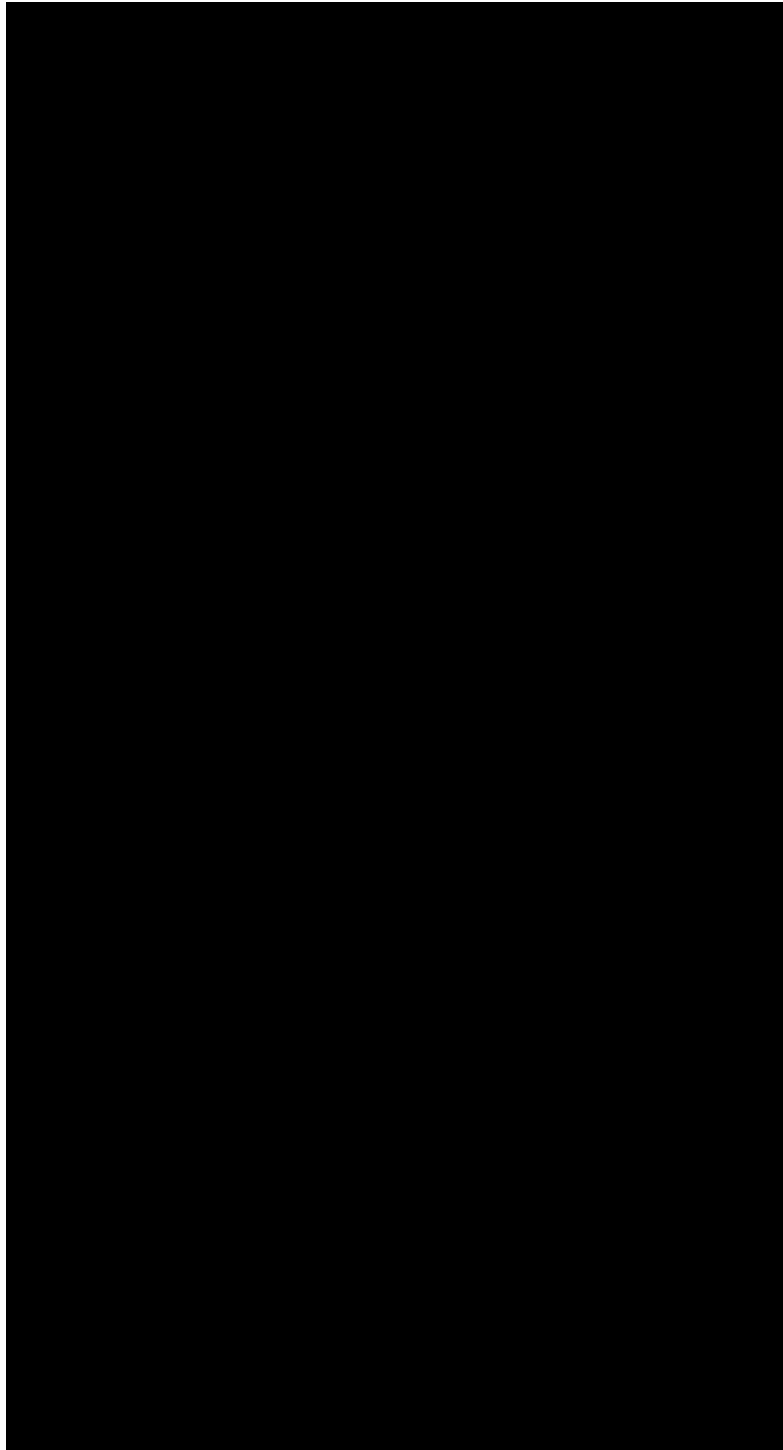


Dominique Jaussein

Opposite him is Marie, the only one in revolt, the only one who doesn't sing but cuts through all the other voices because she speaks loud and clear with the violence of courage, with the conviction of the absolute: "*He is wrong about everything, he is evil, ruin and destruction*".

Even in the face of violence, she follows through on her unyielding resolve. <sup>2</sup>This solitary rebel is ardently embodied by Sonia Petrovna a dancer and actress who, in the film *Ludwig*, played the role of Sophie of Wittelsbach, Duchess of Bavaria (sister of Elisabeth, Empress of Austria), who almost married the insane King Ludwig II of Bavaria (Decidedly!...).





Dominique Jaussein

This premiere of an opera at La Cuisine (a co-production of the Théâtre National de Nice and the Opéra de Nice) takes the form of a semi-scenic version, with the Philharmonic Orchestra on stage and a beach surrounded by bushes in the foreground, giving the show a cinematic feel with a screen at the top of the stage. The backwash of the ocean is followed by the protagonists expressing their emotions.



respectively the blind submission of their destiny, the despair of their fate or the conviction of their power.

Muriel Mayette Holz's masterful direction is evident in both the protagonists (Anaïs Constant's touching Iris and Marie-Ange Todorovitch's moving Marthe) and the chorus.

### **Christian Jarniat**

February 20, 2024

1 **Laurent Petitgirard**'s output includes some twenty symphonic works and as many film scores, fifteen chamber music works and two operas.

2 Sonia Petrovna is the wife of composer **Laurent Petitgirard**.

Musical direction: **Laurent Petigirard**

Stage direction: **Muriel Mayette-Holtz** Sets

and costumes: **Rudy Sabounghi** Video

production: **Julien Soulier** Cast:

Guru: **Armando Noguera**

Marie: **Sonia Petrovna**

Iris: **Anaïs Constans**

Victor: **Frédéric Diquero**

Carelli: **Nika Guliashvili**

Marthe : **Marie-Ange Todorovitch**

Six followers: **Rachel Duckett ; Noelia Ibañez ; Aviva Manenti ;Raphael Jardin ;**

**Eduard Ferenczi Gurban ; Trystan Daguerre**

**Nice Opera Chorus Nice**

**Philharmonic Orchestra**

