

WORLD THEATRE DAY

To you, who lives far away...

My ancestors came from far away, to seek adventure and new encounters, and certainly to make their fortunes. They intermingled, reproduced. They created a mixed culture. The Métis.

The generations who followed were mocked, stigmatized, marginalized, for their languages, their skin colours, their traditions.... To survive, some decided to erase any outward sign that could trouble the dominant white culture. They became chameleons, white-faced, neutralized. They directed all their energy into "not causing trouble." They lived without a past, without a cultural identity.

When I became aware of this legacy, it made me deeply unhappy and very angry. I would have loved to know, even to experience, the Métis culture of my grandfather and his grandparents. I don't want to live in this "neutral" world. Quite the opposite: I want to take a stand, assert my heritage and to broaden its horizons by discovering other cultures.

We are fortunate these days to be able to indulge our own curiosity, to be able to go on our own adventures and have our own encounters – a present we can experience and inscribe on the annals of posterity.

I have the immense privilege to be at the head of the oldest francophone theatre company in the country – the Théâtre Cercle Molière, in Winnipeg. It is located on a vast plain, as beautiful as it is hostile. My theatre is supported by its history; the history of the circle, where I like to believe everyone has a place. A circle open to a future that comprises all colours, traditions, shapes and sizes. There is room here for everyone. After all, space is vast. But we have to be willing to be here, to share the space, to understand that the neutralized past – of dominant and dominated, white and foreigner – no longer belongs.

Isn't theatre this privileged space? A place where music, dance, video, ideas, images, laughter, circus, languages, cultures (I could go on and on) intersect and where real people play on a stage (inside, outside, physical, mental...) in front of other real people?

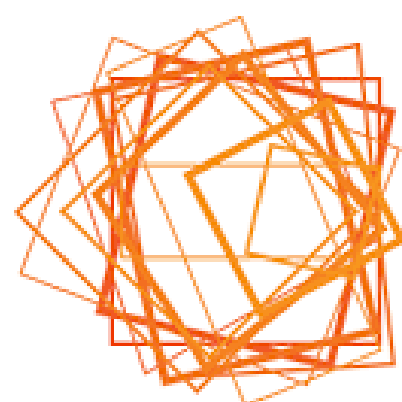
Theatre is a living art form where anything is possible, but it's also full of mystery and of the unknown. Theatre is an Art of engagement that invites movements, new experiences; an invitation we can accept, or not, as we see fit.

Together, let's transform the stage into a world of echoes, a world where laughter, pain, brutality, gentleness and complexity can all spring forth.

Let's take a collective moment to listen to mysterious silences. Let's share so that the theatre of today and tomorrow can be a dream fulfilled, a geometry combined, a theatre that troubles. Let's work towards a theatre that doesn't resemble us in the least. Theatre needs to be a place where human universality and complexity can come together, so that the next generations can express themselves the way they want, without being forced to say, "I'm not from the dominant culture, I'm not allowed, I can't let myself, I don't belong here," and so that, soon, culture will be enriched by all cultures.

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