



BISTOURI

One show, two versions...

1. Street theatre, under cover (tent)

2. In a theatre, under a real roof

# Look out...

## This is very important

We appreciate that people who come to see our show would like to know a little more than just the title...

but we also appreciate that the programme they are given does not reveal all the surprises the show holds in store for them...

Therefore the contents of this presentation dossier are not destined to be used in a leaflet for the general public !

It is important to indicate, however, that the minimum age for the public for this show is fixed at 7 years old.

*(You'll find a presentation text for the public on the following page)*



### A show without words

A very important patient in the bed and, at his bedside, the retired "do-it-yourself" surgeon delighted to be back at work.

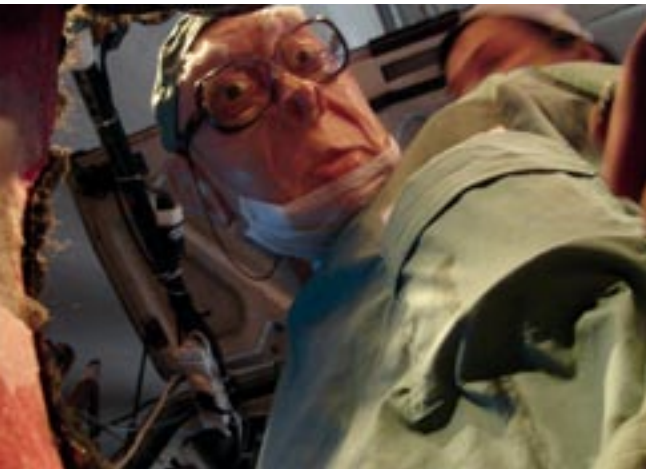
What famous patient has the old tinkerer managed to get hold of and what is at stake in the open-heart surgery about to take place?

One way or the other, the operation is going to be tricky !...

Preying on the weak and oppressed, this mercenary will spare no expense to get what he wants !...

Equipped with all the latest apparatus such as the endoscopic video camera, a state-of-the-art anaesthetising mallet, a scalpel, a tin-opener, a wood-saw, he's ready to take a pleasurable trip into the turbulent entrails of his patient, discover new unexplored regions and perhaps come out of there with the desire to add an extra page or two to the dossier on an immortal myth.

Whatever the outcome, his mission will be accomplished with a certain degree of gravity, a good dose of humour as well as his renowned professionalism !



## Creation team...

**Conception, direction, scenography and puppets:** Alain Moreau

**Script:** Alain Moreau with the help of the actors

**Actors (alternately):** Maxime Durin, Alain Moreau, Dimitri Joukovsky, Julie Tenret, Céline Robaszynski, Léon Knutselaar, Willy Bawette and Jean Dekoning.

**Music:** Max Vandervorst

**Lighting creation:** Dimitri Joukovsky

**Technical advice and image processing:** Benoit Moreau

**Assistant scenography:** Céline Robaszynski and Michel Van brussel

**Assistant construction of the "Bistouri cross":** Florence Teuwen and Philippe Thirion.

The outdoor version of the show was created at Namur on the 19 May 2004, in coproduction with the Festival des Arts Forains "Namur en Mai", with the complicity of "Percursos", a European project led by the 'Centro Cultural de Belém (Lisbon) and with the support of the Communauté Française de Belgique ( French-speaking Community of Belgium), Direction Générale de la Culture (General Direction for Culture), Service Général des Arts de la Scène (General Service for the Performing Arts).



## A show for the “general public” ?...

A part of the philosophy of the company is to not target just one type of audience ! We like to vary the fun and each of our shows has its public depending on what we want to tell them...

We're simply doing theatre, sometimes for children, sometimes for adults and often for both.

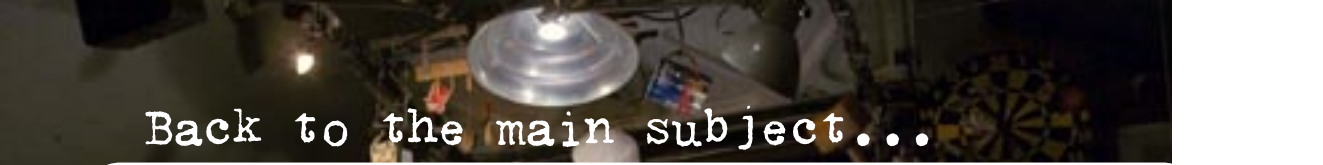
“Bistouri” was first imagined as street theatre, but the street is full of “general public”; adults, children, pensioners, toddlers, dogs, babies...!

Apart from dogs the rest of the population can be found inside a theatre...

We really love babies, toddlers and dogs but this show wasn't created with them in mind as some of the scenes could frighten them... and we have no psychological support on offer following the show !

In order to appreciate the show, children must be at least 7 years old. Parents with babies will have to take turns to watch the show and dogs will have to quietly wait for their masters outside the tent.

Experience has taught us that when young children are in the audience they unfailingly leave after a couple of minutes howling their heads off. On the other hand, dogs howl their heads off but don't leave...




## Back to the main subject...

The idea for the show was not to finally put the big bad wolf to sleep (we've left a certain amount of material for our creative colleagues ...) but to take a little trip inside a bottomless pit, have fun losing ourselves somewhere inside this intriguing belly, discover unexplored regions and come out of it with the desire to add an extra page or two to the dossier on this eternal myth.

From time immemorial the wolf has inspired great terror and even today a number of unsolved mysteries surround him: The Beast of Gévaudan, the two young she-wolves Amala and Kamala, the Man-Wolf of La Louvière, the Werewolf, the Whistling Wolf, the Wolf in sheep's clothes, the Crying Wolf... and we still waiting for news of the Saint Valentine's chicken remains we put in the fridge...

Since earliest antiquity the wolf has inspired many legends and numerous authors have made reference to him: The Grimm brothers, Charles Perrault, Georges Sand...



Bruno Bettelheim and even Tex Avery have crossed swords with him ; so, I said to myself...

It was high time, from both a scientific and artistic standpoint, for the Tof to finally get involved with a character that keeps millions of children from sleeping at night and gives adolescents a subject to fantasize over...

Our surgeons, Léon, Willy and Jean are the worst sort of handymen and tinkerer's and encouraged by the subject itself, they decide to master all the latest techniques to probe the wolfs entrails, the twists and turns of our deep-rooted fears... and they soon mastered the art of the endoscope !

This "modern" technique (the endoscopic video camera) allows the possibility of a sixth level of interaction. The first is the actor himself, the second the actor who manipulates, the third the acting of the manipulated puppet, the fourth the interplay of the actor manipulating the puppet who is itself



manipulating another puppet, the fifth is the relationship between the puppet who is manipulated by a puppet with the actor who is manipulating the puppet (still following ?) and finally, the sixth and last level(?) the video camera which no longer knows who is filming nor who is watching the images produced...

Seriously though, even if these different levels of interaction are the underlay of the show, the video is comical and a trigger for both interesting and ludicrous discoveries.



## Puppets and actors...

More than our previous shows there was a wish to explore the relationship of the actor to his puppet further and also, conversely, to explore the relationship that the puppet can have with his actor.

The power game which can be installed between the two of them is definitely a path that attracts me. The actor is completely visible behind the surgeon/puppet and has the role and the white costume of the nurse. A certain personal playful perversion led me to go as far as putting puppets into the hands of these puppets to observe how they and their actors would come out of it...

The show is played alternately by three different actors with three different puppets of sturdy character. The personality and point of view of the performers concerning the story offers three slightly different shows.



*Alain Moreau, Director*



One show, two versions...

## 1. Street theatre, under cover (tent)

"Bistouri" Street theatre version in a tent for about 70 spectators.

We've been a travelling theatre since we started and right at the beginning of this project there was a real wish to go back and play in the street...

"Its great working in the street... The issues are different and we're allowed to explore new theatre forms in new spaces, go and meet the public... the street belongs to us... you can do what you want !..."

However, playing the show "Eugène, Roi de la Frite" in the streets what was going through my head most of the time was ... "Bloody hell, it's shit when it rains !" ...

"Wasting time waiting for the sun to come out, and then searching for the will to play again once the sun is back... and a host of cancelled shows because of the weather !"

A certain idea had been floating around in my stubborn head for some time ...  
"... and what if we travelled around with our theatre and the 'blackout' we need for the show ?"

Well, now we've done it !

Our ambulance, with tent and seating arrives at the site, a square, a place or a meadow, and we play four times a day...

Our van, disguised as an ambulance and serving as our stage, enters the nursing tent, we open the back doors, bring out the scenery and the seating and install the audience to observe the operation.







In winter, a few heaters raise the seasonal temperature a couple of degrees...

Length of show including seating the audience: 40 minutes

Number of spectators: 70 per show.

## 2. In a theatre, under a real roof

400 shows in our tent gave way to another idea, so we adapted the show to allow it to be played inside a theatre.

This version is longer and also takes place inside the nursing tent, but the public do not enter the tent. The audience is seated facing the tent which opens up to reveal the workshop/operating theatre where the surgeons operate.

Length of show: 50 minutes

Number of spectators: 130 per show





## Our technical needs are...

### “Bistouri” street version

- > A flat space, sheltered from sunlight if possible. A site where people come and go and which is at a short distance from other shows (to avoid mutual interference) is fine
- > Net area (tent and van): 15m X 9m
- > 2 stage hands for load in, set-up , bring-down and loading
- > Electricity: 2 x 16 amps (220v monophase)
- > Night-time performances... provide lighting to light the outside of the tent
- > Windy weather, tarmac or paved ground surface, provide ballasting for the tent
- > Even though our van has an alarm we need you to provide us with a guarding eye when we are not there (at night time when we sleep and at meal-times when we eat).

**Set-up:** 5 hours (In general we set-up the day before the show and bring-down the day after the last show).



### “Bistouri” theatre version

- > Number of spectators: 130 maximum
- > Stage area: Opening: 8m ; Depth: 6m (+ space between edge of scenery and first row of spectators) ; Height: 4m
- > Amperage: 2 x 16 amps / 220v mono + 1 sound circuit (220v)
- > TOTAL BLACKOUT IS ESSENTIAL.

**Set-up:** 3 hours.





## Newspaper critiques...

A large white tent, a field hospital, sits proudly in a park avenue. The spectators wait politely for the doors to open. Suddenly a bespectacled old docteur with thinning hair and his assistant-manipulator emerge from nowhere and after a brief disinfection session, we're allowed to enter the hospital. The time to sit down and appreciate the operating room full of odds and ends ; a dart board here, a teapot there, a heap of machines and miscellaneous stuff which one supposes has some sort of close or distant connection to the operation, and the serious stuff starts....

The Tof Théâtre puppets are splendid, their aspect in itself is comical with their mad globular eyes and wrinkled faces. The manipulation is also finely tunes giving life and energy to a surgical operation Tex Avery style. The audience is alert from start to finish waiting to discover what delicious treasures the professor will drag out from the body which is a never ending fountain of surprises and source of play.

We can't reveal what these treasures are without taking away from the show itself, but they are perhaps not so surprising once you know who the famous face with the anonymous body belongs to.

Definitely to be discovered.

## Newspaper critiques...

Also very good with their hands, the Tof Théâtre brings us "Bistouri" which plunges us into the belly of one of our most fabled individuals. Beneath the white canvas of a field hospital the clobber gathered together by Alain Moreau and Maxime Durin is splendid as is their manipulation of the large puppets and their endoscopic comedy. A successful operation well in tune with the atmosphere of the festival: certainly light but beneficial.

[ Laurent Ancion, Le Soir ]

Hit for Tof Théâtre, success for Benno Besson.

(...) The senses jump to life to take our subconsciousness towards a field hospital where the amazing "Bistouri" by the Tof théâtre is playing. The scenery is very realistic, a van and a white tent at the heart of which reigns the surrealist operating table, a puppet surgeon visibly manipulated by a nurse. Under the sheets, only the over-sized belly of the patient can be seen. Using his bistoury, the surgeon extracts our deepest and most engulfing fears .....our venality too, all this retransmitted by monitor. (...) Laughs and guaranteed success thanks to the wonderful complicity between the actor and his marionette. (...)

[ Laurence Bertels, La Libre Belgique ]



## Story of the company...



**The Tof Theatre** was born in 1986 on Alain Moreau's initiative and at the creation of the show "Le Tour du Bloc".

Originally created for an adult audience, the show was re-worked and presented in its young peoples version. It was selected to play at the Rencontres/Sélections d'Arlon. The show was a immense success and went on to play 500 times around the world: Flanders and numerous european countries, ex-USSR, Canada, USA, ...

Adept of "miniature realism" the Tof perverts traditional puppet manipulation techniques and allows the spectator to see the manipulator. The puppet, often the centre of the shows and measuring from 5 centimetres to 5 metres, is not destined exclusively for young peoples theatre. Often without words, the shows are conceived for a larger public where the pleasure can be shared by parents, children, and grand parents.

Moving out of the darkness of the theatre, the Tof Théâtre is also present on the streets with "Les Bénévoles", "Bistouri" and the show "Eugène, Roi de la frite", a sort of a poem to the glory of roadside gastronomy where a tiny puppet cooks real mini French fries in front of your very eyes and with no safety net !... Since 2001 the company has been regulated by the decree relating to children and young peoples theatre and benefits thus from the support of the Minister for the French-speaking Community of Belgium, the General Direction for Culture, General Services for the Performing Arts.

The Tof Théâtre is a member of the Chamber of Children and Young Peoples Theatre (C.T.E.J) and UNIMA.

## Countries that have organised Tof Théâtre tours:

France, Holland, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Great Britain, Slovakia, Canada, USA, Germany, Switzerland, Grand duchy of Luxembourg, Denmark, Byelorussia, Austria, Finland, Israel, Brazil, Tchequia, Ukrainia.

## Madness...

**In 1996**, the Tof decided to organise an international puppet festival at Genappe... And it worked !... The event was named "DES PIEDS ET DES MAINS". We did the whole thing again in 1998 and the event was attended by more than 5000 people during the four day festival. A lack of time and above all financial support has put the festival 'out to grass' for an undetermined length of time...

**In 2001**, the Tof initiated "Le Petit Bazar Erotik" with the complicity of ten European companies

Created at the Halles de Schaerbeek this grand ambulatory evening was presented some 25 times in Europe despite the considerable weight of the project, the 20 or so participants, all working with small forms associated with puppets, objects and eroticism.

**From 2002 to 2006** our madness was less obvious... even though !

The Tof set up in an old run-down cinema in Genappe ( close to Brussels), the 'MONTY'. Some time later and after much sweat, a welcoming bar, a small theatre with seating for 100 spectators opened to the public from time to time for evenings where shows or parts of shows in creation are presented.





## Shows created...

**1987 "le Tour du Bloc"** (Co-produced with La Filipendule) conception: Alain Moreau, script, scenography and puppets: Agnès Lebrun and Alain Moreau, "Outside eye": Ioanna Gkizas.

550 performances in Belgium, France, Holland, Spain, Austria, Switzerland, Canada, Slovakia, Ex-USSR, England, USA

**1988 "Radio Tom"**, conception and scenography: Alain Moreau, puppets: Antoinette Brouyaux, direction: Francys Begasse.

200 performances in Belgium, France, Holland

**1992 "Camping Sauvage"**, conception, direction, scenography and puppets: Alain Moreau, Script: Alain Moreau and Caroline Bergeron

530 performances in Belgium, France, Holland, Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, Denmark, Canada

Coup de Cœur de la Presse, 'Pierre Thonon' award and special mention by the jury for exceptional work on emotions at the Rencontres/Selection at Huy 1992

**1995 "Cabane"**, direction, scenography and puppets: Alain Moreau, script: Alain Moreau and Caroline Bergeron.

550 performances in Belgium, France, Holland, Germany, Italy, Spain, Denmark, Austria, Portugal, Switzerland, Canada, Israel.

Rencontres/Selection at HUY 1995 awarded: Minister of Culture Prize, City of Huy prize, Coup de Foudre from the press, special mention by the jury. Grand Prix from the jury at the International Puppet Festival and Animated Forms at Cannes in 1998

**1996 "Eugène, Roi de la frite"**, conception, direction, scenography and puppets: Alain Moreau.

Street theatre, 800 performances in Belgium, Holland, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Finland, Denmark, England, Austria, Portugal, Switzerland, Canada.

1998 **"Patraque"**, direction, scenography and puppets: Alain Moreau, Script: Alain Moreau and Caroline Bergeron, Assistant director: Caroline Bergeron. 530 performances in Belgium, France, Holland, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Canada.

Rencontres/Selection at Huy 199 awarded: Special mention by the jury for "the exceptional work on emotions and retranscription of daily life", "Coup de Cœur" from the press.

2001 **"Le Petit Bazar Erotik"**, co-conception and co-direction: Alain Moreau and Caroline Bergeron, 25 performances in Belgium, France, Spain and Portugal.

Participating companies: Vélo-Théâtre (F), Théâtre Manarf (F), Théâtre de Cuisine (F), Green Ginger/Pickled Image (GB), Turak (F), La Balestra (F), Les Petits Miracles (F), Compagnie Gare Centrale (B) and Laïka (B)  
Co-produced with the Halles de Schaerbeek, EQUINOXE, National theatre of Chateauroux and La Laiterie in Strasbourg.

Within the framework of Premis Fad Sebatia Gasch, awarded the "Aplaudiment Internacional Joan German Schreöder" in Barcelona in 2002. Prize for the best foreign show of the season in Catalonia.



2002 **"Les Zakouskis Erotiks"**, conception, script, direction, scenography and puppets: Alain Moreau.

60 performances in Belgium, Switzerland, France, Germany, Holland, Austria.

**2002 "Duel"**, conception, direction and scenography: Caroline Bergeron, assisted by Alain Moreau for the direction.

50 performances in Belgium, France, Portugal, Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. Co-produced with the Centro Cultural de Belém (Portugal), and Très Tôt Théâtre, Quimper.

**2003 "A Tout Jamais ! / Lebwohl, bis morgen !"**, conception, script (in collaboration with the actors ), direction, scenography and puppets: Alain Moreau. Co-produced with the Theater Marabu, Bonn.

150 performances to date in Belgium, France, Switzerland, Germany, Byelorussia, Portugal, Brazil, Italia, Holland, Tchequia.

"Coup de Cœur" from the press and the Minister for Young Children and Fundamental Education prize at the RencontresThéâtre Jeune Public at Huy 2003.

**2004 "Bistouri"** (street version) conception, script (in collaboration with the actors), direction, scenography and puppets: Alain Moreau.

Co-produced with the Festival des Arts Forains "Namur en mai", complicity with "Percursos", european project lead by the Centro Cultural de Belém. Performances in Belgium, France, Switzerland, Spain, Italy, Canada, Portugal, Israel.





**2005 "Les Bénévoles"** (events and shows) conception, script, direction, scenography and puppets: Alain Moreau.

Co-produced with PASS- Scientific adventure park Mons-Frameries, the Théâtre de Namur/Dramatic Centre. With the participation of the Centre des Arts Scéniques (Performing Arts Centre), and with the complicity of the festival "Théâtre à Tout Age", Quimper.

Performances in Belgium and France.

**2006 "Bistouri"** (theatre version) conception, script (in collaboration with the actors), direction, scenography and puppets : Alain Moreau.

**2007/2008 Creation of a show about Jean** (one of our three surgeons and one of our "Bénévoles") and revival of our shows "**Cabane**", "**Eugène, Roi de la Frite**", on the occasion of the 21st birthday of the Tof Théâtre...







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