



On a String

String puppets on a ring
Compagnie Pelele / Creation 2015

A REVISITED TRADITIONAL TECHNIQUE



String puppets have a rich and centuries-old history in several European countries. However, the techniques for their manipulation are in constant evolution. Circus-themed puppet shows are a tradition since the eighteenth century in Western and Central Europe (Italy, Germany, former Czechoslovakia, Hungary). In most instances, the hidden or black-garbed manipulators are invisible for the audience.

The company took back to create a show in which visible manipulators and a musician are an integral part of the program through their interactions, their costumes and their masks.

The puppeteers become occasionally musicians, whereas the musician, who plays live original music, sound effects and songs, becomes occasionally an actor.

The idea is to move from the exhibition of puppets into a theatrical production in which the manipulator interacts with the puppets, and with the public as one of the characters on stage (Monsieur Loyal the ringmaster, the Circus Groom, the Musician...)

On a String is a show of 45 mn, with five-minute acts which run.

With a perspective opening on to the backstage, the Company serves up a comedic and poetical story in two versions: a forty-five-minutes show for all public, or a thirty minute one for children for 3 to 6 years.

The show, complete with live music, can be staged indoor or out, with minimal outside technical support.



THE PUPPETS

For several years now, the Company has been working with glove puppets in a castelet. This production involves string puppets.

Paz Tatay founded Compagnie Pelele in 1996. She discovered puppetry through string puppets which she manipulated for seven years, notably in the show *Concertino*, with Company Karomato. In 1996, she worked on a project for a circus-themed puppet show that produced a fifteen-minute exhibition. With some eighteen years of extra experience, Compagnie Pelele re-explored the premise of that project from a different perspective.

Precision of the movements - trapeze, tightrope walking -, funny energy - clown and Cossacks-, tension and suspense of the acrobatic performance...

The puppets are sculpted out of wood, hollowed out, given their patina, and costumed. With their construction also built itself their story.

MASKED PLAY

Costumes and masks must allow the public to readily identify with the action. Based on masks from the Commedia dell'arte, they concentrate on a character's main trait : jolly, grotesque, awkward...

The puppeteers so become a dancer, Mister Loyal, ring worker, and musicians ...





MUSIC IN LIVE

Live music has been a constant with the Company since its inception.

Not only does the music accompany the circus acts, it interacts with the characters, providing a rich acoustical environment : sound effects, sound commentary, and dramatization of key moments in the acts.

Accordeon, percussive instruments, whistles and various objects allow tinkering with sound, live. Music is the leading thread to the show.



SCENOGRAPHY

It consists of a ring cordoned off from the public with a space between both in which the puppeteers and the musician can move about. The puppeteers' lower bodies are hidden behind a stage curtain.

The various puppets, masks and costumes hang from a dressing-room like structure, reminiscent of a circus big top.

Minimal scenery, in the circus tradition, both easy to assemble and to strike down. Staging space : 6 m x 6 m, height 3 m



PRESENTATION

Mesdames et Messieurs, le cirque est de passage dans votre ville ! Des Ladies and Gentlemen, the circus is in town! Exceptional acts with Pipo the Clown and the Cosacks of the Puszta ! Come marvel at the high-wire artist and thrill at the trapezist !

A ringmaster out of his depth, a very dumb groom, a hyper-motivated young artist and an over-the-top musician present the acts in the ring. In an upbeat and uncluttered environment, our string puppets defy the laws of gravity.

On a String rolls out a series of acrobatic feats and situation comedy straight from the world of traditional circus.

CAST

Puppet makers and handlers : Paz Tatay and Marie de Nazelle

Music and sound effects : Christophe Sabatié

Coproduction Compagnie Pelele – Traditionsverein Hohsteiner Kasper e. V. (Allemagne) **with help from** DRAC Midi-Pyrénées, L'Usinotopie, Marionnet'ic, Le Grand Manitou/MTG

CREATION

Masked acting and clowning : Mimi Duuez

External view : Eder Feitosa

Costumes : Louise Bloch

Lighting : Christophe Deflorenne

THE COMPANY

Paz Tatay, founder of Compagnie Pelele and puppeteer. A puppeteer since nineteen eighty-eight, she co-founded Marionetas del Matadero with Luis Montoto; they worked exclusively with string puppets.

Paz Tatay created La compagnie Pelele in nineteen ninety-six in Toulouse and signs up all shows of Pelele with this wish : Shows designed as venues for meetings for ritual, and for catharsis

Through a careful attention to esthetics and a strong identification with popular theatre, Company Pelele creates punchy shows full of energy that lift the public into a world of surprises and emotions, an absurd and magical world where puppets are the main actors. Quality of manipulation, rhythm and comedic tension are topmost in our priorities. Music and sound effects are always done live. Pelele is an international company that has played across Europe, in Quebec, Brasil, Mexico and Argentina

1996 / Le cirque de passage (The Travelling Circus), exhibition of string puppets.

1998 / La Muerte de Don Cristobal (The Death of Don Cristobal) for gloves puppets on the figure of an old Spanish Pulcinella celebrated by Federico Garcia Lorca.

2005 / A la Dérive (Drifting) carried puppets, shadows, projections and fool's baubles on the theme of clandestine emigration.

2009 / Les Funestes Epousailles de Don Cristobal, The Grievous Marriage of Don Cristobal), second episode in the adventures of the old Spanish Pulcinella.

This show received several prizes :

The **Drac d'Or for best interpretation**, and the **Drac d'Or for programmers from autonomous regions/Fira de Titelles de Lerida – Spain – 2014 - the Luk-Vincent Prize for best show/ Puppetbuskersfestival, Ghent – Belgium 2013 - Most Original Show / International Puppet Festival Lutke, Ljubljana, Slovenia – 2010**

2015 / Au Bout Du Fil, (On a string) : string puppets on a ring



NEXT SHOWS OF THE COMPANY

JULY

5 – La Muerte de Don Cristobal

Festival Les Têtes en l'Air – Savennières (49) – France

11/12 – Au Bout Du Fil

Festival RéciDives – Dives-sur-Mer (14) – France

13 – Les Funestes Epousailles de Don Cristobal

Festival RéciDives – Dives-sur-Mer (14) – France

22/28 – Au Bout Du Fil

PUF Festival – Slovenia

22/07 Piran, 23/07 Izola, 24/07 Koper et 25/07 Ljubljana

AUGUST

1st – Au Bout Du Fil

MuCem-Plage, Marseille (13) – France

7 – Les Funestes Epousailles de Don Cristobal

Festival MIMA – Mirepoix (09) – France

9 – Au Bout Du Fil

Festival MIMA – Mirepoix (09) – France

30 – Au Bout Du Fil

Festival Titereando – Vitoria-Gasteiz - Spain

SEPTEMBER

18/19 – Au Bout Du Fil

La Merce – Barcelona - Spain

21/27 – Au Bout Du Fil

Festival Mondial de Marionnettes– Charleville-Mézières (08) – France



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