FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Seuls en Scène - Princeton French Theater Festival
Celebrated French theater artists converge onstage at Princeton University
6th Edition of the Festival

1: Tiago Rodrigues in By Heart, photo by Magda Bizarro
2: Dorothée Munyaneza in Unwanted, photo by Bruce Clarke
3: Maurin Olles in Portrait(s) Foucault—Letzlove, photo by Tristan Jeanne-Valès
4: Judith Henry and Nicolas Bouchaud in Interview, photo by Mathilde Priolet

(Princeton, NJ) Princeton University’s Lewis Center for the Arts, Department of French and Italian, and L’Avant-Scène will present the sixth annual Seuls en Scène French Theater Festival, which will take place from September 15 to 30 at venues across the University’s campus. Some performances will be in English, while others will be in French with English subtitles; all are free and open to the public.
Seuls en Scène ushers in the 17th season of L’Avant-Scène, a French theater troupe of Princeton students. It also celebrates professional theatrical achievements from the past year: many of the invited artists to Seuls en Scène are prominent contributors to contemporary theater in France. The festival is organized by Florent Masse, Senior Lecturer in the Department of French and Italian and director of L’Avant-Scène.

The festival begins with Nicolas Truong’s Interview, featuring Judith Henry and Nicolas Bouchaud, on September 15 and 16 at 8 p.m. at the Matthews Acting Studio, 185 Nassau Street. Interview has a special tie to Princeton: its first rehearsals occurred during Seuls en Scène 2015 with space provided by the University. Since its local beginnings, Interview has grown into a well-reviewed play. It debuted at the 2016 Avignon Theater Festival and continued with a successful French tour. In the play, Judith Henry and Nicolas Bouchaud take turns answering the interview questions that saturate our media. They become politicians, artists, and athletes in turn, all trying to avoid tropes and keep their responses true.

Renowned playwright, former head of T2G-Théâtre de Gennevilliers, and recent creator of a new theater company, Structure Production, Pascal Rambert returns to Princeton to present Le début de l’A., the prequel to the play he presented at last year’s festival. Rambert will read Le début de l’A. with Academy Award-winner Marina Hands on September 20 and 21 at 8 p.m. at the Matthews Acting Studio. Rambert wrote the play in the summer of 2000 after beginning a relationship with an artistic collaborator. He imagines conversations with her, rehearses and dissects them. Le début de l’A. is integral to his body of work; it was one of his first successes and defines his style, where internal monologue becomes external performance. Rambert’s productions have toured the world, and he is regularly invited to perform in the United States. His reading will be preceded by L’Art du Théâtre, a manifesto of the actor’s craft, written and directed by Rambert, performed by Arthur Nauzyciel, and declaimed to his dog Elboy.

Tiago Rodrigues will present his play, By Heart, on September 22 and 23 at 8 p.m. By Heart premiered in 2013 and is considered the turning point of his career. Rodrigues was recently appointed the youngest-ever artistic director of Portugal’s national theater, the Teatro Nacional D. Maria II Lisboa. Appropriately, he chooses as his subject the nonlinear transmission of knowledge between generations: a blind grandmother asks her grandson to read her a book so
that she may learn it by heart. Rodrigues uses ten audience volunteers to participate in the reading and learning of that text, making them complicit in the text’s fiction—and in the situation’s reality.

Olivier Py, current artistic director of the venerable Avignon Theater Festival, makes his Princeton debut directing Prométhée Enchaîné and Les Suppliantes, two pieces inspired by Aeschylus’s original text and separated by a short intermission. They will be performed at the Butler College Amphitheater, on September 23 at 2 p.m. and September 24 at 5 p.m. Py first presented the pieces at the 2016 Avignon Theater Festival. The plays, about a god who breaks the rules by giving man art and fire, have since toured France. Py calls any rebel’s story “fundamentally political.” Prometheus defies divine order, and in doing so, offers a glimpse of what comes after an insurrection.

On September 26 and 27 at 8 p.m. in the Matthews Acting Studio, Dorothée Munyaneza presents Unwanted. She performs her work in English and investigates the women of the Rwandan genocide, their stories, the rape they experienced, and the fate of the female body. Unwanted is Munyaneza’s second work. She enlists South African visual artist Bruce Clarke, composer Alain Mahé, and Afro-American musician Holland Andrews to tell her story with song and dance where words begin to fail; by telling a personal story, she offers dignity to those who suffered anonymously without.

Portrait(s) Foucault—Letzlove by Pierre Maillet will play at the Matthews Acting Studio on September 28 and 29 at 8 p.m. Maillet uses a book of conversations between philosopher Michel Foucault and young hitchhiker Thierry Voetzel, who was at first unaware of his driver’s identity. Together, they discuss the main topics of summer 1975, namely new attitudes toward family, drugs, and music. What starts as a text about Thierry becomes a portrait of Foucault, and an innocuous narrative becomes a study of revolution. Maillet is currently supported by the Comédie de Caen and the Comédie de Saint-Étienne, and Portrait(s) Foucault—Letzlove debuted in the 2016-2017 theater season to critical acclaim.

Guillaume Vincent presents Myrrha, an excerpt from his recent show, Songes et Métamorphoses, on September 30 at 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. at the Whitman College Class of 1970
Theater. He tells the story of several Ovidian myths as they are understood by high schoolers who learn about them in school. In the students’ eyes, the myths take on existential meaning that redefines the bounds of performance. Vincent is a rising French director and previously came to Princeton to perform at Seuls en Scène 2013.

This edition of the festival will continue partnerships with New York City French cultural organizations and institutions, and the Cultural Services of the French Embassy/French Institute Alliance Française. Several shows and guest artists of this year’s edition of Seuls en Scène will be presented elsewhere during their stay in North America.

Discussion with the artistic teams of the shows will follow each performance. During their visits, festival artists will offer master classes for Princeton students related to their current theatrical productions. They will also participate in Program in Theater classes, such as the French Theater Workshop course, and L’Avant-Scène.

On October 7 at 4:00 p.m., L’Avant-Scène will present key scenes from Jean Racine’s Phaèdra in a new translation by Princeton senior Marc Decitre as part of A Festival of the Arts that will celebrate the opening of the new Lewis Arts complex. The opening festival will run from October 5 through 8 at the arts complex and venues throughout the campus and will feature dozens of performances, concerts, readings, exhibitions, screenings, master classes, jam sessions, lectures and other events open to the public, most of them free.

L’Avant-Scène anticipates a full year of programming. Masse plans to direct several student-acted plays, and troupe members will have the opportunity to participate in master classes led by prominent members of the French theater scene. This spring, L’Avant-Scène will receive a particularly significant guest: Guillaume Gallienne, one of the stars of the Comédie-Française, is coming to Princeton as a Council of the Humanities Long-Term Visiting Fellow. He will teach the Advanced French Theater Workshop, an advanced theater class taught entirely in French, and will also lead an English-language workshop about Chekhov for students in the Program in Theater.
Masse, who curates the Festival, was trained as an actor and director at the University of Lille and Lille National Theater under Daniel Mesguich. He later pursued his theater studies at Amherst College as a Levy-Despas Fellow and a teaching assistant in the Department of French. It is there that he originated L’Avant-Scène, a program that combines language and dramatic training. He has directed more than 50 full-length productions of canonical and new works of French theater since arriving at Princeton in 2001, and he has hosted several prominent theater artists. In 2017, he was named Chevalier of Arts and Letters by the French Minister of Culture.

The Festival is being presented by the Lewis Center for the Arts, the Department of French and Italian, and L’Avant-Scène with support through the Lewis Center’s Arts Initiative Partners program, which annually seeks unique arts partnership projects with other University departments and affiliated groups and individuals. Additional support is provided by Princeton University’s Department of French and Italian, the Council of the Humanities, the Department of African American Studies, the Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies (PIIRS), the Seeger Center for Hellenic Studies, the Department of Classics, Rockefeller College, the Jeune Théâtre National (JTN), and the Cultural Services of the French Embassy.

Further information about L’Avant-Scène can be found at https://fit.princeton.edu/lavant-scène.

For more information on the Princeton French Theater Festival and the more than 100 events presented by the Lewis Center each year, visit arts.princeton.edu.

EVENT SCHEDULE

Seuls en Scène 2017 presents Interview
Nicolas Truong, Judith Henry & Nicolas Bouchaud
September 15-16 at 8 pm
Matthews Acting Studio, 185 Nassau Street
Duration: 90 minutes, no intermission
Performed in French

Seuls en Scène presents L’Art du théâtre & Le début de l’A.
Pascal Rambert
September 20-21 at 8 pm
Matthews Acting Studio, 185 Nassau Street
Duration: 100 minutes with intermission between the two shows
Performed in French (with English subtitles)

Seuls en Scène 2017 presents By Heart
**Tiago Rodrigues**  
Teatro Nacional D. Maria II Lisboa  
September 22-23 at 8 pm  
Matthews Acting Studio, 185 Nassau Street  
Duration: 75 minutes, no intermission  
Friday, September 22 - Performance in French  
Saturday, September 23 - Performance in English

Seuls en Scène 2017 presents *Prométhée Enchainé & Les Suppliantes*  
Aeschylus/Olivier Py  
September 23 at 2 pm & September 24 at 5 pm  
Butler College Amphitheater (Rain Location TBA)  
Duration: Prométhée Enchaîné 50 min. - Intermission - Les Suppliantes 45 min.  
Performed in French (with English Subtitles)

Seuls en Scène 2017 presents *Unwanted*  
Dorothée Munyaneza  
September 26-27 at 8 pm  
Matthews Acting Studio, 185 Nassau Street  
Duration: 80 minutes, no intermission  
Performed in English

Seuls en Scène 2017 presents *Portrait(s) Foucault - Letzlove*  
Pierre Maillot  
September 28-29 at 8 pm  
Matthews Acting Studio, 185 Nassau Street  
Duration: 80 minutes, no intermission  
Performed in French

Seuls en Scène 2017 presents *A Staged Reading*  
Guillaume Vincent – Émilie Incerti Formentini  
September 29 at 5 pm  
Whitman College Class of 1970  
Duration: 60 minutes, no intermission  
Performed in French

Seuls en Scène 2017 presents *Myrrha*  
Guillaume Vincent  
September 30 at 4 pm & 8 pm  
Whitman College Class of 1970 Theater  
Duration: 60 minutes, no intermission  
Performed in French

*Admission to all Festival events is free but reservations are required by visiting:*  

*For more information on the Festival, please contact Florent Masse, Department of French and Italian fmasse@princeton.edu*