

ROOM

**Sydney
Festival
2023**

Photo by Manon Bollery



ROOM

By James Thierrée | France
AUSTRALIAN EXCLUSIVE

Roslyn Packer Theatre
11 – 25 January
100 minutes (no interval)

CAST AND CREDITS

Created, directed and performed by James Thierrée
Original music by James Thierrée

With
Anne-Lise Binard
Ching-Ying Chien
Mathias Durand
Samuel Dutertre
Hélène Escriva
Steve Eton
Maxime Flaa
Nora Horvath
Sarah Manesse
Alessio Negro

Lighting design James Thierrée, Lucie Delorme,
Samuel Bovet

Sound design Lilian Herrouin, Loic Lambert, Jean
Francois Monnier

Costume design James Thierree

Costume realisation Laurette Picheret, Sabine Schlemmer

Technical manager Rodolphe Padel

Musical assistant Mathias Durand

Production assistants Felicitas Willems, Philippe Royer

Scenery and props construction

Olivier Achez, Mathieu Fernandez, Christelle Naddéo,
Félix Page, Sam Dutertre & Anthony Nicolas, Thomas
Delot, Joanny Guillaumin

Scenic painting Marie Rossetti

Stage technicians

Samuel Dutertre, Mathieu Fernandez, Christelle
Naddéo, Félix Page, Laurette Picheret, Alessio Negro

Administration La Compagnie du Hanneton,
Benoîte Gillet

Production and coordination La Compagnie du
Hanneton, Emmanuelle Taccard and Hélène Dubois

Production representative

Quaternaire: Sarah Ford, Anne McDougall,
Felicitas Willems

Tour manager Anne McDougall

Technical consultant Violaine Crespin

A NOTE FROM THE CREATOR

Room
Is a place
It is a place
Where is a place where I
Up is a place where we
Loom in a room
Rewinding the loop
Minding what all hours are made for
More for
For more
For more ...
Roots in the roof
The upscale beat bites and disarray
As I linger on on backwards end
Spraying paint and preying faint
I gamble on what all our hands can keep
Holding your land
Through a place in the maze I call it my room.

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PROGRAMME NOTE

Speaking to a Sydney Morning Herald journalist in 2002, ahead of his Australian debut in the 2003 Sydney Festival, James Thierrée described his work as something that “provokes thoughts, but it doesn’t impose thoughts”. More than twenty years later that succinct summation still applies. Thierrée’s new production, *ROOM*, the latest in a line of remarkable works from his La Compagnie du Hanne-ton, continues to resist the urge to teach, preach or explain itself. The worlds Thierrée conjures on stage have become more elaborate, his shows more technically ambitious, but the openness to interpretation remains as strong as ever.

ROOM is the fifth production from La Compagnie du Hanne-ton to play in Sydney Festival, a relationship that began with *The Junebug Symphony* in 2003. In its wake, *Bright Abyss* (2006), *Au Revoir Parapluie* (2008) and *Tabac Rouge* (2015) were all acclaimed for their theatricality, imaginative daring and emotional impact.

Thierrée is a lifelong creature of the theatre, making his stage debut aged four in the circus company run by his parents. Aged fifteen, he made his film debut in Peter Greenaway’s 1991 art house movie hit *Prospero’s Books* and in 1998 he founded La Compagnie du Hanne-ton.

‘Hanne-ton’, you ask? It’s a colourful beetle of a scarab family, sometimes called a Junebug, and it’s no spoiler to say you’ll meet this spiky, iridescent creature in your encounter with *ROOM*. In French, ‘Hanne-ton’ also means something akin to the English “scatterbrain” – a nod (perhaps) to Thierrée’s delight in making the kind of left-field imaginative leaps and unexpected visual associations that make his work so playful.

Thierrée’s whimsical sense of humour seeps into each production the company stages. When asked to explain the meaning of his *Au Revoir Parapluie*, he elaborated thus: “It’s a story about a story (about a story about a story about a story...) that cannot be told.” Another Hanne-ton show, *The Toad Knew*, apparently takes its title from a conversation James

had with an amphibian when he was a child – something that became a family joke.

Thierrée’s extraordinary clowning abilities are usually centre stage but his fingerprints can be found all over a Hanne-ton production, offstage and on, and never more so than on *ROOM*, for which he takes credit for scenography and costumes as well as direction.

An encounter with a product of Thierrée’s imagination can be many things. It can delight, mystify, hit you with a jaw-dropping stage moment or send you on imaginative flights of your own. He can frustrate, too, if you are focused on the straight-and-narrow, but one thing is certain: you’ll never forget the time you spent with this maverick master of stage magic.

Elissa Blake

JAMES THIERRÉE

James Thierrée was born in Lausanne in 1974 and made his stage debut aged four in his parents’ circus, Le Cirque Imaginaire. From 1978 to 1994 he toured with Le Cirque Imaginaire, its successor, Le Cirque Invisible, and Le Cirque Bonjour, then trained at the Piccolo Teatro, Milan, and the Conservatoire National Supérieur d’Art Dramatique, Paris. In 1998 he founded his own company, La Compagnie du Hanne-ton, for which his production of *La symphonie du Hanne-ton* toured internationally and won three Molière Awards in 2006. His other directing and performance credits include *La Veillée des Abysses* (2003); *Au Revoir Parapluie*, which won a Molière Award in 2007; *Raoul* (2009); and *Tabac Rouge* (2013), which won a Molière Award in 2014; *The Toad Knew* (presented at the 2016 Edinburgh International Festival); *Frôlons* (2018) for the Opéra National de Paris; and *Mo’s* (2021). He has collaborated with the directors Peter Greenaway (on the film *Prospero’s Books*, in which he played Ariel), Robert Wilson, Carlos Santos, Beno Besson, Coline Serreau, Agnieszka Holland, Jacques Baratier, Tony Gatlif, Claude Miller, Jacques Doillon and Roschdy Zem, among others.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

La Compagnie du Hanne-ton current co-productions: Théâtre de Carouge (CH), La Comédie de Clermont-Ferrand National Stage (F), Théâtre de la Ville Paris (F), Théâtre de Namur (B), Théâtre des Célestins, Lyon (F), Chekhov International Theater Festival, Moscow (RU), Edinburgh International Festival (GB), Sénart Theater National Scene of Lieusaint, anthéa Antibes (F), LG Arts Center Seoul (K), Equilibre-Nuithonie - Friborg (CH), Le Volcan Scène Nationale Le Havre (F), Opéra de Massy (F), Théâtre du Passage Neuchâtel (CH), Le Parvis National Stage Tarbes (F), L'arc National Stage Le Creusot (F), Berliner Festspiele (D), Festpielhaus St Pölten (A), Espace Jean

Legendre, Compiègne Theater (F), Bimot Global (IL), Sydney Festival (AU).

Residencies at Théâtre Sénart Scène Nationale de Lieusaint, L'arc scène nationale Le Creusot and Théâtre de Carouge.

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ROOM is supported by DRAC and Conseil régional Bourgogne Franche Comté

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Photo by Richard Haughton