

[traduction française plus bas]

A modern staged version of a masterpiece of 20th-century French theater which eerily reminds us how easily the masses can be manipulated towards war by a tiny elite, in a period when Europe is steadily advancing towards a bellicose confrontation between East and West.

Une version moderne mise en scène d'un chef-d'œuvre du théâtre français du XXe siècle qui nous rappelle de manière inquiétante à quel point les masses peuvent être facilement manipulées vers la guerre par une petite élite, à une époque où l'Europe s'achemine inexorablement vers une confrontation belliqueuse entre l'Est et l'Ouest.

Les acteurs donnent vie, avec habileté, aux répliques écrites par Giraudoux avec une diction presque parfaite, ce qui est en effet un plaisir pour l'oreille. L'utilisation occasionnelle de projections vidéo est particulièrement intéressante. Elle n'est jamais envahissante et ajoute en fait un impact émotionnel au contenu de la pièce, permettant aux acteurs de jouer avec le silence et des micro-expressions qui seraient autrement imperceptibles.

Full Review

The play is set in Troy just before the legendary Trojan War is about to begin. The central character is **Hector**, the Trojan prince and war hero, who desperately tries to prevent the war despite the mounting tensions caused by his brother Paris's abduction of Helen of Troy. Hector believes that war is avoidable and fights against the forces – both human and divine – that seem determined to make it inevitable.

Giraudoux, a professional French diplomat at the time, wrote this play as an **anti-war manifesto**. His aim was to warn public opinion about how Europe was sleepily drifting towards a new continental war as the rational tools of diplomacy were being set aside and replaced by the drumbeat of confrontational propaganda.

This modern staging of the play performed by French company **Comet** in co-production with theatre collective **Nuit Orange** casts an eerie shadow on how the winds of the Gods of War are blowing again on the European continent, setting the basis for a renewed confrontation between East and West.

The protagonists of the play: Hector, Cassandra, Helen, Paris, Ulysses, **are made to be contemporary characters**. The men are dressed in business suits and interact at times with a movable video camera set on one side of the stage. The effect on the spectator is to recreate the images we see nowadays of often failing diplomatic efforts taking place in Washington, Istanbul or Riyadh.

Particularly interesting is the occasional use of video projections which is never invasive and actually adds emotional impact to the content of the play, allowing the actors to play with silence and micro-expressions which would otherwise be imperceptible.

The theme of the play is so universal (and unfortunately so linked to modern events) that it would do well even if translated into other languages, whether English, German or Spanish.

The actors skillfully bring to renewed life the lines written by Giraudoux in clear French spoken with almost perfect diction which is indeed a pleasure to the ear.

Dramatically, the first act of the play introduces the main characters. The narrative impulse is Hector's desperate attempt to let the logic of diplomacy prevail over events that, if led by the erratic will of men, could lead to the destruction of Troy itself. However, slowly but surely, Hector is pulled by **the will of a tiny**

elite to commit to the war triggered by Helen's abduction. He is soon to discover that gigantic tectonic forces lie underneath what is a mere excuse to resolve a lurking conflict between the Greek world and Troy.

He's therefore challenged by Paris and most of all by the poet Demokos to prepare Troy's citizens for war. **The goal is not conflict resolution but rather public manipulation.** That's where the strength of Demokos's skills becomes fundamental to please the Gods as Troy's course appears to be set by destiny itself. Logic is to be replaced by anything that can stir public opinion towards the necessity of an armed confrontation: from music to the language to be used when dealing with the adversary (something that modern psychology would define as objectification).

The dramatic climax is reached when Hector meets Ulysses, acting as emissary of the Greeks. Although the two men share the same love for logic and rationality, they slowly become aware of their impotence as the logic of war has already prevailed. This final part is enriched by an exchange of beautiful verses and lines of dialogue, some of them so modern, when thinking about current events, that they enter the deep unconscious of the audience.

A provocative play that could be staged well beyond France to remind us how, once the Gods of War are fed, they become insatiable and unstoppable.

Published July 25, 2025 by [Tom Corradini](#)

CULTURETOPS
CRITIQUE DES ÉVÉNEMENTS CULTURELS



La guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu – de Jean Giraudoux

Mise en scène : **Édouard Dossetto** ; avec : **Tatiana André, Ghina Daou, Édouard Dossetto, Leslie Gruel, Adam Karoutchi et Majd Mastoura**

Troie. Réunion en cellule de crise. Quelques heures avant l'arrivée du négociateur grec, Ulysse. Le débat fait rage. Faut-il se défendre face à l'agression grecque, et déclarer la guerre ? Faut-il l'éviter, et comment ? Car "la guerre s'enfante d'elle-même" malgré celles et ceux qui se battent pour l'empêcher, à cause du bellicisme d'un petit nombre et de la passivité d'une majorité silencieuse.

Ils avaient donné « Bérénice » en version bilingue, les voilà revenus à un classique poétique dans la belle langue de Giraudoux avec habileté et intelligence. Un décor épuré, une esthétique froide et glacée pour rendre plus forte encore la chaleur des combats que se mènent les personnages entre eux. L'interprétation est précise, acide et cynique, transposée dans un univers contemporain dont l'œuvre n'a pas à souffrir et c'est une réussite. L'humour trouve aussi sa place dans cette tragédie qui s'annonce. Toute la troupe rend à merveille la substance du texte dans une incarnation vibrante de personnages. Tous ces caractères qui ne cherchent qu'à servir leur intérêt propre courent après un bonheur auquel ils n'ont pas le droit sous le regard de divinités lâches et inconséquentes. Un grand classique à déguster sans modération.

Recommandation : 4 cœurs

<https://www.culture-tops.fr/critique-evenement/theatre/chroniques-festivalieres-davignon-16-juillet-2025>