

Wild

*An equestrian and choreographic creation
by Karine Saporta*



© Nicolas Gastard

FONDAZIONE 
FABBRICA EUROPA
PER LE ARTI CONTEMPORANEE

Wild

Design, production and choreography: Karine Saporta

Horse rider / dancer : *Eva Schakmundès*

Dancer/musician : *Jean Kouassi Konan*

Technical direction / horses : *Compagnie Salam Toto*

Scenography : *Valerio Ferrari*

Lighting : *Alessandro Ruggiero*

Costumes : *Michèle Tarot*

Design and staging of the set: *Fabbrica Europa /*

Saverio Cona, Giordano Acquaviva

Coproduction : *Compagnie Karine Saporta*

Fondazione Fabbrica Europa

Fondazione Pontedera Teatro

*Osservatorio per le Arti Contemporanee,
Florence*

A Project is born:

A few years ago, inspired by the work of the *Zingaro* equestrian theater's most dazzling horse rider of the past ten years, which is both raw and refined, the choreographer Karine Saporta undertook to write a short film which she entitled *La bête*. The film won the France 3 award for the best choreographic short film screenplay. At the time, however, the choreographer and rider's schedules didn't coincide and the short film production was shelved.

The horse rider Eva Schakmundès has now left *Zingaro* and is finally free to make her own choices and schedule. She has currently set up a ten-horse stable and settled in the Midi-Pyrenees region of France, where she has just created her *Tonneau – Manège*, an astonishing semi-mobile theater-in-the-round.

A few months ago, the choreographer and rider met up again and were very keen to carry out a dual project together involving both a cinematographic and performing art event.

The moving script of *La bête* gave rise to a feature film synopsis whose screenplay is in the process of being written.

In the meantime, it is an equestrian and choreographic performance that Karine Saporta will create in the spring of 2007.



Equestrian and choreographic research

This choreographic duo will be built on the relationship between two performers: a horse rider and an African contemporary dancer (also trained in Côte d'Ivoire traditional dancing) with three different horses. The number of horses selected matches Karine Saporta's three different approaches to the creation of "Wild".

These involve:

1. *Ground work* (the dancer, horse rider and horse dance together in the enclosed arena performing ring).

The work, initiated a few years ago with Eva Schakmundès, is groundbreaking. The energy produced by human movement elicits a response from the animal which is gradually incorporated into the dance throughout the ongoing rehearsals.

A strong emotional and physical relationship between the horse and the performer is required.

We are far from Dressage. The relationship with the animal passes through a multitude of affects and not a simple "domineering/dominated" position.

The dancers and the horse interact, jumping, pacing, flipping, and tumbling ... together.

The work consists in creating a score from such impulses.



2. *Dance work with mounted horses.*

Haute Ecole maestro and virtuoso Eva Schakmundès knows how to obtain from the horses she rides an extremely elegant dance in perfect harmony with the purest classical routines developed through her particularly erudite and elegant style. Karine Saporta's hopes and dreams are to use her own artistic impact and contemporary choreographic skills to recompose this equestrian choreographic dialogue so as to produce new dances.

This is why she is currently devoting a great deal of her time and energy to the study of this approach. The idea is for the dancer's steps on the ground to be answered by those of the mounted horse in as complex and erudite a composition as possible.



3. *A gymnastic trick-riding performance*

The rider in this performance has engraved an indelible image of breathtaking glamour and yet absolutely modern gymnastic trick-riding in the minds of many *Zingaro* spectators.

Trained in traditional acrobatic techniques, this ex-Fratellini horse "ballerina" found the inspiration with Bartabas that enabled her to develop her true wild and absolutely untamed nature. Her body wrapped in her superb flowing hair reaching down to her thighs, Eva has fashioned a rough and

sensual technique over time that has nothing in common with passé, old-fashioned trick-riding stunts.

Inspired by her life-long fascination for speed and acrobatics, Karine Saporta is sure to want develop this aspect of her performer's artistry.

Jean Kouassi, Eva Schakmundès's partner, will oppose his earthy power to Eva Schakmundès's airborne pirouettes.

Central theme: horses in art and painting

The choreographer is driven by the desire to preserve an as-rough-as-possible visual environment, in order to emphasize the force and precision of the creative gestures.

The artistry and poetic value of the performance lies essentially in the positioning of the bodies, those of the man, the woman and the horse... horses. The same applies to the positioning between dance and equestrian performance...

However, colored elements will gradually come to highlight the denouement.

The horse, traditionally represented through drawings and paintings, will become the pictorial medium here.

The first horse to appear will wear an ivory dress sheet.

The opening act, which stages all "natural" hues (sand/raw silk), setting the tone and evoking the canvas "to be painted", will gradually change.

Karine Saporta's will work step by step to lead the performance towards a furious musical crescendo and visual apotheosis. With pictorial and striking body movements, the two performers will splatter a special paint (used in India to color horses) on the horses' dress sheets and their own bodies.



Karine Saporta

is one of the most prominent and yet “unusual” figures in the recent history of Western contemporary dance.

Her acclaimed “mythical” choreographies include: *La Fiancée aux Yeux de Bois*, *Les Taureaux de Chimène*, *La Princesse de Milan*, *Le Bal du Siècle*, *La Belle au Bois Dormant*, *Des Larmes Ecarlates*, etc.

Karine Saporta is also a visual artiste, photographer and short film director.

Her company has performed on all the most prestigious stages worldwide.

She has staged two dramatic productions, one for the Comédie Française (*Feu le Music-Hall* by Colette) and *Phaëton*, a Lully opera for the Lyon Opera House.



Director of the *Centre Chorégraphique de Caen Basse-Normandie* from September 1988 to June 2004, Karine Saporta has founded and directs her own company: Compagnie Karine Saporta.

The Compagnie Karine Saporta is based in Ile de France (Paris and St Denis) and will soon be equipped with two new offbeat workspaces to match the daring, experimental approach characteristic of Karine Saporta.

Saporta is particularly interested in crossovers between “archaic” dance forms from around the world, “extreme” body language and contemporary creations.

The “Auteur–studio–Compagnie Karine Saporta” in St Denis (currently being renovated) will be the dance company’s “factory”.

Strong emphasis will be placed on research, transmission and urban work in progress. The “Dansoir”, a semi-mobile theater in the round, is scheduled to open at the beginning of the 2007/2008 season at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

“Dansoir” is a cross-over performance and meeting space designed to celebrate all visual arts, textual and body language possibilities.

Eva Schakmundès

Her taste for travel started when she was still very young. At the age of 11, Eva Schakmundès set out on the expedition of a lifetime towards the North African deserts and Greece on board boats and donkey caravans... School for her was the *Ecole en Bateau*.

Once back in France, 15-year-old Eva Schakmundès joined the Ecole National du Cirque Annie Fratellini. There she learned acrobatics, trapeze, high wire walking and equestrian acrobatic trick riding while undergoing full dance training at the same time.

Years of touring in well-known circuses followed, including the Jean Richard and Annie Fratellini circuses.

After working with Alwin Nicolaïs in his first choreographic production of *Schema* at the Paris Opera and Jean-Louis Martin-Barbaz in his first production of *Lola Montès* at the *CDN Nord Pas-de-Calais*, she joined the *Equestrian Theater Zingaro* in 1988. She played the leading female role in the feature film *Mazeppa* directed by Bartabas.

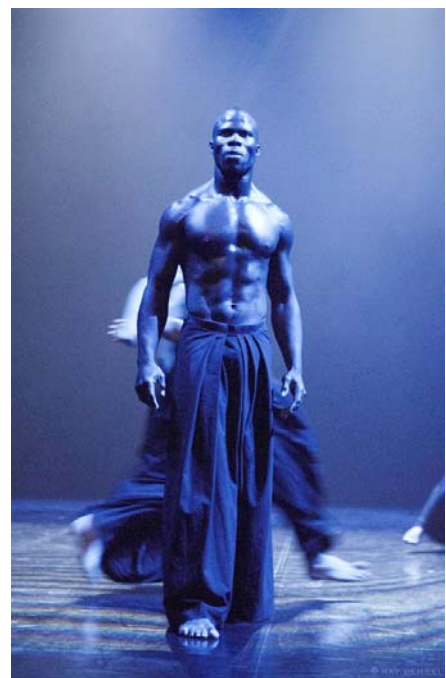
Today she runs her own Horse and Adventure Theater, *Salam Toto Compagnie*.



Jean Kouassi Konan

Jean Kouassi, a traditional African dancer of the *Lakimado Dance Company* in Abidjan, decided to train as a contemporary dancer. He then went on to win the contemporary dance gold medal at the 3ème *Jeux de la francophonie* in Madagascar.

Since then, he has performed with choreographers such as George Momboy, Anne-Marie Porras, etc. It is as a dancer, singer and flutist that he took part in the musical comedy *The Gladiators* with Elie Chouraqui.



Schedule:

- *October 2006:*
Beginning of work period (design of the project, solo training)
- *January 2007:*
Beginning of rehearsals (duo)
- *February-April 2007:*
Design and creation: Props/Costumes/Music
- *April 2007:*
Resumption of rehearsals
- *May 2007:*
End of rehearsals: Creation



Technical conditions:

Stage dimensions: minimum 12m diameter

Front stage: 12 x 15m minimum

Floor: sand or specific carpet produced by the
Compagnie Karine SAPORTA

Lighting: natural or performance light

Outdoors: preferably in the countryside (arena, stud
farm, etc.)

Indoors: under a big top or the Tonneau-Manège
Alternatively, on a theater stage with a 15m
minimum opening.

