

A documentary by HÉLÈNE CHOQUETTE



LEPAGE AU SOLEIL

AT THE ORIGINS OF KANATA

FILMOPTION INTERNATIONAL presents an EMAFILMS production

Images YOAN CART - HÉLÈNE CHOQUETTE - PHILIPPE LAVALETTE - Editor MÉLANIE CHICOINE

Music ANTHONY ROZANKOVIC - Script by HÉLÈNE CHOQUETTE and SOPHIE MANGAUD

Sound recordist OLIVIER LÉGER - Sound engineering and design DANIEL TOUSSAINT with the financial participation of TELEFILM CANADA in association with the ROGER GROUP OF FUNDS through the THEATRICAL DOCUMENTARY PROGRAM.

film and television tax credit - Gestion SODEC, the SODEC, Canada Media Fund, RADIO-CANADA, ARTV and RDI, Canadian Film and Video Production Tax Credit and SRF - Produced by ANNE-MARIE GÉLINAS



A man with dark hair, wearing a blue denim jacket over a white t-shirt and dark pants, is riding a bicycle on a city street. He is looking slightly to his right with a slight smile. The background is a blurred city street with buildings and a traffic sign.

Synopsis

In the spring of 2016, for the first time in 54 years, Ariane Mnouchkine entrusts her troupe, the Théâtre du Soleil, to another director: Robert Lepage. He embarks on the creation of *Kanata*, a work that imagines the meeting of Europeans with First Nations people of Canada over a period of two centuries. After more than two years of work, the rumor of a show about First Nations people without their direct involvement sparks debates in the Canadian media, and soon in Europe and the United States. Its creators are accused of cultural appropriation, while no one has even seen the show.

Lepage at the Soleil: The Origins of Kanata shows how, the 36 actors from 11 different countries, discover in their own stories an astonishing resonance with the stories of the people they are telling. Inspired by the cosmopolitanism of the troupe, Robert Lepage tries to get them to talk about their own stories through those of the Indigenous people of Canada. The documentary plunges into the heart of a theatrical creation in search of universality, but turned upside down by a media scandal even before its premiere.

Word from the director

HÉLÈNE CHOQUETTE

My documentary career has led me to the four corners of the world and sensitized me to the fate of the peoples who claim ancestral territorial rights notably in Brazil, Chile and Burma. In 2009, during the filming of *Avenue Zero*, a documentary on human trafficking in Canada which showed that Aboriginal women were the first victims, I became aware of the extent of the tragedy that the First Nations people lived in Canada. Although I am a theater lover, it is above all this subject matter at the heart of the creation of *Kanata* that drew me in. I was fascinated by the resonance that these Afghan, Iraqi, Brazilian and other actors had with the history of the Native people of Canada, and I was fascinated by this miscegenation, Robert Lepage's main source of inspiration. It was audacious on his part, of course, but I was confident that he would avoid the pitfalls. When the controversy around the show arose in the summer of 2018, we were already at 46 days of filming. Throughout the scandal, I was careful not to comment, feeling that my documentary would bring to light the nuances that escaped the debate. *Lepage at the Soleil: The Origins of Kanata* tells the story behind this theatrical adventure strongly denounced without anyone having ever seen it. It documents a fascinating process of research and creation, of which the film will remain the only trace. As Canada embarks on the long road to reconciliation, I hope this documentary will restore some weakened bridges and continue the necessary dialogue. So, I really played my role as a documentary filmmaker.

Technical list

DIRECTOR **Hélène Choquette**

SCRIPT **Hélène Choquette** and **Sophie Mangado**

PRODUCER **Anne-Marie Gélinas**

IMAGES

Hélène Choquette, Yoan Cart and **Philippe Lavalette**

SOUND **Olivier Léger**

EDITING **Mélanie Chicoine**

SOUND DESIGN **Daniel Toussaint**

MUSIC **Anthony Rozankovic**





Biographical notes

HÉLÈNE CHOQUETTE – DIRECTOR

Recipient of prizes at home and abroad, Hélène Choquette has dedicated herself to writing and directing documentaries for the last 17 years. Versatile and curious, she also handles the camera. Internationally, she is credited with, among other things, the documentary feature films *The Refugees of the Blue Planet*, one of the first documentaries about environmental refugees shot around the world (Best Documentary Feature Film Award in Canada, Planet in Focus 2007). *Fists of Pride* which lifts the veil on the situation of Burmese children exploited in boxing camps in Thailand (Special Mention - RIDM Inmates Jury 2012). As a filmmaker she does not shy away from addressing societal issues that are just as sensitive as they are inevitable: the living conditions of foreign family helpers employed by Canadian families; *Bonnes à tout faire* about human trafficking, including the fate of thousands of missing Aboriginal women in Canada with complete indifference; *Avenue Zero* (Gemini Award for Best Picture Direction 2010, finalist Beyond Borders Award), homelessness through the singular relationship that unites them and their dogs; *A Dog's Life*, the social inclusion of the intellectually handicapped; *The Different* (Gemini Awards Finalist - best documentary society 2015).



SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY

- **LEPAGE AT THE SOLEIL** – EMAfilms / SRC, SRF, 2019
- **LIKE A PEBBLE IN THE BOOT** – EMAfilms / SRC, Doc Channel, 2018
- **A DOG'S LIFE** – EMAfilms / SRC, RDI, TV5, 2016
- **UNITÉ 9 ; LE DOCUMENTAIRE** – AETIOS / ICI Radio-Canada WEB, SRC, RDI, 2015 / Winner Audience Award Best numeric or series of fiction, Web Program Festival, Paris 2015
- **LES DIFFÉRENTS** – Toast Studio, Moi & Cie, TVA, 2014
- **LES DISCRÈTES** – Toxa, Radio-Canada, 2013
- **FISTS OF PRIDE** – Aviva Communications / SRC, RDI, ARTE France, 2012 / Special Mention, Inmates Jury, RIDM, Montréal 2012
- **AVENUE ZÉRO** – Virage / SRC, RDI 2009 / Winner for Best picture at the 2010 Géméaux Awards, and Finalist in the Beyond Borders Award
- **THE REFUGEES OF THE BLUE PLANET** – Tutti Frutti, RDI and TFO, 2006 / Winner of the Best Canadian feature documentary at the Festival Planet in Focus, Toronto 2006 / Award winner for Best research at the 2006 Géméaux Awards / Humanitarian Award-CineEco at the International Environmental Film & Video Festival, Portugal 2007
- **JEAN-TALON MARKET** (series) – Galafilm, 2003 / Winner for Best documentary series & Special prize for multiculturalism at the 2010 Géméaux Awards



EMAFILMS AND ANNE-MARIE GÉLINAS – PRODUCER

EMafilms produces stories for the screen that both inspire and entertain, with potential for international appeal. With vision and creative drive, Anne-Marie Gélinas, founder of EMafilms, works with innovative and ambitious writers and directors from around the world.

In 2019, the feature narrative *Third Wedding*, written and directed by David Lambert (*Hors les murs, Je suis à toi*), was released. The film is a Canada-Belgium-Luxemburg coproduction and stars Rachel Mwanza (*War Witch*) and Bouli Lanners (*Les Géants*). Also in 2019, EMafilms goes to camera with *Slaxx*, written and directed by Elza Kephart, a slasher about a possessed pair of jeans brought to life to punish the unscrupulous practices of a trendy clothing company. 2019 will also see the release of the feature documentary *Lepage au Soleil*, directed by Hélène Choquette.

In 2017, *Radius*, a sci-fi feature thriller written and directed by Caroline Labrèche & Steeve Léonard starring Diego Klattenhoff (*Blacklist*) and Charlotte Sullivan (*Rookie Blue*) had its World Premiere at the Fantasia Film Festival and will also play at FrightFest, UK and many others. Also in 2017, Hélène Choquette's documentary *Like a Pebble in the Boot* had its premiere at the Vancouver International Film Festival.

In 2015, *Turbo Kid* premiered at the Sundance Film Festival, and was also selected at SXSW, winning the Audience Award. The film played in more than 60 festivals, garnering almost 20 prizes, including Best International Film at the Saturn Awards 2016.

Also released in 2015, Hélène Choquette's documentary *A Dog's Life* with a world premiere at the Vancouver International Film Festival, also selected at the One World Film Festival in Prague, the film played in Canadian competition at Hot Docs 2016.

MÉLANIE CHICOINE – EDITOR

Always a movie buff, Mélanie Chicoine studied film studies at the Université de Montréal, before completing her Bachelor's degree in Communications at UQAM. She then develops a real passion for editing and documentary.

For almost 20 years, she has worked as a film editor in the film and television industry.

She has edited the films of Anaïs Barbeau-Lavalette and Émile Proulx-Cloutier's *Le plancher des vaches*, François Barbeau, *Costume Designer* by Jean Beaudry, *Les ultras* by Sarah Fortin, *D'une mer à l'autre* by Eza Paventi and *L'invisible essence: Le Petit Prince* by Hugo Latulippe. She is currently working on the editing of Hélène Choquette's next film, *Carré St-Louis*.

ANTHONY ROZAKOVIC – COMPOSER

Anthony Rozankovic received his training at the Conservatoire de musique du Québec where he studied composition, analysis, conducting, fugue, counterpoint, harmony and trombone. He has worked with Gilles Tremblay, Gaston Arel, Clermont Pépin, Jacques Faubert, Joseph Zuskin and Raffi Armenian as part of his training. He received the first prize in composition and musical analysis. Since the end of his studies, in 1990, he has worked mainly as a composer of audiovisual music for cartoons, documentary and fiction films. In 2010, he signed the music for Carl Leblanc's *The Heart of Auschwitz*. He also signed the music for the Pointe-à-Callières Museum's permanent exhibition, *Signé Montréal*. Among his most recent concert music, is a re-creation of the musical tale *The Adventurer of the Lost Air* by the Toronto Symphony Orchestra with a text by Stanley Péan. Mr. Rozankovic has also been active as music director, notably for the program *Vous m'en lirez tant* at Radio-Canada from 2005 to 2009. He is also a jazz and pop pianist, as well as an arranger and orchestrator. He has made records for the Magnétik Band, Florence K, as well as The Montreal Jazz Club vol 1 and 2. Since 2005, Anthony Rozankovic has signed the music of nine of Hélène Choquette's documentaries.

YOAN CART – DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

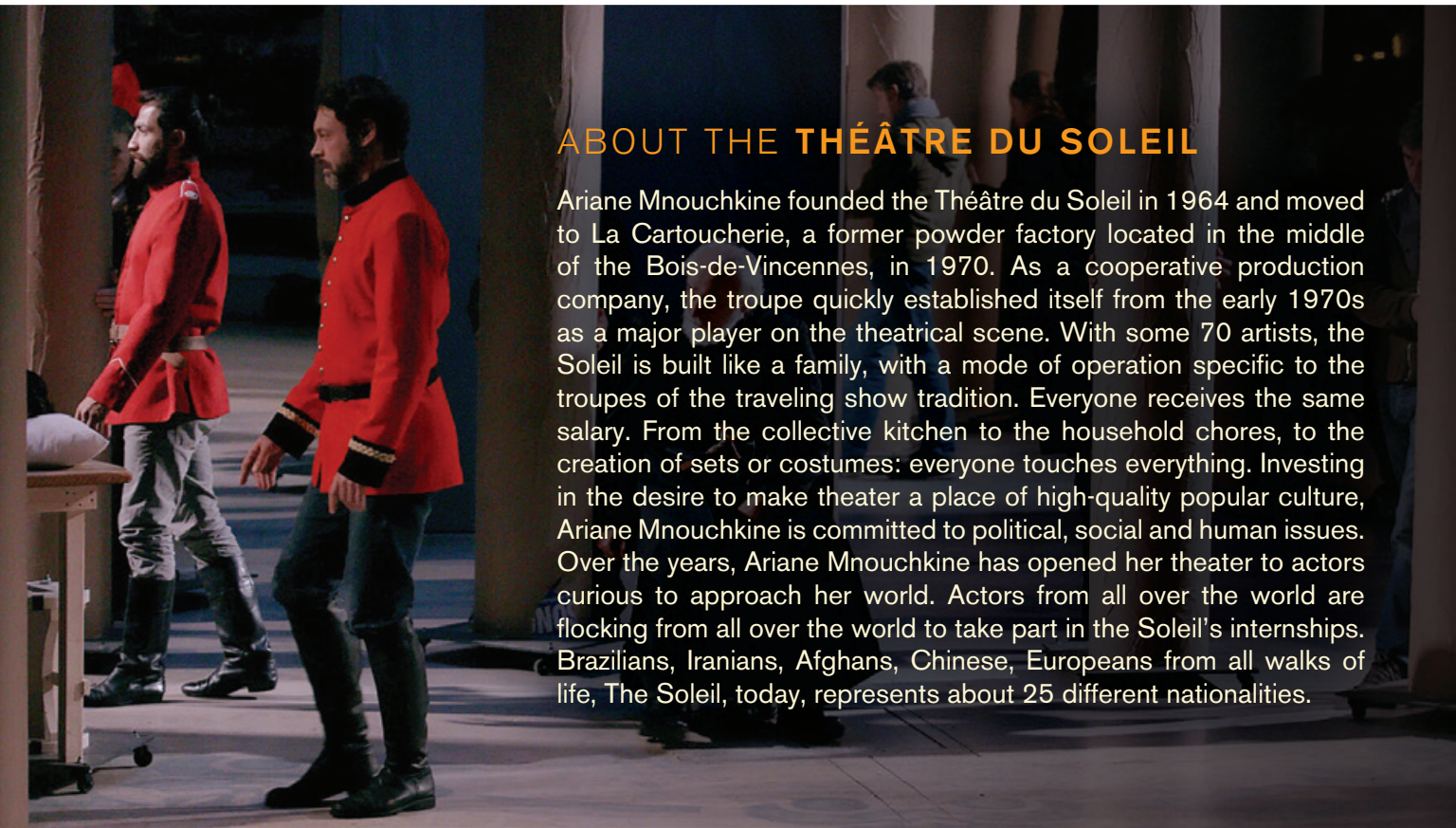
Yoan Cart lived in Canada for 22 years and 22 years in France.

In Montreal, after graduating in Film Production at Concordia University, he worked on feature films as a camera assistant, then discovered documentary at the National Film Board. He became a manager and his career brought him to Paris in 2002 where he developed an international business, in both French and English. This dual North American and European culture will have a strong influence on the way he works and the aesthetics of his image. In fiction as in documentary, his approach is simple, instinctive and always attuned to the subject, which preserves the maximum freedom of the interpreters.

Appreciated for his calmness and his instinct for the frame, he knows how to mix a documentary script with the image of fiction. And conversely.

ABOUT THE THÉÂTRE DU SOLEIL

Ariane Mnouchkine founded the Théâtre du Soleil in 1964 and moved to La Cartoucherie, a former powder factory located in the middle of the Bois-de-Vincennes, in 1970. As a cooperative production company, the troupe quickly established itself from the early 1970s as a major player on the theatrical scene. With some 70 artists, the Soleil is built like a family, with a mode of operation specific to the troupes of the traveling show tradition. Everyone receives the same salary. From the collective kitchen to the household chores, to the creation of sets or costumes: everyone touches everything. Investing in the desire to make theater a place of high-quality popular culture, Ariane Mnouchkine is committed to political, social and human issues. Over the years, Ariane Mnouchkine has opened her theater to actors curious to approach her world. Actors from all over the world are flocking from all over the world to take part in the Soleil's internships. Brazilians, Iranians, Afghans, Chinese, Europeans from all walks of life, The Soleil, today, represents about 25 different nationalities.





ABOUT ROBERT LEPAGE

Multi-talented, a true creative genius, Robert Lepage has led a dazzling and acclaimed career renowned for its eclecticism. Director, stage director, designer, playwright, actor on stage and on screen...

A multidisciplinary artist, Robert Lepage has a master's degree in acting, drama, directing, actor and stage director. Hailed by international critics, he creates and brings to the stage original works that upset the standards of scenic writing, especially through the use of new technologies. He draws his inspiration from contemporary history and his work, modern and unusual, transcends borders.

In 1984, he created the piece *Circulations*, which was presented across Canada and received the award for best Canadian production at the Québec International Theater Fortnight. The following year, he created *La Trilogie des dragons*, a show that earned him international recognition. These were followed by *Vinci* (1986), *Le Polygraphe* (1987) and *Les plaques tectoniques* (1988).

1994 marks a milestone in Robert Lepage's career with the founding of a multidisciplinary creative company, Ex Machina, of which he is the artistic director. The new team presents *Les sept branches de la rivière Ota* (1994), *Le songe d'une nuit d'été* (1995) as well as the solo show *Elseneur* (1995).

Current projects include *Coriolanus* (2018) by William Shakespeare, a production of the Stratford Festival in collaboration with Ex Machina, starring André Sills in the title role. Alongside Betty Bonifassi, Robert Lepage creates the play *SLÁV* (2018). At the invitation of Ariane Mnouchkine, he worked on *Kanata - Episode I - The Controversy* (2018), a new theatrical creation in collaboration with the Théâtre du Soleil troupe. He also began a collaboration with Kodo, a Japanese traditional drumming troupe from the island of Sado.

He collaborated with the Cirque du Soleil by taking on the design and direction of *KÁ* (2005), a permanent show in Las Vegas, and *Totem* (2010), a big-top show that is on a world tour.

The work of Robert Lepage has received many awards for all aspects of his work.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

SHOOTING FORMAT HD	PROJECTION FORMAT Flat 1.78	AVAILABLE LENGTHS 94 minutes and 52 minutes	GENRE Documentaire	ORIGINAL VERSION French
SUB-TITLES English	FORMAT Colour 2.39	SOUND 5.1	COUNTRY OF PRODUCTION Canada	YEAR 2019

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