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13th World Puppet Theater Festival Charleville-Mézières/Champagne-Ardenne September 19 - 28, 2003

The Festival Mondial des Théâtres de Marionnettes is held every three years in Charleville-Mézières (just 54 miles northeast of Rheims) and opens its doors to the cultures and traditions of all continents. This international gathering of puppeteers is the largest of its kind and in 2000 welcomed 120,000 spectators of all ages.

A FESTIVE ATMOSPHERE

The main venues for the performances are conveniently located in the center of historic Charleville-Mézières with some 600 shows planned over the nine-day period. The streets and squares are filled with a variety of acts that create a festive and friendly atmosphere. The lively bistros and cafés serve as the gathering spots for the puppeteers, many of whom are young talents searching to launch successful careers. Here the ancient traditional styles meet the avant-garde marionettes and with the mix of cultures, the techniques are constantly refined and renewed.

2003: FOCUS ON FRENCH-SPEAKING COUNTRIES

The 2003 Festival will highlight French language and culture. A special focus will be on the puppeteers from France as well as French-speaking African, Asian, American and European countries. Performers from Burkina, Mali, Togo, Quebec, Algeria, Switzerland and Belgium will participate. Also a special welcome will be given to those who present their shows in French.

Participating companies:

- *Mandalay Marionettes (Burma)
 - *Sandglass Theater (USA)
 - *Teatro Gioco Vita (Italy)
 - *Jordi Bertran (Spain)
 - *Philippe Genty (France) (subject to confirmation)
 - *Stuffed Puppet (The Netherlands)
 - *Green Ginger (Great Britain)
 - *Théâtre de Sable (Quebec)
 - *L'Avant Pays Marionnettes (Quebec)
 - *Les Sages Fous (Quebec)
- Additional participating companies will be announced at a later date.

Exhibitions:

- *Temps Fort Théâtre (France)
 - *African Masks and Fetishes
 - *Les Ramoneurs Cérébraux (Quebec)
- Additional exhibitions will be announced at a later date.

FESTIVAL HISTORY

Founded in 1961, the Festival Mondial des Théâtres de Marionnettes started with a small amateur company of puppeteers from the Ardennes with its French, Belgian, English, German and Luxembourg counterparts. At that time, in Western Europe, puppetry was considered to be mostly for the pleasure children. The festival exposed the world to the sophistication and complexity of the art and inspired an interest that has grown into international proportions.



CHARLEVILLE-MEZIERES

Charleville, the architectural fantasy of a 17th-century Italian prince, and the once fortified town of Mézières joined together in 1966 to become one city. Charleville-Mézières is the capital of the department of Ardennes in the region of Champagne-Ardenne. It is home to the Ecole Supérieure Nationale des Arts de la Marionnette, an international institute of puppetry founded in 1981.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Comité d'Organisation du Festival Mondial des Théâtres de Marionnettes
BP 249 08103
Charleville-Mézières Cedex
Tel: 011-33 (0) 3 24 59 94 94
Fax: 011-33 (0) 3 24 56 05 10
E-mail: festival@marionnette.com
Web site: www.marionnettes.com

**TRAVEL INFORMATION:**

Getting there by train: 7 to 8 trains leave daily from Paris-Gare de l'Est to Charleville-Mézières. The SNCF offers reduced fares from 25% to 50% (offer subject to conditions) for tickets to Charleville-Mézières. Schedule and fares are available at French train stations, or at Tel: 08 92 35 35 35 - (0.34 €/min) or www.sncf.com

For information on rail passes and schedules from the U.S. visit franceguide.raileurope.com or www.raileurope.com

TOURIST INFORMATION:

Comité Départemental du Tourisme des Ardennes
22-24 Place Ducale
08107 Charleville-Mézières
Tel: 011-33 (0)3 24 56 06 08
Fax: 011-33 (0)3 24 59 20 10
E-mail info@ardennes.com
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Comité Régional de Tourisme de Champagne-Ardenne
Website: www.tourisme-champagne-ardenne.com

For information on the ABCs of France (Alsace, Burgundy and Champagne-Ardenne): www.abcoffrance.com

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