

LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE PLATON

About 2,500 years ago, Plato wrote the dialogues that would make up *The Republic*, a reflection on justice within man, on the organisation of political life, and on the role philosophers would play in an “ideal” city. About eleven years ago, philosopher Alain Badiou began re-reading and translating this seminal text, in order to create a modern version of it. To the original text, he added a reflection fed by the evolutions, revolutions, and interrogations political philosophy has gone through since Plato’s time.

This corpus, newly rewritten for the Festival d’Avignon, aims to “shine a light on Plato’s modern resonance and power,” and to put the Republic at the heart of this 69th edition of the Festival. It will be read daily, all through the Festival. Thanks to directors Valérie Dréville, Didier Galas, and Grégoire Ingold, as well as to the students of the École régionale d’acteurs de Cannes, the people of Avignon will make those dialogues theirs, along with festival-goers, artists, politicians, and simple citizens, in order to share them with the audience, in a strong desire for knowledge. They will give us to hear the evolution of an idea which will be built and rebuilt thanks to everyone’s participation, readers and listeners alike. The goal will be to establish true exchange, at a time when people so often talk at cross purposes. *The Republic*: a unique and unifying project, worthy of the issues mankind has to face in a world that seems to have lost all meaning.

The first reading will premiere on 4 July, 2015 at the Jardin Ceccano, Avignon.

ALAIN BADIOU

After studying philosophy, Alain Badiou becomes a secondary school teacher, then a university professor in Vincennes, before joining the École Normale Supérieure Ulm. As a political activist, he is a member of the Unified Socialist Party, before creating in 1969 the Maoist Union of Communists of France Marxist-Leninist (UCFML). From 1985 to 2007, he serves as the secretary to the Organisation politique, which supports illegal immigrants. His love for the theatre leads him to work with Antoine Vitez, before writing a series of plays on his own: *Ahmed le subtil* (*Ahmed the Subtle*, 1984), *Ahmed philosophe* (*Ahmed the Philosopher*, 1995), *Les Citrouilles* (*The Pumpkins*, 1996). He has written essays about the theatre—*Beckett, l’incroyable désir* or *Éloge du théâtre*—and is also a novelist and a polemicist, active in the political life of France and the world. Recognising Plato as one of his masters, he publishes in 2012 his version of *Plato’s Republic*, the result of several years of an almost-daily work of re-reading and rewriting.

La République de Platon by Alain Badiou is published by éditions Fayard, collection Pluriel.

INTERVIEW WITH ALAIN BADIOU

What is the nature of the work you have done on *Plato's Republic*?

Alain Badiou: It's an attempt at expressing in a transmittable way the very specific nature of my relationship to Plato. Plato is important in my thinking and in my life, but I know that he is also far removed from the dominant tendencies of modern philosophy and from the questions that seem the most important in our "democratic" societies. In order to try to master this contradiction, I chose one of his most famous and most fundamental texts and immersed it in my own world. I really got into it, and for more than five years, I worked daily on that process of reading-writing. I would read the text, make sure that I understood its syntactic and literal structure, but immediately after that I would write my own text, creating something new with the translation as basic material only. It's a work with two authors, the second rewriting the text originally written by the first to transmit it to a new audience, show how modern it is, and use it to unfold a new thought.

What is the nature of your fundamental relationship to Plato?

I was struck by the passage in *Meno* in which Socrates calls a slave to show that he is entirely capable of understanding a rather complex geometric puzzle. That conception of philosophy, anti-academic in that it rejects the distinction between disciplines and the very idea of specialisation, should be defended today. More than a philosophy professor, Plato is a sort of conceptual agitator, as well as a great writer. He never gives his philosophy the form of a treatise. Plato seeks his path, and his voice, among all the possible forms of writing: dialogues, mythical and allegorical tales, poem quotations, pastiches, political and historical stories, mathematical demonstrations... I wanted to reproduce the liveliness of his thinking through moving forms of writing.

Right from the start, did you have a specific dramaturgy in mind, did you think of the text's potential orality?

I tried to dramatise the text as much as possible, through various means: for instance I added a character. I turned many passages into stage directions, many tales into speeches. However, I feel that I have simply pushed Plato towards more theatre. There is a powerful underlying orality to Plato, even in the most theoretical passages. For Avignon, I wrote a completely dramatic version made up of twenty-four sequences. The work was long and difficult, but always possible, even obvious.

You want to "shine a light on the text's modern power," its struggle.

If, like I did, you immerse *The Republic* in a modern context, if you decide not to relegate it to the freezer of antique studies, you'll realise it has an extreme vitality. Which is why we can show that Plato is our contemporary: all you have to do is confront him, him and his text, to the 2,500 years of history separating him from us. You'll see then that everything that has been thought since Plato can be illuminated by Plato himself, and that Plato is in turn illuminated for having to go through all that was thought after him.

VALÉRIE DRÉVILLE

A student of Antoine Vitez, she has worked with Claude Régy, Anatoly Vasiliev, Alain Françon, Jean-Pierre Vincent, etc. Adept of an “adventurous” theatre, she likes encounters that culminate in collective experiments.

DIDIER GALAS

A student of Claude Régy, it is as an actor that he first became interested in the concept of the mask. This led him to Japan, where he became a director. His shows are at the crossroads between visual arts, dance, and literature.

GRÉGOIRE INGOLD

A student of Antoine Vitez, he began his career as an actor, before studying different schools of direction. He has worked for a while now on disputations, and directed about twenty shows.

ÉCOLE RÉGIONALE D'ACTEURS DE CANNES

The Erac is a higher education institution created in 1990, with campuses in Cannes and Marseille, whose goal is to train actors. Graduates receive the diplôme national supérieur de comédien, in partnership with the university of Aix-Marseille, as performing arts students. The Région PACA and the State help Erac graduates find work thanks to the Fonds d'Insertion pour Jeunes Artistes Dramatiques (Funds for the Integration of Young Dramatic Artists).

AND...

THE WORKSHOPS OF THOUGHT

Site Pasteur de l'Université, free admittance

- 6 July at 01:00 pm, Radio creation week: *La République de Platon* or "why don't have I time to read", organised with Radio Campus Avignon and Radio Campus France

- 9 July at 03:00 pm, *Theatre under construction: the theatre of values*, with, among others, Valérie Dréville, organised with the magazine *Théâtre/Public*

- 10 July at 11:00 am, *Building one's own free will*, with, among others, Grégoire Ingold and Fabien Gaertner, organised with Région Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur and the Ceméa

- 11 July at 05:30 pm, *The world is young*, with Alain Badiou

- 12 July at 11:00 am, *The Controversies of Le Monde: how to live one's life?* with Alain Badiou, organised with the newspaper *Le Monde*

- 13 July at 05:30 pm *Dialogue artists-audience*, with Valérie Dréville and the team of *La République de Platon*, encounter hosted by the Ceméa

- 14 July at 02:00 pm, *Say yes*, with, among others, Alain Badiou
Organised with Université d'Avignon and ARTE

Site Sainte-Marthe de l'Université, free admittance

- 10 July at 02:00 pm, *Teaching of the University* with Alain Badiou

THE NAVE OF IMAGES

Le Partage de midi by Paul Claudel / Direction Valérie Dréville, Gaël Baron, Nicolas Bouchaud, Jean-François Sivadier (2008) / Documentary realised by Michel Viotte / 4 July at 11:45 am, Église des Célestins, free admittance

ENCOUNTER

Theatre and "Theatre": the true and the false in theatre, with Alain Badiou

11 July at 02:00 pm, Conservatoire à rayonnement régional du Grand Avignon
Proposed by the SACD, free admittance

PHOTO EXHIBITIONS

- *La République*, by Christophe Raynaud de Lage

4-25 July, Médiathèque Ceccano, free admittance

- *Les Visages de la République*, by Christophe Raynaud de Lage

from 4 July to 31 August, Gare TGV SNCF Avignon, free admittance

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#VALERIEDREVILLE #ERAC @DIDIERGALAS

69th
EDITION

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In order to bring you this edition, over 1,750 people, artists, technicians, and organisational staff, have worked tirelessly and enthusiastically for months. More than half of them are state-subsidised freelance workers.