

Denis Marleau

Artistic Director, French Theatre

Denis Marleau trained at the Conservatoire d'art dramatique de Montréal, and in 1982 founded Théâtre UBU. His first production with the company, a re-mount of *Cœur à gaz et autres textes DADA* (a show he had premiered a year earlier at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal), marked the beginning of a series of performance/collages inspired by the works of Schwitters, Picasso, Mayakovsky and Kruchonych, by way of Jarry, Queneau and l'Oulipo*. Over the years, whether presenting the works of these avant-garde authors or works by Mishima, Pasolini, Koltès, Beckett or composer Maurizio Kagel, Mr. Marleau developed a unique style that embraced performance and visual art, dance and theatre, music and poetry. This is UBU'S signature: an interdisciplinary vision with the text as its central focus.

In the mid-1990s Denis Marleau turned his attention to the major works of the modern German dramatic repertoire, including Büchner's *Woyzeck*, Wedekind's *Lulu*, Lessing's *Nathan le Sage*, and Goethe's *Urfaust*, which were produced in Brussels, in Montreal, in the Court of Honour of the Papal Palace in Avignon (France), and in Weimar, respectively. He also wrote stage adaptations of two novels, Thomas Bernhard's *Maîtres anciens* (1995) and Antonio Tabucchi's *Les Trois Derniers Jours de Fernando Pessoa* (1997), both of which toured Europe. For the Festival d'Avignon he has directed two plays by Quebec author Normand Chaurette: *Le Passage de l'Indiana* (1996) and *Le Petit Köchel* (2000). Most recently, at the National Arts Centre Studio, he directed *Catoblépas* (2001), Québécois author Gaétan Soucy's first play.

After two decades of collaboration with such outstanding performers as Carl Béchar, Danièle Panneton, Pierre Lebeau, Henri Chassé, Christiane Pasquier, Paul Savoie, Céline Bonnier, Pierre Collin and Gabriel Gascon, artists and designers Michel Goulet, Claude Goyette and Zaven Paré, and composers Jean Derome, Denis Gougeon and John Rea, Denis Marleau and UBU – still of no fixed address, always in search of a permanent performance space – continue their exploration of scripts that are rarely staged.

Following the premiere of *Intérieur* by Belgian symbolist Maurice Maeterlinck at the Théâtre du Rideau Vert in 2001, Denis Marleau returned to Maeterlinck and to the Musée d'art contemporain with a composite work based on Maeterlinck's *Les Aveugles*: a theatrical installation that uses video and sound to foreground the "double," poised between life and death – a figure that appears in many of Marleau's productions.

In December 2000 Denis Marleau was appointed Artistic Director of the French Theatre of the National Arts Centre.

- * "L'Oulipo" is an abbreviation for L'Ouvroir de Littérature potentielle (literally, "workshop for potential literature"), a collective of writers (including Raymond Queneau and Georges Pérec) dedicated to the revival of traditional literary forms, usually with a playful twist.