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Pierre Dac
King of Lunatics

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From the 1920s to the mid-1970s, Pierre Dac (1893-1975), genius of the absurd, invented an entirely new comic arsenal that left its mark on French culture. Born into an Alsatian Jewish and profoundly patriotic family, he was mobilised at the beginning of the First World War, during which he was seriously wounded. In the immediate post-war period, he became a singer in the cabarets of Montmartre. In the 1930s, he founded the *Société des loufoques* [The Lunatic Society], invented new forms of radio and created *La Course au trésor* [Treasure Hunt], a game in which listeners took part in a hilarious search for the quirkiest objects.

Pierre Dac was a stubborn critic of the rise of fascism and in 1938 founded the weekly *L'Os à moelle* [The Marrowbone]. From the beginning of the Occupation, he never stopped trying to reach London, where, at the microphone of the programme *Les Français parlent aux Français*, he criticized the Vichy regime and the Nazi occupiers. In the early 1950s, he formed a duo with Francis Blanche, creating several radio dramas with record audiences. With the revival of *L'Os à moelle* in 1964, Pierre Dac ridiculed the cynicism and mediocrity of the politicians of the Fifth Republic. In 1965, he was even candidate for the presidential election, at the head of the of the *Mouvement ondulatoire unifié* (M.O.U.) ([S.O.F.T.] meaning "United undulatory Movement"). The following year, he played, in a hieratic manner, the president of the court in *The Investigation* by Peter Weiss, at the Théâtre de la Commune in Aubervilliers.

Pierre Dac devoted his last years to writing his *Pensées*. He left a considerable body of work - more than 900 songs, 12 novels and essays, 5 radio serials, several plays, and countless articles, in a style that owes as much to the slang of butchers to the Freudian wit and nonsense of Jewish humour. In more ways than one, Pierre Dac deserves to be considered today as master of the absurd, in the same way as Samuel Beckett or Eugène Ionesco.