

Ariane Mnouchkine's Théâtre du Soleil

bring the **ÉCOLE NOMADE** – Travelling School – to Oxford.

Oxford University and the Maison Française d'Oxford are both excited and proud to announce that Ariane Mnouchkine, Europe's foremost experimental theatre director, and members of her radical collective *Théâtre du Soleil* will be coming to Oxford for two weeks this September, to establish an exciting new international experiment in creative collaboration– the **École Nomade**.

*Actors, like all artists, are explorers;
an actor is someone who makes their way along a very long,
very deep, very strange and sometimes very dark tunnel, and, who, like a miner,
gathers up stones: amongst these stones, he might hope to find a diamond,
and the work of cutting it into shape begins.*

*I believe that this is what actors mean when they talk about being on an 'adventure'.
In any case, this is what the adventure means to me.
Travelling deep into the human soul, the soul of society,
and then making your way back;
that is the first stage of the adventure.*

Ariane Mnouchkine,
cited in Béatrice Picon-Vallin : *Ariane Mnouchkine* (Actes sud papiers), 2009.

For a long time now — in fact almost since the very beginning — the thinking which animates the Théâtre du Soleil has associated, whether consciously or not, creation and transmission, production and apprenticeship: theatre and school.

Every time we start preparing a new show, we begin by running a 'grand stage' – a great big workshop – in our theatre in Paris, during which we try to bring together more than 300 actors or aspiring actors, from all over the world, to foster connections between their work and ours. At times we have been able to offer similar workshops elsewhere, in different countries, when we have been invited on tour.

These encounters are, we hope, nourishing for all involved; they certainly have proved to be so for us, and we now wish to multiply them, by setting up our **École Nomade**, or Travelling School. The sessions of the **École Nomade** will not simply be drama classes; they will, rather, constitute moments of practical reflection, in which we seek to set out, explain, and clarify our methods, and to share our collective way of working. And the point of all this? *Because this is how we, at the Théâtre du Soleil, explore, try, fail, and begin again. In short, this is how we work.*

Over the last fifty years, thanks to its diversity, its mixed character, combined with its constant sense of purpose – and, of course thanks to both public funds and good fortune – our troupe has been able to grow, to renew itself, and... to survive. This is why we believe that it is the collective nature of our work as a troupe that we should be explaining to others and trying to pass on.

Our first port of call is in Chile, where we have been invited by the Fondation Teatro A Mil who hosted our show, *Les Naufragés du Fol Espoir*, at their festival in 2012. Here, the **École Nomade** will run from 29 June to 24 July 2015. For four weeks, Ariane and ten actors will meet and work with more than a hundred actors and apprentice actors from across South America.

The **École** will then travel to Europe. To Sweden, first of all. Here, at the invitation of the Bergman Center and the Academy of Dramatic Arts in Stockholm, Ariane and five actors will offer a workshop for two weeks, from the 10th to the 21st August, 2015, on the mythical island of Fårö, where Ingmar Bergman lived and worked. Sixty actors and apprentice actors, drawn from all over Scandinavia, will take part in this workshop.

Then, at the invitation of Oxford University and the Maison française d'Oxford, the **Ecole Nomade** will make its way to the UK, and to Oxford. Here, from the 14th to the 25th of September, 2015, Ariane and five actors will run a workshop bringing together a mixed group of around sixty people.

These initial experiments will lead to others, and we are already dreaming of an Indian stage to the adventure, in December 2015. This, if it takes place, will be thanks to the combined efforts of the French cultural service and the local Alliances Françaises. The adventure that is **École Nomade** has only just begun!

The partners of the **École Nomade** of the Théâtre du Soleil are:

In Chile : Fundación Teatro A Mil <http://www.fundacionteatroamil.cl>
Institut Français – Chili <http://www.institutofrances.cl>

In Sweden: Stockholms Dramatiska Högskola (Stockholm Academy of Dramatic Arts) <http://www.stdh.se>
Bergmancenter <http://bergmancenter.se/en>
Institut Français – Suède www.institutfrancais-suede.com

In the UK : Maison Française d'Oxford www.mfo.ac.uk
Institut Français – Royaume Uni : www.institut-francais.org.uk
Archive of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama (University of Oxford) <http://www.apgrd.ox.ac.uk>
Modern Languages Faculty (University of Oxford) www.mod-langs.ox.ac.uk
Oxford Playhouse www.oxfordplayhouse.com
Pegasus Theatre www.pegasustheatre.org.uk