

Théâtre de l'œil

CORBEAU

de JEAN-FRÉDÉRIC MESSIER

RAVEN

English Translation:
MAUREEN LABONTÉ



Coopérative de développement
Québec

Ministère de la Culture
et des Communications

Ministère de la Culture
et des Communications

TUE

!!! ATTENTION !!!

ENGLISH VERSION PROJECT UNDER STUDY.

English script, translated by Maureen LaBonté, available on demand.

Théâtre de l'oeil

" We want, with the character of the grandmother, to make understand the importance of the transmission of the values through the generations. "

André Laliberté, Artistic Director

25th production

Script
Jean-Frédéric Messier

English Translation
Maureen LaBonté

Direction
André Laliberté

Set and Puppets
Richard Lacroix

Music
Libert Subirana

Lighting
Gilles Perron



Audience: 5 years old up

Marketing : Jocelyne Losier losier@theatredeloeil.qc.ca

CORBEAU/RAVEN received an Audience Award and a special mention for its props from the Young Critics given by the Arrière Scène (Dramatic Art Center for the childhood and the youth in Montérégie), 2013-14.

CORBEAU/RAVEN premiered in October 2012 at Maison Théâtre (Montreal) after a residency at Maison de la culture de Villeray–St-Michel–Parc-Extension.

CORBEAU/RAVEN is also a book published in French by L'instant même in Québec City. It combines the full text of the play, Richard Lacroix's storyboard, workshop and stage photographs, as well as a portrait of the company over its forty-year history. And it's all skilfully put together by Michelle Chanonat

Raven, or the story of Nukum



© R. Lacroix Nukum – Child



Nukum – Young women



Nukum - Grand-mother

The Story...

When Saskia was little, she would go camping in the woods with her cousins. Her grandmother, Nukum, would tell them stories of the raven. Nukum had known the raven ever since she was a child. The bird had once stolen some of her French fries and, later, even stole some fish. In return, he told her some of his most celebrated stories. And then one summer, the raven appeared in the form of someone whom Nukum had loved dearly.

Inspired by the figure of the raven, found in many First Nations legends, the play illustrates how culture is passed on and the special bond between grandparents and their grandchildren. It shows humans as part of the animal family and tells of their Relationship with an unseen world.

40 Seasons of Happiness

Interview with André Laliberté, Director of the show and of the company



"This 25th production tips its hat to the company's first show that also featured a raven," says André Laliberté. After introducing many authors to the art of writing for puppet theatre, he chose to work with Jean-Frédéric Messier: "Both his writing and his sensitivity appeal to me. Corbeau was inspired by an Aboriginal legend, but it's a universal tale that focuses on the importance of transmission of culture from one generation to the next. In this production, I wanted to keep the feel of a traditional story, including a narrative voice, and a more prominent presence of the puppeteers."

After two productions that featured guest directors (Javier Swedsky for *Ah, la vache ! / Holy Cow!* and Simon Boudreault for *Sur 3 pattes / 3-Legged Tale*), can we qualify *Corbeau* as André Laliberté's return to stage direction? He replies with a smile: *"But I've never left ..."*

As a gift to all of us, André Laliberté has gathered his loyal partners for this 25th production that marks the company's 40th season. *"The rear guard"*, as Laliberté affectionately calls them, consists of: Richard Lacroix (set and puppet design), Libert Subirana (musical score) and Gilles Perron (lighting).

Why not a raven?

Interview with Jean-Frédéric Messier, Author



© D. Chartrand

Jean-Frédéric Messier is a playwright, director, musician, *Momentum Theatre Company* founder and co artistic director. He has written several plays for young audiences (*Wigwam* for *Théâtre des Confettis* and *Au moment de sa disparition* for *Théâtre Le Clou*). A neophyte when it comes to puppetry, he has written two plays simultaneously: *Corbeau* and *Kanata, une histoire renversée (1^{ère} partie)*, for *Théâtre du Sous-marin jaune* and its famous *Loup Bleu* that premiered in 2011 at Quebec's *Théâtre de la Bordée*. *"I discovered the puppet's tremendous power of subversion, something that I had not quite been aware of before. You can have them say all sorts of things you would never ask a human being to say!"* he said with wry smile.

Raven is the result of three years of work with André Laliberté. Back to the keyboard one hundred times.¹ *"For some strange reason, I figured a bird puppet would be cliché, so I deliberately avoided the raven and wrote a tale about a coyote. This went on for six months. Then one day, André simply asked me: why not a raven?"*

The trickster

Jean-Frédéric Messier has been exploring Aboriginal culture for the past twenty years. Right from the outset of his research, he could relate to what he discovered in terms of

¹ Nicholas Boileau's original version: "Vingt fois sur le métier remettez votre ouvrage: Polissez-le sans cesse et le repolissez" or "Bring your work back to the workshop twenty times. Polish it continuously, and polish it again."

philosophy, nature and culture: *"But there was never any question of putting on an 'Aboriginal show,' " he insists. " Raven is about cultural heritage and transmission. After having read many tales, I wanted to place them in a contemporary setting. As I wrote the scenes, a female character came to me. First, as the little girl, and then as the woman, both linked to the raven. Corbeau's story is also the story of Nukum at three different ages. Her granddaughter, Saskia, is the one telling the story..."*

"I wanted to explore the trickster archetype, a prominent figure in universal culture, particularly prevalent in Aboriginal tales. The trickster is the mediator between two worlds, a kind of anti-hero who upsets the social order with his blunders and his clumsiness. The trickster is embodied in several ways in different regions. In the United States he is a coyote, while in the northeast he's a wolverine (featured in Wigwam). In the east, it is the raven which plays this role."



© R. Lacroix

Writing for puppets? *"When I write for 'human beings', I aim for a certain minimalism: as few words as possible and as much space as possible between words to allow for playfulness and thoughtfulness. A puppet is not a public speaker and, in puppet theatre, we need to stick to the strict*

minimum. It requires a visual language that inspires playwriting based on images and events rather than dialog. I wanted to tell a story through a visual dramaturgy. Having a raven as the lead character is something unique to puppetry! This is a show where birds are front and centre. ... Richard Lacroix's wonderful creatures..."

Few characters

Illustrations : Richard Lacroix



Young Saskia

Saskia when she was a young girl.

She's the one who's telling the story of Nukum, her Grandmother.



Little Raven

Raven when he was a child



Little Nukum

Nukum when she was a child.



Young Raven

Raven becoming a bird



Young Nukum

Nukum when she was a young women



Raven

that became a bird



Nukum

Grandmother of Saskia, Danaë, David, Daniel, Mikael, Maya, Jérémie and Élie



Danaë, David, Daniel, Mikael, Maya, Jérémie and Élie, Nukum's grandchildren.

CORBEAU/RAVEN...

...Overview

2014-2015 season

IN QUEBEC :

- Shawinigan
- Sainte-Julie
- Montreal
- Valleyfield

2013-2014 season

IN QUEBEC :

- Montreal
- L'Assomption
- Trois-Rivières
- St-Jean-sur-Richelieu
- Belœil
- Longueuil
- Joliette
- Sherbrooke
- Festival Petits bonheurs

2012-2013 season (creation)

- Maison Théâtre, Montreal QC
- Théâtre français du Centre national des Arts, Ottawa ON
- Maison de la culture Ahuntsic, Montréal QC

RAVEN

Press Reviews:

English Translation: Denise Babin

“If, in *Raven*, Messier deals with transmission between generations and amongst ourselves, he does so not through explanation, but through “experience”. The very young will be captivated by the antics of a number of fowls—ducks, pigeons, a seagull and a hilarious chicken—but they will also effortlessly understand, unconsciously or even despite themselves, the notion of transmission and perpetuation, with the help of Messier’s simple yet efficient story line. As Saskia says at the very end, “as long as we have mouths, she (Nukum) will be alive.” As long as we talk about culture, language or values, we keep them alive and well. Is this not the intrinsic reason behind the existence of storytelling? [...]

[...] The scenography is superbly sober. It consists of two small wooden platforms on which the puppets amble along, and a large screen in the background. The screen is essentially used as a canvas for the many—quite effective—light and shadow combinations that share the stage with all kinds of projections of cityscapes, skies and forests made of paper and cardboard that are manipulated in real time under a camera and a table lamp.”

David Lefebvre, **Mon(Theatre).qc.ca**, October 2012

“*Corbeau*, Théâtre de l’Œil’s new production, is a celebration of fiction and memory. A celebration of the stories, tales and legends that are passed on from one generation to the next. Whether they are true or not is irrelevant. [...]

[...] Nukum and the raven’s encounter is narrated by Saskia, Nukum’s granddaughter, who has listened to her grandmother’s stories. These were first told to Nukum by the raven: how he was born human and then turned into a bird, how he stole the sun ... As Saskia’s words are mirrored by puppets, Nukum suddenly appears as a child with the raven landing at her side shouting, “Fries! More Fries!” This is one of the play’s recurring themes, much to the children’s delight. [...]

[...] this magnificent production will most certainly thrive for many years to come. Carried by *Théâtre de l’Œil*’s poetry and inventiveness, *Corbeau* is a moment of great beauty.”

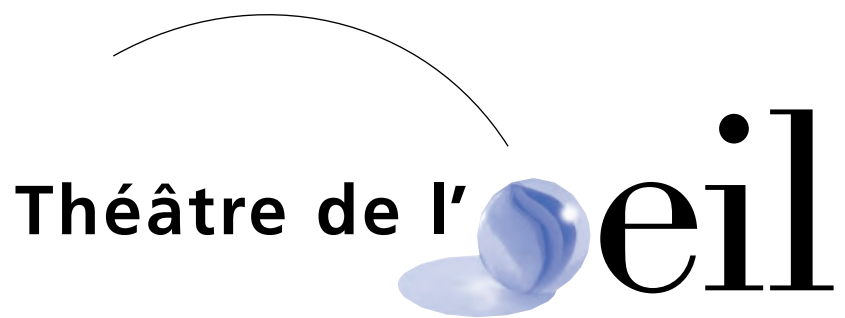
Josée Lapointe, **La Presse**, October 18, 2012

“There’s something spellbinding about this brand new tale, which was in its very first performances when I saw it at the *Maison Théâtre*. If only because of how time seems to float around Nukum’s character, *Raven* can take place at any time and virtually anywhere in America, in any sequence... It’s a timeless tale. And the *Théâtre de l’Œil* production has succeeded in shaping it into a somehow vague, yet concrete object by emphasising its ill-defined contours. Quite an undertaking – *Bravo!*”

Michel Bélair, **Le Devoir**, Montreal, October 19, 2012

CORBEAU / RAVEN

Press Review



www.theatredeloil.qc.ca

regards critiques
RAYMOND
BERTIN

Corbeau

CRÉATION RICHARD LACROIX, ANDRÉ LALIBERTÉ ET JEAN-FRÉDÉRIC MESSIER
TEXTE JEAN-FRÉDÉRIC MESSIER / MISE EN SCÈNE ANDRÉ LALIBERTÉ, AVEC LA COLLABORATION DE STÉPHANE HEINE
SCÉNOGRAPHIE ET MARIONNETTES RICHARD LACROIX / NUKUM / LIBERT SUBIRANA / ÉCLAIRAGES GILLES PERRON
MARIONNETTISTES NICOLAS GERMAIN-MARCHAND, ANNE LALANCETTE, ESTELLE RICHARD
ET DOMINIC L. SAINT-LOUIS. PRODUCTION DU THÉÂTRE DE L'ŒIL, PRÉSENTÉE À LA MAISON THÉÂTRE
DU 13 AU 27 OCTOBRE 2012.

DES FRITES ! DES FRITES !

Le Théâtre de l'Œil, qui a 40 ans cette année, semble bien avoir atteint l'âge de la maturité artistique, car ses plus récentes productions, loin de tomber dans le ronron ou la recette, étonnent et ravissent chaque fois. Après les superbes et érotiques *Ah, la vache !* en 2007 et *Sur 3 pattes en 2010*, la qualité ne se dément pas avec *Corbeau*, qui, tout en faisant une belle part à l'humour, révèle un émouvant univers fantaisiste. L'auteur, Jean-Frédéric Messier, qui avait déjà donné le mémorable *Wigwam* du Théâtre des Confettis¹, revient au théâtre pour enfants – le spectacle cible les 4 à 9 ans – en s'inspirant à nouveau des légendes amérindiennes qui le fascinent. Ce créateur touche-à-tout, directeur artistique de Momentum et collaborateur du Théâtre le Clou, co-lauréat du prix Louise-LaHaye 2010 pour le texte *Éclats et autres libertés*, était auteur associé à la Maison Théâtre en 2011-2012. Un about précieusement pour le milieu.

Corbeau, c'est l'histoire de Nukum et de sa relation avec cet animal légendaire, racontée par sa petite-fille Saskia. Lorsqu'elle avait l'âge de celle-ci, Nukum avait eu la surprise, un jour qu'elle mangeait des frites sur son balcon, de voir ce gros oiseau noir se poser à côté d'elle et réclamer des frites en échange de la narration de son histoire pas ordinaire. « Je ne sais pas si mon histoire est vraie, mais je sais que tu vas me croire », lui déclare-t-il alors. Pour la petite Nukum à l'imagination fertile, voilà une subaine : « Derrière le décor de la rue, elle imaginait un autre monde qui n'était pas une ville », de dire Saskia. Ce monde, où les animaux, les roches, les arbres, les nuages parlaient, lui parlent, c'est sans doute celui d'où vient ce *Corbeau* d'origine mystérieuse.

L'oiseau, tout en s'empiffrant de frites, lui explique qu'il fut jadis un petit être humain, tout blanc, dont la mère était morte avant même qu'il naisse. Recueilli par des enfants, il rejeta leur nourriture jusqu'au jour où l'un d'eux lui offrit du goudron. Alors, enduit de goudron, il partit à la chasse, tua un oiseau dont il s'empara des plumes, qui lui collèrent naturellement à la peau... Puis il apprit à voler. Pour poursuivre son histoire, fréquemment interrompue, *Corbeau* exige : « Des frites ! Des frites ! ». Puis, dit Saskia, Nukum a grandi, oubliant cet étrange compagnon de son enfance. Jeune femme, alors qu'elle aide son oncle pêcheur, vidant les filets, rangeant les poissons

dans des glacières, voilà qu'elle s'endort... et se fait réveiller par un cri reconnaissable entre mille : « Des frites ! Des frites ! » *Corbeau* est revenu et, contre quelques poissons, frites de frites, accepte de raconter à Nukum comment un jour il a volé le soleil.

On s'en doute, il a fallu quelques astuces à l'équipe de création pour rendre crédible, ou à tout le moins acceptable, cette histoire invraisemblable. Là se révèle tout le savoir-faire du Théâtre de l'Œil, du metteur en scène André Laliberté et de son complice Richard Lacroix. Une scénographie relativement dépouillée crée la magie : un plateau à deux niveaux, tour à tour balcon de Nukum en pleine ville, quel au bord de la mer et le forrestier lorsque, plus tard, Nukum aura atteint l'âge d'être grand-mère, entourée de ses huit petits-enfants ; un écran, qui semble s'ouvrir au gré de projections et de jeux d'ombres où apparaissent de petits personnages, le ciel, le soleil, formes découpées manipulées par d'habiles marionnettistes. Et bien sûr, les marionnettes : Nukum à ses divers âges, Saskia, *Corbeau* et quelques autres volatiles, dont un canard hilarant, puis les enfants, magnifiques objets qui prennent vie sous les doigts précis de Nicolas Germain-Marchand, Anne Lalancette, Estelle Richard et Dominic L. Saint-Louis.

À la fin, la vieille Nukum est emportée dans l'autre monde dont elle avait tant rêvé par son fidèle *Corbeau*, et Saskia offre aux enfants, ceux de la pièce comme ceux du public, une conclusion qui exprime bien l'importance de la transmission des histoires, qu'on y croie ou non : « Je leur ai dit que notre grand-mère serait toujours vivante, tant et aussi longtemps qu'on aurait des bouches pour parler d'elle... Vraiment, un moment de théâtre à ne pas manquer, un spectacle à partager avec les enfants lorsqu'il passera près de chez vous. »

1. Voir les comptes rendus de Patricia Belzil dans *Jeu* 126, 2008.1, p. 18-20, et dans *Jeu* 139, 2011.2, p. 143.
2. Voir ma critique, *Quelques arpents de neige*, dans *Jeu* 120, 2006.3, p. 34-35.
3. Tous les extraits sont tirés du texte fourni par la Maison Théâtre.



Nukum was Saskia's age, one day, much to her surprise, a big black bird landed next to her as she was eating French fries on her balcony. He offered to tell his extraordinary story in exchange for some fries. "I don't know if my story's true, but I know you're going to believe it,"³ he said. This bargain peaked little Nukum's vivid imagination: "Beyond the familiar streets, she imagined another world which wasn't a city," says Saskia. This world, where animals, rocks, trees and clouds can and do speak to her, is undoubtedly the world where such a raven of mysterious origin comes from.

The bird, while stuffing his face with fries, explained that he was once a tiny, totally white human being, whose mother had died even before he was born. Taken in by children, he rejected their food until the day one of them offered him some tar... Once covered in tar, he went out hunting, killed a bird and snatched its feathers which readily clung to his skin... He then learned to fly. In exchange for continuing to tell his oft-interrupted story, the raven called for "French Fries! French fries!" Nukum eventually grew up, explains Saskia, and forgot about this strange childhood companion. Then one day, when Nukum was a young woman helping her uncle empty his fishing nets and put the catch on ice, she fell asleep... and was awakened by a unmistakable call: "French fries! French fries!" The raven was back and, in exchange for some fish (for want of fries), agreed to tell Nukum about the day he stole the sun.

No doubt, the creative team had to use quite a few clever tricks to make this unlikely story credible, or at least acceptable. And there lies the perfect illustration of the company's know-how and director André Laliberté and his accomplice Richard Lacroix's skill. A relatively sober set design creates the magic: a two-level set is in turn Nukum's inner-city balcony, a seaside dock and then an island forest where Nukum, once she becomes a grandmother, is surrounded by her eight grandchildren. A screen comes and goes, revealing various projections and shadows of small characters, the sky, the sun, as well as different shapes cut out of paper which are manipulated by skilful puppeteers. And of course, there's the puppets: Nukum at various ages, Saskia, the raven, as well as a few other birds—including a hilarious duck—and the children. These beautiful objects come to life in the nimble hands of Nicolas Germain-Marchand, Anne Lalancette, Estelle Richard and Dominic L. St.-Louis.

In the end, the raven carries old Nukum into the other world she had so often dreamed about, and Saskia offers the children, puppets and spectators alike, a conclusion that expresses the importance of the transmission of stories, whether we believe them or not: "I told them that our grandmother would always be alive as long as we have mouths to talk about her." This is without a doubt a moment of theatre not to be missed, a performance to be shared with children when it comes your way.

¹ See Patricia Belzil's critical reviews in *Jeu* 126, 2008.1, p. 18-20, and *Jeu* 139, 2011.2, p. 143.

² See my review, *Quelques arpents de neige*, in *Jeu* 120, 2006.3, p. 34-35.

³ All excerpts are taken from the text provided by the *Maison Théâtre*.

Corbeau / Raven

Original idea: Richard Lacroix, André Laliberté and Jean-Frédéric Messier / Script: Jean-Frédéric Messier / Stage Direction: André Laliberté / Assistant Stage Direction: Stéphane Heine / Scenography and Puppets: Richard Lacroix / Music: Libert Subirana / Lighting: Gilles Perron / Puppeteers: Nicolas Germain-Marchand, Anne Lalancette, Estelle Richard and Dominic L. St-Louis. A *Théâtre de l'Œil* production presented at the *Maison Théâtre* October 13-27, 2012.

FRENCH FRIES! FRENCH FRIES!

The *Théâtre de l'Œil* is turning forty this year and appears to have indeed reached the age of artistic maturity. Its latest productions, far from slipping into a humdrum routine or a comfortable complacency, continue to astonish and delight every time. After the wonderful and comical *Holy Cow!* in 2007 and *3-Legged Tale* in 2010,¹ the company lives up to its reputation for quality with *Corbeau / Raven*. This latest production reveals a touching, whimsical universe where there is also plenty of room for humour. Playwright Jean-Frédéric Messier, who had already given us the memorable *Wigwam* by the *Théâtre des Confettis*,² returns to children's theatre – the target audience is 4 to 9 years – drawing again upon the First Nations legends that fascinate him. This creative jack-of-all-trades, artistic director of *Momentum Theatre Company* and *Théâtre le Clou* collaborator, co-winner of the 2010 Louise-LaHaye Award for *Éclats et autres libertés*, was a playwright associated with the *Maison Théâtre* in 2011-2012. A valuable asset to the theatre community.

Corbeau / Raven is the story of Nukum and her relationship with the legendary animal, the raven, as told by her granddaughter, Saskia. When

Nukum en trois temps

Michel Bélair 19 octobre 2012 Théâtre



Photo : Leon Grinewich
Marionnettistes bien en vue dans Corbeau.

À RETENIR

Corbeau

Texte : Jean-Frédéric Messier.

Mise en scène : André Laliberté.

Scénographie : Richard Lacroix.

Une production du Théâtre de l'œil.

Jusqu'au 27 octobre. Public visé :

les enfants de 4 à 9 ans. Durée :

environ une heure.

Ça commence par une petite fille qui mange des frites installée sur son balcon du centre-ville lorsque surgit soudain un corbeau. Mais l'histoire aurait pu tout aussi bien commencer avec une jeune femme sur un quai de pêcheurs, face à la mer et aux bateaux à l'horizon. Ou encore autour d'un feu de camp autour duquel une vieille grand-mère raconte les mêmes sempiternelles histoires à ses petits-enfants.

On aura peut-être deviné qu'il s'agit tout au long du même personnage féminin, celui de Nukum. Et que le plus récent texte de Jean-Frédéric Messier met d'abord en scène la figure mythique du corbeau. En découpant son histoire selon trois moments de la vie de Nukum, Messier nous raconte en fait une légende amérindienne dans laquelle le corbeau joue à la fois le rôle de Prométhée - en volant le soleil pour l'amener sur terre - et celui du « décepteur » comme l'appelait Lévi-Strauss - en le faisant d'abord pour lui.

Cette histoire toute neuve, qui en était à ses toutes premières représentations lorsque je l'ai vue à la Maison Théâtre, a quelque chose d'envoûtant. Ne serait-ce qu'à cause du « flottement temporel » autour du personnage de Nukum, Corbeau peut se dérouler n'importe quand et presque n'importe où en Amérique, dans n'importe quel ordre... C'est un texte intemporel, et la production du Théâtre de l'œil réussit à en faire un objet fluide bien concret en appuyant ses contours mal définis. Fallait le faire. Bravo !

La mise en scène qu'en propose André Laliberté est particulièrement vive, il le faut pour lier une histoire délibérément floue s'écrivant devant nous sur de multiples plateformes. Ici, marionnettistes et marionnettes bien en vue construisent un théâtre d'ombres, d'images (fort belles, souvent) et d'objets divers qui fera voyager les enfants sur une foule de niveaux... selon ce qu'ils investiront de présence et d'écoute. Surtout lorsque le spectacle aura atteint sa vitesse de croisière et que le rythme s'en trouvera plus affirmé et plus cohérent du même coup.

Bref, la production traîne encore un peu par moments, mais c'est un détail bien vite balayé par la fougue et l'ardeur qui caractérisent cet intrigant Corbeau.

Michel Bélair, *Le Devoir*, Montreal, October 19, 2012

Translation: Denise Babin for Théâtre de l'Œil

Nukum in three times

It all begins with a little girl eating French fries on her inner city balcony when a raven suddenly appears. But the tale could just as well have begun with a young woman on a fisherman's wharf, overlooking the sea and the boats on the horizon. Or even around a campfire as an elderly grandmother tells same-old stories to her grandchildren.

We may have guessed that these three female characters are actually one and the same: Nukum. And that Jean-Frédéric Messier's latest play is above all a telling of the tale of the mythical figure

of the raven. By dividing his story line into three periods of Nukum's life, Messier is in fact telling us a First Nations' legend in which the raven plays both the role of Prometheus (by stealing the sun and bringing it to earth) and of the "trickster" (in the words of Lévi-Strauss) because he does so first and foremost for himself.

There's something spellbinding about this brand new tale, which was in its very first performances when I saw it at the *Maison Théâtre*. If only because of how time seems to float around Nukum's character, *Raven* can take place at any time and virtually anywhere in America, in any sequence... It's a timeless tale. And the *Théâtre de l'Œil* production has succeeded in shaping it into a somehow vague, yet concrete object by emphasising its ill-defined contours. Quite an undertaking – *Bravo!*

André Laliberté's mise-en-scène is especially lively, a must in order to bind an intentionally vague story line as it is being written before our eyes on multiple platforms. Here, puppets and puppeteers in full view pull together a theater of shadows and (often quite beautiful) images as well as various objects. It's a theater that offers children a multi-levelled journey... depending on their attention level and their responsiveness. Especially once the show reaches its cruising speed and gains a more defined and coherent rhythm.

In short, the production still lags a little at times, but such a detail is quickly swept away by the eagerness and the warmth at the heart of this intriguing *Raven*.

Corbeau : comme dans un livre de contes



Photo: Laron Golewisch

Josée Lapointe
La Presse

«Je ne sais pas si mon histoire est vraie, mais je sais que tu vas y croire.» C'est ce que dit Corbeau à la petite Nukum lorsqu'ils se rencontrent pour la première fois - elle mangeant des frites sur son balcon, lui attiré par les frites et utilisant ses histoires comme monnaie d'échange. C'est clair dès le début: Corbeau, nouvelle création du Théâtre de l'Œil, est un écho de la fiction et de la mémoire. Ces récits, contes et légendes qu'on se transmet d'une génération à l'autre, qu'ils soient vrais ou non, cela n'a pas vraiment d'importance.

La rencontre entre Nukum et Corbeau, c'est la petite-fille de Nukum, Saskia, qui en fait la narration. Saskia a écouté les histoires de sa grand-mère, qui lui a raconté celles que Corbeau lui avait racontées: comment il est

né humain et s'est transformé en oiseau, comment il a volé le soleil... Les paroles de Saskia sont ainsi mises en images par les marionnettes, et tout à coup apparaissent Nukum enfant et Corbeau, qui attendent en criant «Des frites, des frites», un des leitmotifs de la pièce, pour la plus grande joie des petits.

Les marionnettes prennent vie dans la mise en scène très épurée d'André Laliberté, appuyée de manière fort ingénieuse par Richard Lacroix à la scénographie. Sur scène, pour tout accessoire, une longue table en bois qui devient un balcon, une forêt ou un quai. Derrière, un immense écran sur lequel les décors s'animent à partir d'un petit projecteur placé sur le côté de la scène. Un arbre, des nuages, des silhouettes, minuscules objets découpés dans du papier et délicatement manipulés par les marionnettistes, apparaissent en plus grande dimension et donnent à Corbeau les allures d'un livre de contes dont on tournerait les pages.

Les quatre artistes qui insufflent leur âme et donnent leur voix aux personnages - avec l'aide de micros-cravates, qui ont connu quelques ratés lorsque nous l'avons vu - sont époustouflants de précision. Très visibles, ils sont parfois trois pour faire bouger le seul corbeau, mais un seul d'entre eux fait parler et se déplacer les huit petits-enfants de Nukum.

Cette variété donne à la pièce beaucoup de mouvement, une fluidité qui ne se reflète pas nécessairement dans le texte, dont les différentes parties sont liées davantage par des éléments scénographiques - la robe de Nukum, qui est la même à mesure qu'elle grandit, par exemple - que par la narration à plusieurs niveaux.

Ces petits creux auront le temps de se combler, puisque cette création magnifique vivra sûrement de nombreuses années. Porté par la poésie et l'inventivité du Théâtre de l'Œil, Corbeau reste un moment de grande beauté.

Josée Lapointe, *La Presse*, October 18, 2012

Translation: Denise Babin for Théâtre de l'Œil

Raven: like in a storybook

"I don't know if my story is true, but I do know you're going to believe it." That's what the raven says to little Nukum when they first meet—she's eating French fries on her balcony, he longs for a taste of her fries and offers his tales in exchange. It is clear from the start: *Corbeau*, *Théâtre de l'Œil's* new production, is a celebration of fiction and memory. A celebration of the stories, tales and legends that are passed on from one generation to the next. Whether they are true or not is irrelevant.

Nukum and the raven's encounter is narrated by Saskia, Nukum's granddaughter, who has listened to her grandmother's stories. These were first told to Nukum by the raven: how he was born human and then turned into a bird, how he stole the sun ... As Saskia's words are mirrored by puppets, Nukum suddenly appears as a child with the raven landing at her side shouting, "Fries! More Fries!" This is one of the play's recurring themes, much to the children's delight.

The puppets come to life in André Laliberté's very sober mise-en-scène supported by Richard Lacroix's ingenious scenography. On stage, the only prop is a long wooden table that in turn becomes a balcony, a forest or a dock. In the background, there's an enormous screen on which the scenery is brought to life with the help of a small projector set up on the side of the stage. A tree, clouds, silhouettes, as well as tiny objects cut out of paper and gently manipulated by the puppeteers, appear much larger and give the impression that *Corbeau* is a storybook and we are turning its pages.

The four artists who breath life into and lend their voices to the characters—with the help of tie microphones that experienced some glitches during the show we attended—are stunningly precise. It sometimes takes three puppeteers in full view to manipulate the raven alone, but only a single puppeteer to manipulate Nukum's eight chatty grandchildren.

This variety fills the play with movement, but this flow is not necessarily reflected in the script whose different parts are linked more by scenic elements—Nukum's dress, for example, stays the same as she grows older—than by the multi-levelled narration.

There will be plenty of time to work out these small flaws, since this magnificent production will most certainly thrive for many years to come. Carried by *Théâtre de l'Œil's* poetry and inventiveness, *Corbeau* is a moment of great beauty.