

AND...

SHOW Olivier Py et Enzo Verdet

Macbeth Philosophe, Olivier Py and Enzo Verdet with the Centre pénitentiaire Avignon-Le Pontet, July 17 to 19, Chartreuse-CNES de Villeneuve lez Avignon

PRESS CONFERENCE with Olivier Py,
July 5 at 11:00, cour du Cloître Saint-Louis

ACCESSIBILITY for blind and low vision people 
Audiodescription of the performance on July 12 at 20:00
Informations and booking : accessibilité@festival-avignon.com

ELECTRONIC GLASSES   
Personalised service of French and English surtitles
July 6, 7, 10, 11 and 13 juillet at 15:00, and July 8 at 20:00

PEDAGOGICAL FILE
Pièce (dé)montée produced by Canopé, available on festival-avignon.com

THOUGHT WORKSHOPS with Olivier Py, Cloître Saint-Louis
Encounter Recherche and creation, July 9 at 9:30
Forum Cultural Intelligence, July 11 from 9:30 to 18:00
Culture and social economy : a third way, July 12 at 14:00

CONVERSATIONS À LA MAISON, LE FESTIVAL CÔTÉ LIVRE
Encounter with Olivier Py, July 15 at 11:30, Maison Jean Vilar

YOUNG AUDIENCE SHOWS
Snow White, story of a Prince, Michel Raskine,
July 6 to 12, Chapelle des Pénitents blancs
Young, Yakouba Konaté,
July 13 to 17, Collège Joseph Vernet
Republic of the Bees, Céline Schaeffer,
July 16 to 22, Chapelle des Pénitents blancs

TOUR DATES AFTER THE FESTIVAL

- November 6 to 8, 2019, Scène Nationale du Sud-Aquitain, Bayonne
- November 12 and 13, Théâtre Saint-Louis, Pau
- March 3 to 8, 2020, Le Centquatre-Paris, with the Théâtre de la Ville
- March 19 and 20, Théâtre National de Nice
- April 1st to 3, Théâtre d'Angoulême Scène nationale
- April 7 to 9, Opéra de Limoges
- April 16, Théâtre Georges-Leygues, Villeneuve-sur-Lot

73rd
EDITION

In order to bring you this edition, over 1,700 people, artists, technicians, and organisational staff, have worked tirelessly and enthusiastically for months. More than half of them are state-subsidised freelance workers.

FESTIVAL-AVIGNON.COM



#FDA19

LOVE TRIUMPHANT

For refusing to obey her father, a young girl in love is locked up in a tower. When released, she discovers a world torn apart by conflict and poverty. To find her prince, our heroine must listen to her desires and face a general who can only sow chaos. Inspired by the Brothers Grimm's *Maid Maleen*, *Love Triumphant* is an operetta in which five characters—a strong-willed princess, a disfigured suitor, a diabolical general, an eco-friendly gardener, and a dishwashing girl—lead us on adventures in blank Alexandrines full of love, disguises, and struggles. In this show for children, the author and director smartly combines the pleasures of theatre and operetta with the awareness of a troubled world: ours. To despair he answers with fancy, to war with songs, so that love, with the help of the actors, singers, and musicians, can triumph.

OLIVIER PY

In 2013, Olivier Py became the first artist since Jean Vilar to be named director of the Festival d'Avignon. A director for the theatre, the opera, and cinema, but also an actor and writer, Olivier Py anchors his work in the preoccupations of his contemporaries in order to open a poetic and political dialogue. Theatre is his culture and instrument: with it, the word becomes action, without ever losing sight of the fact that this gesture—a poem—could one day be the basis of new democratic forms.

Love Triumphant by Olivier Py, published by Actes Sud-Papiers,
is on sale at the bookshop in the Maison Jean Vilar.



FESTIVAL D'AVIGNON 73RD

JULY 5 6 7 8 | 10 11 12 13
GYMNASE DU LYCÉE MISTRAL

INTERVIEW WITH OLIVIER PY

Love Triumphant is based on a fairy tale by the Brothers Grimm, *Maid Maleen*. It's your fourth adaptation in thirty years. What is it about those fairy tales that fascinates you?

Olivier Py : The Grimms' fairy tales aren't moral stories, but initiation stories. Resilience is their keyword. All the characters, who are often young girls, experience a deep trauma, but with the help of magical characters, who serve as metaphors, they find a way to bring themselves back together and to continue living. That is, they find a way to make their life bearable, but also to give it meaning. Violence is always present in those fairy tales, and in *Maid Maleen*, it's more observed than lamented. In this story, the whole world is destroyed, and because we're living through a time of ecological anxiety, we have to interpret it differently. Can we live in a destroyed world? Can we live on a planet where the alliance between mankind and nature has been sold out to a few ambitious and powerful men? The heroine, however humble, is the one who at once causes, observes, and resolves this catastrophe.

Your work isn't just a studious transposition of the original text. You transform it dramatically, changing the issues at its centre...

The fairy tales by the Brothers Grimm can be seen as synopses. They give you complete freedom. You have to come up with the dramaturgy, the dialogue, and the psychology of the characters. If I strayed pretty far from the original story, I kept the essential plot, which deals with issues of catastrophe, guilt, destruction, disagreement, and with the light found again through the way we deal with misfortune. Other themes and questions run through it as well. What destiny are we owed? How are we trapped within gender structures? And always this question about love, which led to the title *Love Triumphant*. Love in those fairy tales isn't narcissistic or bourgeois. It is the recognition of the principle at the origin of the world, of its cause. The characters eventually accept that love is guiding and desiring them, that they aren't in control of their destiny. They are only the masters of the intelligence of their destiny.

Compared to your previous adaptations, did you feel like your writing was in any way different?

First and foremost, there was the desire to sing more, to turn it into a sort of operetta. Play after play, I've given a bigger and bigger role to the musical parts. Which leads to another passion of mine: lyrical theatre. It's the first time I've composed the music to one of my shows, by the way. In *Love Triumphant*, I wrote the text in blank Alexandrines, which means they don't rhyme, whereas the songs do. They have a very different metre, some with three-syllable verses. *Love Triumphant* is written in dodecasyllable verse. That's the rhythm of thought. If you want people to hear an Alexandrine,

it's not the 12 syllables that matter, but the 6/6 split. It's the hemistich that makes the Alexandrine. A coiled thought, at the heart of the verse, very quick. Similarly, there's almost no silent "e" in the text. What mattered to me was to use a very pure, very clear language, imbued with almost biblical authority. It's extremely hard to do.

What do you primarily focus on in this show for children?

I don't tell adults not to come see my adaptations of fairy tales. The show is open to everyone. It's first and foremost aimed at a specific audience, children, just like this year's *Macbeth* is aimed primarily at the inmates we did it for. This double project has helped me break free of the stiffness of bourgeois theatre. Children's theatre has always helped me, with its naivety, real or feigned, to work differently. Operetta or puppet theatre, it represents a way to try different experiments.

The prince imagines himself disfigured, inviting the children to explore the question of beauty...

Children wonder about that a lot. They're faced with the dictatorship of beauty, of the image, which is extremely violent. This leads to haunting questions: What does it mean to be beautiful? And am I? With the underlying idea that not conforming to aesthetic standards deprives one of any possible destiny. In our contemporary world, as in fairy tales, there are archetypes, characters. They're there, in their almost angelic power. Something comes to disrupt this organisation. It can happen precisely because the audience recognises them for the archetypes they are, it allows for catharsis to happen even for younger audiences.

Something tips over at some point in your play. The characters are caught in a war, we move into the realm of contemporary history, a conception of politics starts to appear...

The essential question at the heart of those popular texts is: What can theatre do when faced with the woes of the world? I may have focused a little more in this play on questions about gender, even though in *The Young Girl, the Devil and the Mill*, my first adaptation, the girl said: "*What am I if I cannot fight for others? If I am a woman, then I can't go to war?*", etc. It really is a question about gender. With *Love Triumphant*, I made this question a little more radical. There's an almost systematic reversal of gender roles: a male gardener who doesn't want to go to war, while a young female servant wants nothing more. In a way, the prince is a departure from the arrogant psychology of chauvinistic princes; he feels deeply anxious and guilty, and is incapable of acting upon the world. He sees the catastrophe happening without being able to do anything about it. While he feels powerless, the young girl is inarguably strong, as is often the case in the Grimms' fairy tales. She gives meaning again to a world in shambles.

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Interview conducted by Marc Blanchet and translated by Gaël Schmidt-Cléach