



**Théâtre Gérard Philipe**  
Centre dramatique national de Saint-Denis  
Direction: Jean Bellorini

# Un fils de notre temps (A Child of Our Time)

Based on the novel by Ödön von Horváth  
Directed by Jean Bellorini

Adaptable to any location



Premiere January 2015 / Now on tour

Contact production  
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### **Le Théâtre Gérard Philipe, Centre Dramatique National de Saint-Denis**

is a place of theatrical creation, co-production and distribution. It is managed by the stage director Jean Bellorini since January 2014, accompanied by his group of artists. His interests pertain to creation, transmission and education. He aims to be poetic, joyful, and deeply established in his territory. The TGP (Théâtre Gérard Philipe) aims to exist as a place for thought and reflection, invention, where past and future can be questioned. It is a space for the expression of our uncertainties, of our difficulties to speak out and to listen, and it must remain open, a home for each and everyone.

# Un fils de notre temps (A child of our time)

**based on the novel by Ödön von Horváth**

Translation by **Rémy Lambrechts**

Director: **Jean Bellorini**

Assistant director: **Mélodie-Amy Wallet**

Collective adaptation and musical creation

With: **Clément Durand, Matthieu Tune, G r me Ferchaud, Antoine Raffalli**

**A Th  tre G rard Philipe - CDN of Saint-Denis production, and a Th  tre National de Toulouse Midi-Pyr n es - L'Atelier coproduction**

## **On tour**

The 6<sup>th</sup> of November 2015 at Espace 1789, Saint-Ouen, France

From the 22<sup>nd</sup> of November to the 11<sup>th</sup> of December at Th  tre G rard Philipe, Centre dramatique national de Saint-Denis

The 15<sup>th</sup> of December 2015 at Th  tre Louis Aragon, Tremblay-en-France, France

From the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> of February 2015 at the Sc ne nationale d'Albi, France

The 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2015 at Le Salmanazar, Eparnay, France

The 9<sup>th</sup> of April 2015 at Espace Marcel Carn , Saint-Michel-sur-Orge, France

The 19<sup>th</sup> of April 2015 at F camp, France

Storytellers, comedians, sound fiddlers, musicians, actors-poets, together they tell the tale of A Child of Our Time, the story of a clueless person, a confused man who enlists in the Army. This common speech is told by four characters, and by the music, the "tangibility", and the imagination of each of us. There is a small orchestra (violin, trumpet, keyboards and guitar) from which the voices stand out presenting a different pattern, the intimate and unique color of each tone. Leaving some to the imagination, and letting the image appear in the soul of the people attending... The search for this moment of balance that the actor experiences - like a shooting star leaving a trace - turns him or her into a poet.

## **Synopsis**

Un fils de notre temps (A Child of Our Time) is first-person account, in a seemingly simple style, of the path of an unemployed youngster who decides to enlist in the army in order to escape destitution and establish, under the domination of his country, a world he believes to be fairer. The fleeting vision of a young woman at the booth of a haunted house alters his fate. Wounded while invading an adjoining nation, his military career is ruled out and he goes back to the angst of his old life. Willing to find the young woman again, he is horrified when he understands how his vision of the world was built on injustice and cruelty. Horv th, well-aware of the dangers of Nazism and forced into exile, gives a cruel and accurate portrayal of an ideology based on contempt.

## Memo

I want to begin this short presentation with a quote from Gilles Deleuze: "we do not teach what we know but what we are searching for".

We are going to work on a novel by Horváth. "I need to write this book. It is really pressing! I do not have time to read long books, because I am poor and I need to work to make a living, eat, sleep. I am, too, just a child from our time... », Horváth wrote to a friend in 1937.

First, we have to "sink into" the writing, to appropriate it while being faithful to its own musicality. Despite the translation, we will have to embody the language.

Then we will work in common to explore the whole intricacies of the different meanings of this text. The choir is not leveling the rendition but, on the contrary, adding all our views and characters to build a common understanding and respiration.

It is a work on the birth – the origins – of speech. Torrents of words leading to pathology. Speech getting carried away and leading to frenzy. Remorse and shame.

It is, above all, a work on a novel. This will allow us to state the question of the narrative on stage. The question of the incarnation and the rendering.

The "drama" appears like a short miracle, for a brief moment, when the actor's imagination meets the audience's with all the strength of his belief, his evocative power, i.e. his poetic dimension.

Jean Bellorini

He went on: "We need to be cost-efficient; competition is a form of warfare, my dear sir, and it is well known that no war is fought with kid gloves, you should know that... »

With kid gloves? These were my own words...

When the captain stated that a soldier was not a murderer.

The accountant gives me a mocking look and giggles. Or is it just my imagination?

He resumes babbling and I can hear myself, I hear myself...

All these expressions and sentences: empty, self-important, shameless, worn-out and tired...

I am disgusted with myself.

The shadow of my past makes me sick. Yes, the captain was right!

I hated easy life and I was driven by hardship...

I was such a liar!

Exactly, a coward and a liar – indeed, how easy it was to cover our wrongdoings with the flag from the motherland, as if it was a white coat of innocence!

As if a misdeed was not a crime, whether it was committed at the service of the nation or for any other company...

A crime is a crime, and before a fair judge, no company amounts to anything.

Of good and bad, only the individual can decide, and not any nation set between heaven and hell.

From *Un fils de notre temps (A Child of Our Time)* by Ödön Von Horváth

## Ödön von Horváth

He was born on December 9<sup>th</sup>, 1901 in Fiume, a former autonomous city that is now in Croatia and called Rijeka. He is the natural child of Edmund Josef Horváth, an Austro-Hungarian diplomat and Maria Hermine Pehnal, from a family of Hungarian-German military doctors. From 1902 to 1918, he followed his father's postings in Belgrade, Budapest, Bratislava, Vienna and eventually Munich where he began literature studies at the university. His first play *Mord in der Mohrengasse*, was written in 1923. He signed a contract with the publisher Ullstein that allowed him to make a living writing until he published his first novel *Der ewige Spießer* (The Eternal Philistine) in 1930. As of 1931, he became famous in Berlin thanks to his two major plays, *Italienische Nacht* (Italian Night), and *Geschichten aus dem Wienerwald* (Tales from the Vienna Wood), for which he received the prestigious Kleist Prize. In 1933, confronted with the rise of Nazism, he fled Berlin for Vienna where his play *Glaube Liebe Hoffnung* (Faith, Hope, and Charity) was put on in 1936. But, forced to flee again, he left Vienna in 1938. His exile took him to Budapest, Trieste, Venice, Milan, Prague, Zurich, Amsterdam and eventually Paris where he followed his friend Wera Liessem. On June 1<sup>st</sup>, 1938, while going for a walk on the Champs-Élysées, he was accidentally killed opposite the Marigny theatre by a branch that fell from a tree during a storm. In the same year, his last two novels were published *Ein Kind unserer Zeit* (A Child from Our Time) and *Jugend ohne Gott* (The Age of the Fish), which were soon translated into eight languages, by the publisher of the exiles, Allert de Lange.

Plays by Ödön von Horváth:

- **Mord in der Mohrengasse "Murder in the street of the Moors", 1923**
- **Zur schönen Aussicht "The great view", 1926**
- **Revolte auf Côte 3018 "Riot on Côte 3018", 1927**
- **Die Bergbahn "The funicular", a reprise of Revolte auf Côte 3018, 1928**
- **Sladek, der schwarze Reichswehrmann (Sladek), a reprise of Sladek oder Die schwarze Armee, 1929**
- **Rund um den Kongreß (A Sexual Congress), 1929**
- **Italienische Nacht (Italian Night), 1930**
- **Geschichten aus dem Wienerwald (Tales from the Vienna Wood), 1931**
- **Glaube, Liebe, Hoffnung (Faith, Hope, and Charity), 1932**
- **Kasimir und Karoline (Kasimir and Karoline), 1932**
- **Die Unbekannte aus der Seine "The stranger from the Seine", 1933**
- **Hin und her "Back and forth", 1934**
- **DonJuan kommt aus dem Krieg (Don Juan Comes Back From the War), 1935**
- **Figaro läßt sich scheiden (Figaro Gets a Divorce), 1936**
- **Pompeji. Komödie eines Erdbebens "Pompeii", 1937**
- **Ein Dorf ohne Männer "A village without men", 1937**
- **Himmelwärts "Towards Heaven", 1937**
- **Der jüngste Tag (Judgement Day), 1937**

All his plays have been published in French by L'Arche

Novels:

- **Der ewige Spießer (The Eternal Philistine), 1930**
- **Jugend ohne Gott (the Age of the Fish), 1938**
- **Ein Kind unserer Zeit (A Child of Our Time), 1938**

## The creative team

### Mélodie-Amy Wallet – Assistant director

She attended École Claude Mathieu from 2011 to 2014, after a university education and a literary preparatory class with a specialization in theatre. Since 2009, she has been teaching a student workshop at the Association Saint-Michel-de-Picpus, where she began as a student of Karyll Elgrichi, Michel Jusforgues and Coralie Salonne. In particular, she worked on *Ivanov* by Anton Chekhov, *The Good Person of Szechwan* by Bertolt Brecht, *Les Sacrifiées* by Laurent Gaudé, and put on shows based on one-act plays by Chekhov and Marivaux. In 2013, she assisted Jean Bellorini on *La Bonne Âme du Se-Tchouan* (*The Good Person of Szechwan*) by Bertolt Brecht, created at the Théâtre National de Toulouse and staged at the Odéon-Théâtre de l'Europe, and then on tour. In 2014, she put on *Casimir et Caroline* (*Kasimir and Karoline*) by Ödon von Horváth.

### Clément Durand – Comedian / keyboard

After his studies in cultural mediation, he took theatre classes first at the Cours Florent in first year and then two more years at the Studio d'Asnières school taught by Hervé Van Der Meulen and Jean-Louis Martin-Barbaz. By December 2013, he joined the Atelier Volant class of the Théâtre National de Toulouse. This one-year professional course got him into two shows directed by Laurent Pelly, *Mangeront-ils ?* by Victor Hugo created at the TNT in April 2013 and more recently in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* created at the TNT in March 2014.

### Gérôme Ferchaud – Comedian / guitar

He attended the Théâtre Temps D'M in Bordeaux, where he began to perform under the direction of Luc Faugère in two plays by Marivaux. He then got into Montpellier's academy of dramatic arts (conservatoire), worked with Ariel Garcia Valdès, Richard Mitou, Marion Guerrero, Jacques Allaire, Hélène de Bissy and Laurent Pigeonnat. He took part into the creation and played into *Le Retour d'Ulysse* directed by Luigi Tapella at the Festival de la Luzège. He joined the Atelier Volant of the TNT where he was directed by Bérangère Vantusso, Blandine Savetier, Emmanuel Daumas, Richard Brunel, Jean Bellorini, Sébastien Bournac, Charlotte Farcet and Laurent Pelly.

### Antoine Raffalli – Comedian / violin

His training began with a Classe Libre at Cours Florent's promo 3I where he worked with Jean-Pierre Garnier, Philippe Duclos and the collective *Les Possédés*, he put on *Fantasio* by Alfred de Musset, a show that got an award from the Cours Florent (2010-2012), and played Jacques in *Jacques ou la soumission* (2011) at the Festival Istropolitana of Bratislava and in Avignon at the Théâtre du Bourg-Neuf under the direction of Paul Desveaux. Then, he played the part of Nathan in *Les Vainqueurs* (2012) by Olivier Py directed by Xavier Bonadonna at the Festival Premier pas hosted at La Cartoucherie de Vincennes. In December 2012, he joined the Atelier volant at the Théâtre National de Toulouse and acted in *Mangeront-ils ?* (2013) written by Victor-Hugo and directed by Laurent Pelly at the TNT, then he toured at the Théâtre de Carouge in Genève and at La Criée in Marseille. Pursuing this collaboration, he performed in *Extraordinaires* (2013), a creation based on Edgar Allan Poe's work, put on at the TNT, followed by a tour in Toulouse's area (Midi-Pyrénées) before he played Démétrius in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* that premiered in March 2014.

### Matthieu Tune – Comedian / trumpet

He went to the Cours Florent between 2008 and 2012 and was trained by Frédérique Farina, Julien Kosellek and Jean-Pierre Garnier. He has been playing the trumpet since he was 8 years old. In June 2011, he played for the collective *La Horde* since the show *Job ou ce qu'il en reste* that was created at the Cumulus festival. He also went on stage in *L'Augmentation* by Georges Perec under the direction of Étienne Blanc at the Théâtre de la Jonquière in April 2011. In July 2012, he played in *Andromaque* by Racine at the Théâtre de l'Etoile du Nord directed by Naïs El Fassi. He has been working at the Théâtre National de Toulouse since December 2012 as part of his training at « L'Atelier ». This is how he was able to work with Blandine Savetier, Emmanuel Daumas, Richard Brunel, Charlotte Farcet, Wajdi Mouawad, Bérangère Vantusso, Sébastien Bournac, Marion Muzac and Jean Bellorini. He also performed in three plays by Laurent Pelly at the TNT. In 2013 in *Mangeront-ils ?* by Victor Hugo, *Extraordinaire* based on Edgar Allan Poe and in March and April 2014 in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by William Shakespeare.

## General and technical information

On tour...

This show is adaptable to any location or venue. It is available in two versions:

- A "commando" version for all non-fitted locations.

The auditorium should however ensure: good visibility for the audience (stands or an elevated stage if there is a large public), at least partial darkness during the day to set the lighting and complete darkness in the evening, and a black floor.

- Installation in the morning for a show on the same night

- 7 people on tour from Paris (4 comedians – 2 technicians and 1 assistant director / technician)

- Setting shipped from Paris: 20 m<sup>3</sup> (max) – the crew will bring as much equipment as possible

- Precise technical requirements fixed in January 2015, at the time of creation

- 1 technician at reception will be necessary

Minimum stage measurements: 6m x 8m if it is a platform stage – no other specific requirements.

- A version for a performance hall equipped with lightings: 4 installation gigs, performance on the 5<sup>th</sup> gig

- Installation begins on D-1

- 7/8 people on tour (4 comedians – 2 technicians and 1 assistant director / technician, 1 tour manager)

- Setting shipped from Paris: 20 m<sup>3</sup> (max)

Minimum stage measurements: in principle a 9-meter front, 8-meter depth, minimum 5-meter height – technical data finalized on the creation in January 2015 (if your stage is smaller, please contact us to verify the feasibility)

Show suitable for: 15 y-o and older

Dismantling: at the end of the performance - 1 gig

Duration of the show: about 1:45 (to be confirmed)

