

Manifesto

The Art of the Storyteller and the Spoken Word

« The artistic manifestations of the spoken word, so universally adopted everywhere and throughout time, have found, today once again, a place of expression.

This renewal has made itself known through the use of the narrative and of oral storytelling. It bears witness to the important, though as of yet unfulfilled need, to recount, listen to and share stories. The movement as it appears today, is largely an artistic one. And even though it often refers to a heritage from the past, it is obviously a question today of a new art of the spoken word that, though still in the throws of birth, is recreating itself. »

(Bruno De La Salle « Plaidoyer pour les arts de la parole » / A Plea for the Arts of the Spoken Word)

We, as citizens of and actors engaged in the cultural arena of the recitative arts, support the notion that the act of coming together to listen to a person telling a story, is a universal need, as simple as it is fundamental.

We affirm that when someone tells a story to someone else they accomplish together a social act that is an essential component of humanity.

They in fact participate in the transmission and enrichment of thought and the languages of the world, as well as circulating knowledge for the education of individuals and the foundation of a world society.

They bear witness to a collective as well as inquiring vision of the world they live in.

When someone tells a story to someone else who listens to it, they accomplish in total liberty a political, literary and poetic action, an act of creation or re-creation of the world, in a certain intimacy as well as a social context.

They produce « a common good » to the benefit of all without distinction or discrimination.

They likewise contribute to raise this collective common good that words represent – too often reduced to a strictly utilitarian function – to a blossoming and constitutive dimension for the community.

Men and women storytellers alike transmit and ceaselessly renew the narratives of oral literature, which also represent a permanent source of inspiration for contemporary productions.

Storytellers thusly offer their work to the public at large in fonction of the situations where they find themselves and so participate in the circulation of these works.

In doing so they assume the responsibility of their choices and of their words before an audience.

They renew this ancestral action which birthed literature and theater.

The renewal of storytelling was accompanied by librairies, regional authorities, networking from ongoing educational organizations, doctors, anthropologists and ethnologists who, convinced of the public usefulness of the arts of the spoken word, made possible the emergence of professional storytelling artists.

Universities, international cooperation programs, a variety of training centers and festivals have also pledged themselves to the movement.

Resource centers have likewise been structured around training, creating, producing, programing, researching and documenting all facets of contemporary storytelling. And the ever new generation of storytellers have slowly begun to initiatie get togethers.

All these partners have been mobilized in order to make known and give a better visibility to this art – which at the same time is like a brother to and yet distinct from the other performing arts – in its specifics and diversity.

Today, the art of the storyteller retains its eminent popular dimension. It nourishes society, in an invisible yet forceful manner, in relationships of nearness (proximity) as well as over larger territories. It is accessible in programming within official cultural structures as well as less formal situations.

We the actors of this movement, reaffirm the place of the art of the storyteller in the domain of the performing arts and likewise the urgent

need of its presence in contemporary society.

And we invite those responsible for cultural activities of all kinds, and who share these convictions, to contribute in their own way in the propagation of the arts of the spoken word and oral narration, and to join us in signing this manifesto.

The National Network for Storytelling and the Arts of the Spoken Word (Le Réseau National du Conte et des Arts de la Parole) -

Composed of

The profession Association of Storytelling Artists

(l'Association Professionnelle des Artistes conteurs/ APAC)

& Mondoral

France 2014