

# FESTIVAL MONDIAL DES THEATRES DE MARIONNETTES

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**18 > 27**  
SEPT. 2015

## La Belle Saison at the Worldwide Festival of Puppet Theatres

18 > 27 September 2015

- **The Puppet, children in France and at our neighbor's countries and artists: exchanges on a major artistic discipline and a chosen audience!**

For its 18<sup>th</sup> edition, the World Festival (WWFPT) has the theme of La Belle Saison with children and young people.

The French Ministry of Culture and Communication is launching La Belle Saison, to reveal the riches of the contemporary creation aimed at children and teenagers, from summer 2014 to the end of 2015.

For many years, performing arts for children and teenagers have been blooming with creative boost and artistic vitality in both stage languages and writing, whether in theater, dance, music, circus, visual arts... or in their meeting on stage.

Wanted by the professionals, La Belle Saison avec l'enfance et la jeunesse intends to accompany and to amplify the quality artistic dynamics and cultural initiatives aimed at the future generations. It is an echo to the Artistic and Cultural Education issue that creates the meeting with artworks and artists and tackles vast fields like art, education and citizenship.

The program of La Belle Saison will be built from artistic propositions and defining events coming from all the regions, and from exchanges between artists and professionals gathered in thematic working groups at national level.

The operation is co-ordinated by the General Office of the Artistic Creation (DGCA) - Ministry of Culture and Communication, in cooperation with the regional directions of cultural affairs (DRAC) and with the operational support of the National Office of Artistic Diffusion (ONDA).

The WWFPT is proposing a project which will take place in five stages with the programming of a selection of shows from France and elsewhere and the organization of an international encounter around the theme:

- **Young audience and puppets: a new chapter in a long and tumultuous history to write!**

The puppet, long considered as purely entertainment for children, has in recent times figured in shows for adults, raising consciousness, converting and conquering new adult audiences. Even so, we must admit that, in the rich creative proliferation of the present-day puppet theatre, and in view of the many proposals for shows made to programmers, and thus to audiences, children are still extremely important. These shows are often ambitious, innovative, judicious and jubilatory. All these projects show that, despite infantilizing caricatures and fantasies which are still to be found here and there, in the domain of the puppet, creation is exacting, without concessions, bringing new aesthetics and new scenic languages accessible to all, from the earliest age.

These creations today recall the daring of actors/precursors in the renewal of the puppet: Théâtre sans toit, Théâtre de Cuisine, Amoros et Augustin, Agnès Limbos, Cie Skappa, for example, not forgetting the pioneering Monestier or Dougnac. Through shows aimed at children, all artistic adventures were accepted and authorized, and from the spontaneous viewpoint of children who are by their nature curious about everything, these artists have been able to experiment, expose, develop and thus renew puppet forms.

On the other hand, and because a large part of puppet creations are intended for young audiences and because "children require excellence from us, and not second best, in manipulation and play, never ignorance, hypocrisy and incompetence" (Claude Ponti), let us demand and insist on quality shows for young audiences and the adults who accompany them; let us refuse facility and complacency, mediocrity and inadequacy in all those cases where the puppet might be less than wonderful. So, let us give artists all over the world, in those places where productions for young audiences are as important as they are in France, the means to demand quality for children and the accompaniment they need. With this wonderful artistic field which is the puppet and its new territories, let us be equal to the imagination of children and connected to the world in which they live. With artists/puppeteers, let us reexamine the relationship and the dialogue between children and creation. Let us encourage artistic encounters between French and international artists in order to develop the rich, open and inventive nature of our creations for young audiences, especially in the flourishing and ever-widening domain of the arts of puppetry.

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- **Young audiences and puppets: two international meetings**

The WWFPT invites actors from the artistic, cultural, university, educational and sociocultural fields to question the mutual influence between young audience and puppet productions. This encounter will be held at the 18<sup>th</sup> edition of the Worldwide Festival of Puppet Theaters in September 2015.

In September 2016, a second encounter will be organized inviting international professionals of performing arts and youth (artists, festival directors and educational communities working closely with cultural actors of each country) presents in 2015 and this time also the young people, to seize the question.

- **The five stages of the project**

### **October 2014 to March 2015**

Around twelve international professionals from the performing arts and the youth field mentioned above have been approached by the WWFPT to take part in the project. In order to collect their experience and view on the subject, a questionnaire has been sent to each partner.

**Festivals, international networks:** Festival Commission from UNIMA, Scène d'Enfance et d'Ailleurs, Suspense: London Puppetry Festival (England), Puppet Animation Festival (Scotland), Adults Forbidden (Bulgaria), Bristol Festival of Puppetry (England), Festival de Casteliers in Montreal (Québec), Bristol Festival of Puppetry (England), International Puppet Theatre Festival (Slovenia), ASSITEJ Finland/Bravo! Festival (Finland), Catherine Poher (Denmark), Festival Teni-Tedji (Benin), Festival of Wonder (Denmark), Poppentheater Frans Hakkemars (Netherlands), Merlin Puppet Theatre (Greece), Puppet Theatre Nebo (Slovenia).

**Artistes :** Anima Théâtre (France), Théâtre de l'Avant-Pays (Québec), Naive Theater (Czech Republic), Compagnie Arketal (France), Maleza Company (Chile), Siesta Teatro (Spain), Magali Chouinard (Québec), Theatre Atelier 313 (Bulgaria), Compagnie Créature (France), Kat Katha and Co (India).

### **March to June 2015**

A resource person will analyze and draw a conclusion with the answers from the questionnaire. From this, he will develop a topic or questioning that will be the base of the exchanges of the encounter between youth and cultural professionals and experts on the relation between childhood/youth and art (pedagogues, philosophers, child psychiatrists, artists, prescribers).

**International researchers or practitioners (in progress):** Boris Cyrulnik (neuropsychiatrist), Patrick Bensoussan (child psychiatrist), Pierre Péju (writer), Sylvain Levey (playwright), Marie-José Mondzain (philosopher, image reflection specialist), Philippe Mérieu (philosopher, pedagogue), Jean-Claude Lallias (literature teacher).

### **September 2015**

During the festival, a selection of shows will be proposed to all the participants of the meeting in order to feed their reflection on shared bases.

The encounter will be held during two days and will be opened to local audience and partners (local theaters network: Côté Cour 08, FRMJC Champagne-Ardenne).

### **From October 2015 to August 2016**

An overview of the 2015 encounter will be done by a university lecturer and translated it into English language.

From this experience, a new stage of reflection will be organized, integrating this time three entities involved in the project: cultural actor / youth leader / 13-16 years old people. The

young people will take up the subject by questioning their own actual and past experience, as young audience and young person.

### **September 2016**

The second international meeting will be hold during the festival J-365 Weekend Marionnette in Charleville-Mézières. The programme will be dedicated to young people in order to let them feed their exchanges with a shared experience, following the example of their firstborns.

Website: [WWW.BELLESAISON.FR](http://WWW.BELLESAISON.FR)