

Daraya

FOULE THÉÂTRE

**FAVORITE OF THE PRESS AT THE 2018
RENCONTRES DE THÉÂTRE AT HUY (B).**

A SHOW FOR ALL SPECTATORS FROM 15 YEARS OLD.

When I hear information describing extraordinary wars and conflicts read newspaper reports about how men and women who shared the same country yesterday are sworn enemies today, sometimes I think :

*« How about me?
If war broke out how would I resist?
And first of all, would I resist?
What would I do to stay humane and keep
barbarity at bay? »*

*I consider what the youth of Daraya set up as exemplary.
Their story is beautiful and incredible...*



Philippe Léonard intermingles two stories in **Daraya** : his journey to a peaceful Syria in 1989 and that of the journalist Delphine Minoui which developed from correspondence conducted through Skype in 2015-2016 with the rebellious youth of the country at war. A hymn to individual liberty, to tolerance and to the power of literature.

Based on The Book « **Les passeurs de livres de Daraya** » by
Delphine Minoui, Editions du Seuil

Text Pierre Richards and Philippe Léonard

Cast Philippe Léonard

Scenography & costumes Catherine Somers

Music Philippe Morino & Juliette Richards

Stage manager Luc Jouniaux & Karl Autrique

Voice-off Rania Ameen Ghanoun

Video Arnaud Van Hammée

Photography Philippe Jolet

Graphics Karl Autrique

Poster & illustrations Jean-Claude Salémi

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PRESS REVIEW

Moments of true emotion are quite rare at the theatre so as not to share them. That happened this afternoon at the 'Rencontres de Huy' with 'Daraya', the latest show by Philippe Leonard constructed with the complicity of Pierre Richards based on the book "Les passeurs de livres de Daraya" by Delphine Minoui (Le Seuil) as well as personal memories. Simple, beautiful, human, touching.....and in the heart of current events.

Emile Lansman - FaceBook - 19 August 2018

AN AMBITIOUS PROJECT INCARNATING YOUNG SYRIANS RESISTANCE.

Unfortunately, information concerning conflicts which ravage the world is not always the best way to touch the public. On the other hand, books, stories touch the heart, get to the essentials. Mainly when they are true and delivered by an actor as wonderful as Philippe Léonard who, as always, is authentic and generous.

“Daraya” by the ‘Foule Théâtre” is based on “Les passeurs de livres de Daraya”, a remarkable text by the journalist Delphine Minoui telling the incredible story of how young Syrians created a clandestine library to resist the bombs, to stay humane and not to succumb to barbarity. As she wasn’t able to be on the spot, the journalist used the internet to speak with Ahmed who was responsible for the project. Philippe Léonard went to Syria thirty years ago at a time when it was still a peaceful enclave in the middle of lands in conflict; Iran, Iraq or Israel, and it was while he was strolling around book shops in Brussels that he came across this text. A very different Syria to the one he visited as a hitchhiker with backpack. Memories flood back and intermingle with the book by the French journalist. We hear the muezzin song, we count the number of stamps stuck on the envelope to send an enlarged photo of the family he met there, then we’re plunged once again into the horror of war which, despite everything, could be solved. Leaving the theatre happy to have (re)learnt about this wonderful proof of resistance, which the press spoke of at the time- a sort of sweet complementarity.

Laurence Bertels, - La Libre Belgique - 21 August 2018

“DARAYA” ANOTHER SYRIA

It is not just a glimpse but a great bay window with impregnable views of Syria that Philippe Léonard opens with “Daraya”. Not the Syria churned out non-stop on the news, but a carnal and unexpected Syria. The actor transports us to the depths an entrenched city to the heart of a secret library. As the bombs rain down on Daraya, a handful of Syrians improvise an underground concourse and collect together books by Proust or de Coetzee, medical encyclopedias or poems by Mahmoud Darwich braving the ugliness of war with words. Who is the most devoted reader in the clandestine haven? A rebel from the Syrian Free Army, a Kalashnikov in one hand, a book in the other.

Philippe Léonard discovered this amazing and authentic story in “The Book Smugglers of Daraya” written by the journalist Delphine Minoui. During several years, the writer communicated through Skype and text message with the besieged, abandoned population who, despite the deprivations, found the force to build and activate a secret library under the rubble.

“We read to stay human” says one of the correspondents.

Travelling through passages of the book, the actor mixes in his own memories of a journey to Syria thirty years ago. Armed with his backpacker guide, he digs up anecdotes which pierce the beauty and the sweetness of life in a country where men and women shared the same territory harmoniously. With deep sobriety “Daraya” releases a profound human warmth, giving a face and a soul to these erased beings made commonplace/trivial by the steamroller of real events. Disarmed on the empty stage the actor becomes a smuggler in his own right. He becomes the link between this distant tragedy and us. He becomes living proof that words are invincible and that books are stronger than hatred. “Daraya” is demanding and rings a change compared to shows about the radicalization of youth and other divisive plays that address Syria. geopolitics differently. What's more it's a passionate tool for any teacher wishing to tackle geopolitics differently.