

World Theatre Day, March 27th 2015 Quebec message

Divide.

Divide us. It seems like they put that in their heads. The good old tactic of letting people destroy each other while this new nobility grovels before a crushing austerity. Divide. So that we start saying that he or she has more value. So that we start pushing each other in front of the funding's empty plates. So that we start pretending that we are so much more relevant, so much better, that we should give more to the younger ones, that they already have too much, that the older ones should keep their mouths shut, that the creation of new plays is so much better, that repertory theatre takes up too much space or that some other theatre is too elitist. Name it. Just insert your « my theatre is better than yours » argument here. Let's talk as if we were starving people in front of empty plates. Divide. Divide everywhere. So that we can blame it on our neighbour's pension or social benefits. So that we can feed the resentful machine of the poor. Divide society into efficient people, inefficient people, taxpayers, employable people, job creators, 60% of these, 40% of those, 50% + 1. Remember to put everyone into small boxes so that we may all forget that we are human. Divide to make us hate each other. Divide because it is the only weapon that their advisers, image makers and looking-away pros know how to handle.

Refuse.

Refuse clearly and abruptly.

Refuse this thankless role, this dishonest, gutless, and vulgar score that they want to put into our mouths. Speak on our behalf. Loudly. Frankly. Refuse speeches from those that are ready to hang their neighbour with the strings of the puppets that they are. Refuse, even by defending works that we find boring, pretentious or too popular. Again, insert your « my theatre deserves more money than yours » argument here. Refuse to spit on the ones who might have had it easier than us. Denounce *bullshit*, botchery. Yes, always. But refuse that our differences turn into discrepancy. Refuse. Is that clear?

Fight.

With our hearts. Our ultimate weapon. Our weapon of mass unification.

Assert.

That we're here, insensitive to what they will say to play us off against each other. Assert that we are helping to build a society that is more equitable, more beautiful, and more vibrant. We are not downloadable. We are not church basement games hiding behind the façade of variety shows. We are not the empty fantasies of silicone-filled breasts. We are a living art that speaks to our fellow people. We are full-fledged citizens. We work. Yes, we work while cutback advocates, bragging about their golden bonuses, are putting out smoke and mirrors, and drowning morality on corrupt and oily boats of money men basking in the sun. Hear our message, dear pre-made counts and countesses wearing cheap, laminated smiles: your hallway handshakes and repeated lies are worthless. Keep the austerity you want to shove down our throats to yourself and to your tax havens' tacky gods. The bleak future you claim to draw for our children does not interest us. The one we believe in is fair, green, solidary, sensitive, cultured, and educated. Offer us this kind of future and we will follow.

Celebrate.

Not only on this World Theatre Day, but on every single day. Celebrate because they would be all too happy to see us dealing with the gloominess that they want to dump into our heads. Celebrate with women, men, and children who come to the theatre to hear what humankind has to say and therefore, to live a better life. Celebrate the fact that we have hardly begun to take our rightful place. Celebrate our history. But above all, celebrate the history that free men and women are about to make with actions and words. ■

Fabien Cloutier Biography



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Fabien Cloutier is a rising star in the Quebec theatre scene. He is a Quebecois actor, and playwright the author of eight plays. He wrote and performed *Scotstown*, his first solo show in the raw and caustic tone which won the "Coup de coeur" at Zoofest in the 2010 Just For Laughs Festival. Cloutier next appeared as this infamous character in a sequel called *Cranbourne* described as a "tour de force" by critics and which was a finalist for the Michel Tremblay Prize, Best Writing for the stage in the 2011-2012 season. Fabien Cloutier's powerful writing with its relentless rhythm has earned him a solid reputation over the years. His more theatrical text, *Billy (The Days of Howling)*, won the Gratien Gelinas Prize in 2011. This text has been nominated for the Governor General's Literary Award. It was presented in Guadeloupe, Martinique in 2012 and translated into German and English. *Billy (Les jours de hurlement)* was produced professionally by Theatre du Grand Jour at La Licorne Theatre in Montreal (2012). The play will be remounted in French in September 2013 and will then tour in Quebec. Talisman's 2014 production will be the English-language premiere of *Billy*. In October 2014, *Pour réussir un poulet*, a play of which Cloutier is both author and director was produced by La Manufacture Theatre and presented on stage at La Licorne Theatre in Montreal. ■

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The Conseil québécois du théâtre welcomes the contribution of Quebec theater international
artistic influence of Quebec and Canada.

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