



# PERSEUS

AN ARCHEO-MYTHOLOGICAL FABLE

CREATED BY **OLIVIER DUCAS, MATHIEU GOSSELIN** AND **FRANCIS MONTY**

CO-PRODUCED BY **THÉÂTRE DE LA PIRE ESPÈCE** (CANADA) AND **CREA** (FRANCE)



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## PRESS REVIEWS

“With the Théâtre de la Pire Espèce production *Perseus*, inventiveness is once again given pride of place. [...] The play mocks rigid theatrical conventions, the scientific method, levels of language, media hype, etc., all of which results in an enjoyable, clever and gently irreverent experience.” (Hervé Guay, *Le Devoir*)

“Manipulating strange marionettes as adroitly as they use humour, the actors (who also conceived the show) impress by their creativity. Behind their apparent casual and relaxed manner, all the elements fit together snugly. Such refined simplicity requires a lot of work and solid stage experience.” (Josée Bilodeau, *Guide culturel*, radio-canada.ca)

“When they finally bring to life *Perseus*, a little swaddled hand surmounted by a jug serving as a head, the audience is completely spellbound.” (Ève Dumas, *La Presse*)

“75 minutes of inspired foolishness, imagination, laughter, questioning, many delightful moments and a perfectly absurd finale... Not to me missed!” (David Lefebvre, *montheatre.qc.ca*)

“Splendid, refreshing and intelligent.” (Stéphane Despatie, *Voir*, Montreal)

“Théâtre de la Pire Espèce presents a performance that is funny, entertaining and inventive.” (Amélie Giguère, *Ici Montréal*)

“...theatre that is festive, fiery and quite delightful.” (André Ducharme, *Desautels*, Première Chaîne, Radio-Canada)

“...accessible for both children and adults. [...] not to be missed.” (Francine Grimaldi, *Samedi et rien d'autre*, Première Chaîne, Radio-Canada)

# PERSEUS

## AN ARCHEO-MYTHOLOGICAL FABLE

Using artefacts found on an excavation site, three modern-day archaeologists set out to prove the existence of the mythological hero Perseus but their historical reconstruction constantly comes up against mythical elements, and the scientific inquiry gradually evolves into an existential quest. Transformed by the objects they bring to life, they become the protagonists of the famous myth and a strange, tragic and comical ceremony unfolds. *Perseus* makes good use of the theatrical forms for which Pire Espèce is known – theatre of objects and clowning.

### DEDICATED TO FELIX MIRBT (1931-2002)

Born in Breslau, Germany in 1931, Felix Mirbt began his career with adaptations of theatrical classics using large puppets. His plays often featured full-view manipulation and the use of visible narrators speaking the voices for the characters, while actor-manipulators moved the puppets. The result was an eloquent invitation to comprehend a work through its form, suggesting the inevitability of destiny and of control being in the hands of others. The initial work on *Perseus* was to have commenced in 2002 with a workshop with Felix Mirbt, but unfortunately the master puppeteer died shortly beforehand. We share his sense of aesthetics, his love of his craft and his rigorous exploration of the puppet as theatrical object. *Perseus* is dedicated to his memory and his passion.



## THE MYTH

Acrisios, king of Argos, learned from an oracle that he would be killed by the son of his daughter Danae. To keep her childless, he locked her up in a tower of bronze which was open to the sky. Zeus decided to visit her and took on the form of golden rain. He impregnated Danae, who gave birth to a son, Perseus. A furious Acrisios locked mother and child in a chest and threw them into the sea. They washed up on the island of Seriphos, ruled by King Polydectes. The king was enamoured of Danae, and in order to be rid of Perseus sent him off to behead Medusa, a monster whose hair had been transformed into serpents. Such was her power that gazing directly upon her turned onlookers into stone. With the help of the goddess Athena, Perseus succeeded in cutting off her head. Using the head as a weapon, he saved his future wife Andromeda from a sea monster. He then returned to Seriphos and, again using the head of Medusa, rescued his mother by turning the king and his army into stone. Years later Perseus was participating in funeral games. He threw the discus, which accidentally struck and killed a spectator. The man was in fact his grandfather Acrisios, and thus the prophecy was fulfilled. Perseus became king of Tiryns and enjoyed a long and successful reign.

## THE CREATIVE TEAM

Written and directed by: **Olivier Ducas, Mathieu Gosselin & Francis Monty**

Touring performers: **Alexandre Leroux-Gendron, Mathieu Gosselin & Francis Monty**

Original performers and manipulators: **Olivier Ducas, Mathieu Gosselin & Francis Monty**

Assistant director and assistant stage manager: **Caroline Ferland**

Set and lighting design: **Jonas Bouchard**

Sound design: **Simon Cloutier**

Sound consultant: **Éric Gautron**

Sound and light controls: **Benoît Durand-Jodoin**

Translation of the English version : **Bobby Theodore**

Translation of the Spanish version : **Cecilia Fasola**



## PLAYWRIGHTS

### OLIVIER DUCAS



Photo : Yanick MacDonald

Olivier Ducas studied acting at the National Theatre School of Canada. His decisive encounter with Francis Monty led to the creation of Théâtre de la Pire Espèce in 1999, with both men acting jointly as artistic directors. A playwright, actor, director and puppet manipulator, Ducas co-creates the Théâtre de la Pire Espèce shows, which are presented in Canada, Europe, Mexico and Brazil. In 2008 he wrote and directed *Roland, la vérité du vainqueur*, a play for adolescents that was inspired by the Song of Roland. In addition to his creative work, Ducas instructs professionals and theatre teachers and students in the theatre of objects.

### FRANCIS MONTY



Photo : Yanick MacDonald

Francis Monty graduated from the National Theatre School of Canada's playwrighting program in 1997, and has worked in virtually all aspects of theatre, from directing to clowning, puppetry and, of course, writing. He founded Théâtre de la Pire Espèce in 1999 with Olivier Ducas, and both share the role of artistic director. The co-creator of the company's shows, he co-wrote and directed *Gestes impies et rites sacrés* in 2009. As a playwright, his work has been presented in Canada, Brazil and Europe: *Par les temps qui rouillent*, *Déclownestration*, *Traces de cloune*, *Léon le nul*. In 2005 he received a Masque award for best original script for *Romances et karaoké*.

### MATHIEU GOSSELIN



Photo : Yanick MacDonald

Mathieu Gosselin studied acting at the Conservatoire d'art dramatique in Montreal. He graduated in 2001, and went on to play a wide variety of television and stage roles. He performed in Olivier Choinière's *Venise-en-Québec* at Théâtre du Grand Jour, in Christopher Durang's *Betty à la plage* at Théâtre de la Banquette arrière in 2004, in Francis Monty's *Romances et karaoké* at Théâtre le Clou in 2004 and again in 2009, and in René-Daniel Dubois' *Bob* at Théâtre d'Aujourd'hui, to name but a few. He has also written several plays, including *La fête sauvage*. Mathieu has collaborated regularly with Théâtre de la Pire Espèce since 1999, performing in *Traces de cloune*, *Ubu sur la table*, *Gestes impies* and *Persée*. In 2010 he acted in three of the company's plays: *Romances et karaoké*, *Gestes impies* and *Silence radio*.



## PERSEUS - PERFORMANCE HISTORY

### 2005

Creation and rerun to the Jean-Claude-Germain room at Théâtre d'Aujourd'hui (Montréal)



### 2006

Festival Momix (France)  
Rencontre théâtre ados (RTA), Laval  
Carrefour international de théâtre de Québec  
Tour of Québec



### 2007

Rerun to the Jean-Claude-Germain room at Théâtre d'Aujourd'hui  
Traduction espagnole  
Tour of Mexico, Brazil, France and Spain



### 2008

Rerun to the Jean-Claude-Germain room at Théâtre d'Aujourd'hui  
Tour of France, Mexico, Espagne, New-Brunswick and Québec



### 2009

Festival mondial des théâtres de marionnettes de Charleville-Mézières (France)  
Tour of France and New-Brunswick



### 2010

English translation  
Première at CINARS (Montréal)



### 2011

Festival Internacional Santa Lucia (Monterrey, Mexique)

### 2013

International Performing Arts for the Youth Conference (Philadelphia, USA)

