

SACD

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**ADAPTING TO
THE AUDIOVISUAL
LANDSCAPE
OF THE FUTURE**

SOCIÉTÉ DES AUTEURS ET
COMPOSITEURS DRAMATIQUES

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The future of creation is being written today

BY **JACQUES FANSTEN**,
SACD PRESIDENT



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In his speech on Europe, the French president declared: "In this digital Europe we must defend our authors' rights; we must defend, wherever it exists, the value created by those who really create. This is not a debate from some other era; authors' rights is not, if you'll pardon the expression, some corny debate."

We agree: the fight for authors is not a corny one. But for authors rights to exist, we first need authors, we need works to be produced and for these works to be distributed. Isn't it obvious?

The digital revolution has thoroughly changed habits and uses. Even in the performing arts, the proliferation of discounted ticket prices on the internet or the influential role of social media has had an effect on attendance, box office, and even how shows are programmed. In the audiovisual sector, everything has been turned upside-down. The law now imposes the "sustained exploitation" of works. This was impossible during the time of 35mm film prints, but today all works should be made available. Bizarrely, however, consumption is actually constricting around a diminishing number of titles. In the cinemas, digital projection should allow for screening more films. But if a film fails to sell out a particular screen from the first screening, the mere press of a button is enough to shift it to a smaller screen, and by the next day there may only be two screenings, before it disappears entirely.

Does the dizzying increase in number of broadcasters actually lead to greater diversity? In 2016, the "newcomers" on TNT captured 38% of the advertising share and 29% of the audience share, but they only contributed 4% towards new productions.

The importance of television stations is steadily decreasing, to the benefit of non-linear broadcasts. What kind of future are GAFAN (Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon, Netflix), the social networks, and the telcos preparing for us? It's true that, beyond their fiscal practices seeking maximum optimisation and their tendency to set up where regulations are not so strict, they are starting to invest in production. But even in this area,

they all seem to be trying to produce the same kind of work, as though competition between them only pushes towards imitating each other.

Of course, new forms are emerging, including those designed for viewing on the mobile phone. With France Culture, the SACD launched a support fund for "native podcast" series, and with France Télévisions we launched a fund for writing web series. The CNC also created a support for web creators. The once all-imposing "media-release chronology" calendar is now obsolete. We need to find a place for these new players and incite them towards participating in production and adhering to regulations. The most important challenge is to protect diversity of production in the future. How to treat works aside from as a simple market commodity? We can ask if the real future of an audiovisual public service does not lie here, not as a broadcaster competing against others, but as an instigator of different works. This has long been the role of public intervention in the cinema, so is it not an urgency to apply the same principle for the audiovisual sector?

Protecting authors means first of all protecting their freedom to create. But it also means protecting their revenue. We're not just fighting for ourselves, but we're looking for compulsory proportional remuneration for all European creators for the exploitation of their works on digital platforms. And we expect the French government to support us actively.

Emmanuel Macron added: "If we are here today, if we are standing tall, it's because we have had shared emotions and culture, because those who are the etymological transmitters of what holds us together, the real authority in Europe, are authors. (...) And it's Europe's dignity, its very ability to exist and not dissolve into a continent of sameness, which demands that, in order to make this transition, we must defend fair remuneration of all authors and all forms of creation in the digital age."

We'll go along with that phrase: not dissolve into a continent of sameness. Mr. President, you're on! ■

Europe on the move?



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BY **PASCAL ROGARD**, DIRECTOR GENERAL

“In this digital Europe we must defend our authors’ rights... This is not a debate from some other era; authors’ rights is not, if you’ll pardon the expression, some corny debate.” In pronouncing these words during his speech on the future of Europe on September 26th last, the French president, Emmanuel Macron, spoke clearly and unequivocally. This was a show of confidence in the necessity for authors’ rights in the digital age and a confirmation of his commitment to defend and promote these, at a time when many directives and regulation projects are under discussion in Brussels.

Part of the strength of his message is to have restated precisely the terms and issues behind the authors’ rights struggle. This is no confrontation between old and new. There are no advocates of a triumphant and indisputable modernism pitted against the heirs of an archaic system of authors rights and outdated ideas of cultural diversity.

Protecting creators, recognising their rights over their works, and guaranteeing fair remuneration is not an expression of outdated posturing.

At the very beginning, underpinning the creation of the SACD, Beaumarchais fought over two hundred years ago against those who would exploit works of authors with concern neither for their permission nor for paying them for their trouble. This fight still retains its very modern streak. Because there is a stark reality: the number of those who consider that authors’ rights are an unnecessary burden and an obstacle to freedom is no fewer today than back then.

To demonstrate how pertinent the struggle is today, around fifty writers and filmmakers took up their pens to write to the Minister of Culture. The purpose of their letters was to obtain a firm commitment from France in

support of the introduction of a right to remuneration in Europe. In short, let’s make words into actions! Culture Minister Françoise Nyssen did support, during the Rencontres Cinématographiques in Dijon, that France should defend fair payment to authors.

For years now, the SACD has been rallying Brussels to make progress in this direction. We can’t continue to advocate the necessary circulation of works and development of the internal market if we leave authors on the side of the road. We can’t allow this two-speed Europe to emerge whereby some countries, such as France, have collective management societies signing agreements with digital platform operators and collecting royalties for authors, and other countries where the only guarantee authors have is to receive no payment at all when their works are exploited, simply because this right does not exist or depends purely on the good will of the producer or the middlemen who deduct their generous commissions.

Reform of the directive on author’s rights provides the opportunity to make real progress for all European authors. Many European MEPs are now convinced of its importance, but it is clear that France’s position will be widely anticipated and closely watched by its partners. The hour of decision is upon us, and authors expect France to rise to the occasion, in accordance with its history, its commitment, and a tradition that former Culture Minister Jack Lang summed up with the concept of “most favoured author clause.”

Yes, in Europe we must defend our ambition for creative production and for authors and avoid this race to the bottom that only feeds disillusion and resentment. France has the power, and also the responsibility.

France recently lived up to its responsibilities in the

“Guaranteeing fair remuneration for authors is not outdated posturing”

case of revision of the directive governing audiovisual media services. The directive title may seem obvious, but the stakes for this reform are paramount for the future of cultural diversity: will there be a place tomorrow for European works on online platforms? Or will Europe continue to act as a fiscal and cultural dumping ground for the profit of the American internet giants?

Discussions are still underway between the Member States, the Commission and the European Parliament, but alongside authors who have stepped forward, the government has weighed in to obtain two major concessions which should be written in stone by the end of the year.

In the first place, all video on demand platforms in Europe must include a minimum proportion of 30% of European audiovisual and cinematographic works in their offers. 30% is, of course, no Eldorado, especially compared to the 50% rate of European works that applies to the conventional broadcasters. But let's not grumble, for the setting of this common threshold is both something new and a guarantee that European audiences, wherever they are, will be able to watch European films. The invisibility of European creation will not happen!

The other concession obtained has to do with a new right accorded to each European Member State: from now on, France can finally oblige all video on demand services to invest in creative production. Even if they are based abroad, these platforms will no longer be able to sidestep national policy governing support for creation, as they have developed the unfortunate habit of doing.

This is a major step towards fair and loyal competition between the conventional broadcasters and these new services, who will at last be subject to the same

rules and obligations. They will also be subject to the same taxes, since, at the same time, France, with the approval of the European Commission, also confirmed the application of the extension of the video tax, which supplies funding to the CNC, to all video services, whether physical or digital.

All these positive decisions can only come as good news for the integration of digital companies into the creative economy. Of course, we're not at the end of the road yet, as there remains much to do to ensure we extend these same commitments towards cultural diversity to our future audiovisual landscape.

Here as well, though, France must take the initiative. How often have we read about the need to construct this grand European digital platform, without any efforts leading to the slightest sign of success? Private initiatives have shown their weaknesses, so why not put forth an idea that the French state could submit to Europe: launching a digital platform emphasising the catalogues of European public service broadcasters?

This is surely where the potential of a future audiovisual offer lies, centred around major European public enterprises with rich and diverse catalogues, in particular France Télévisions which, by the way, deserves better than the dose of austerity administered by the government, breaching its commitments and putting the financing of creative production at risk.

This project also says something else: that creativity and culture don't need less Europe, but a better Europe. And they need a political engagement that makes authors' rights, financing creative production, and promoting cultural diversity a cornerstone of the European project. As Françoise Nyssen remarked recently, France remains the birthplace of authors' rights. ■

Adapting to the audiovisual landscape of the future

The audiovisual sector has undergone unprecedented change, putting authors in front of new challenges. The SACD puts forth 9 proposals in response.

4 proposals to protect authors

■ Protect authors in their contractual relations with producers

- Restart professional negotiations post July 2017 agreement
- Enhance investments in writing
- Introduce a share of net revenue after allowance for all authors

■ Reinforce public policy supporting writing

- Make CNC support conditional upon respect for extended professional protocols and agreements
- Offer bonuses on top of CNC subsidies to producers making stronger budgetary commitments to writing

■ Introduce a right to proportional remuneration for digital exploitation in Europe

■ Reinforce the powers of the French regulatory body CSA concerning respect for authors' rights

5 proposals to redefine the rules of the game in the audiovisual landscape

■ Modernise the media chronology calendar

■ Make works more accessible to the public

After obligation for sustained exploitation of works:

- Relax rules concerning prohibited days
- Make films available on the France Télévisions catch-up player
- Create a European digital platform

■ Promote cultural diversity in the digital age

- Quickly transpose the directive on Audiovisual Media Services (AVMSD)
- Subject algorithms to obligations promoting cultural diversity

■ Put into place an active policy fighting piracy

■ Strengthen the role of public service in creative production

- Modernised financing
- Secure level of resources

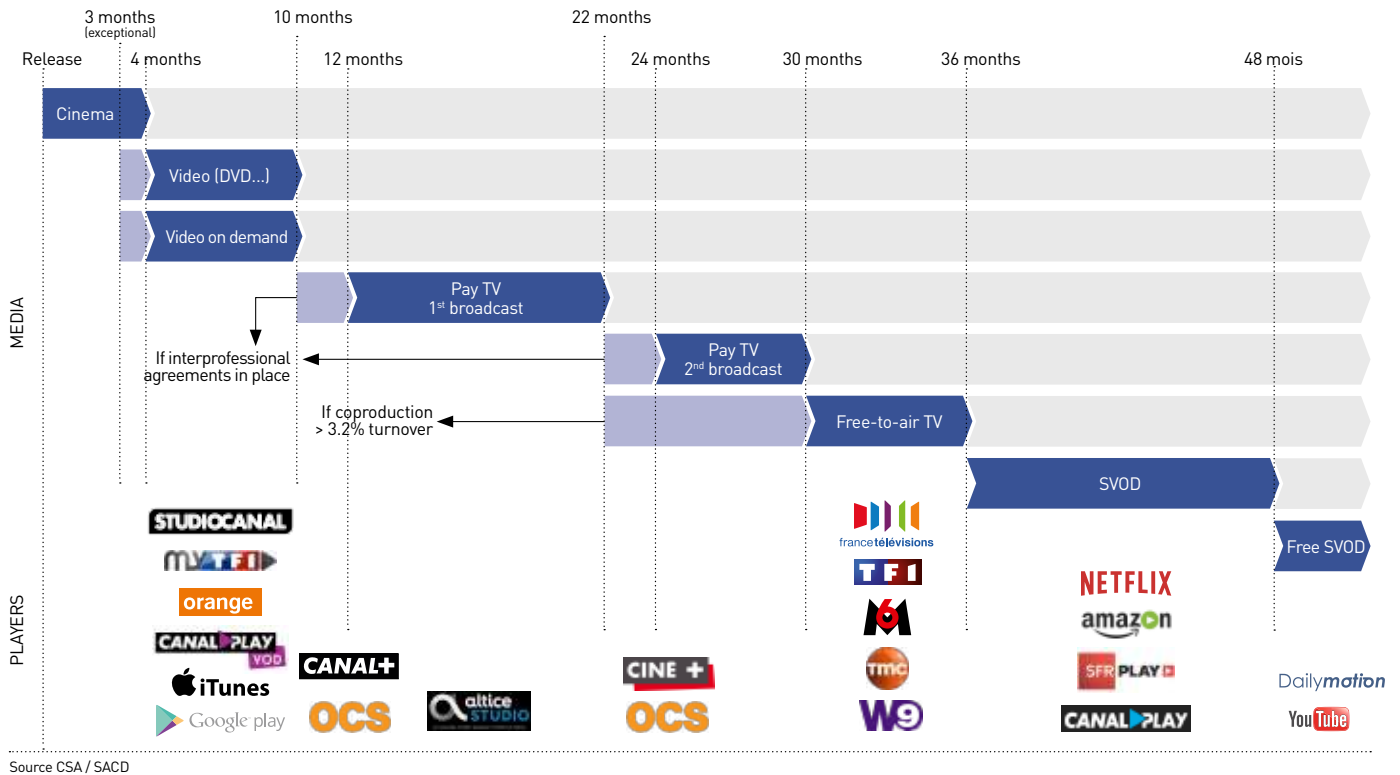
Did someone speak of change? Although live television and the TV screen itself remain at the heart of viewer practices, watching behaviour has indeed evolved, and audiences watch more and more TV programmes on other screens. The amplitude of non-linear watching is intensifying, representing 8% of the daily watching time for French people, in other words almost 19 minutes in total. These developments favour the use of replay/catch-up, a facility used by 4.6 million spectators every day in 2016, regardless of the type of screen. This number has tripled in 3 years. Films and series make up more than half of the time spent by spectators watching programmes on replay. Drama can be watched at the time and place of the spectator's choosing.

GAFAN enters the creators' circle

Within this context the international platforms known as "GAFAN" (Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon, Netf-

lix) are taking root throughout the world: 1.5 billion users per month on Youtube, 2 billion users on Facebook. These are audiences they can now mobilise in order to extend their domination to other sectors and carve out ever more revenue and data. That explains their recent offensive, over the last two years, in programming. Facebook recently joined the party with "Watch," which offers original creations (budgeted at up to \$3m per episode). Apple for its part recruited two Sony Pictures directors, known for the development of Breaking Bad, and Google has announced Youtube TV, its own streaming platform aimed at young "mobile first" adults. Series developed for Youtube Red, the paying, ad-free version of Youtube, guarantee, like with Netflix, the added value of original creations. And Netflix is investing \$7bn into its "originals" in 2018. By way of comparison, HBO's budget is \$2bn. And Amazon has doubled its investment in two years to reach \$4.5bn this year.

Media-release chronology



Telecom operators and social networks on the offensive

Moreover, two surprise types of newcomer have emerged on the content market: first, telcos or cable operators such as Sling, a subsidiary of American Dish, or the German Deutsche Telekom who last August expressed its intention to launch its own on-demand service with exclusive series. Next, the social networks: Snapchat has signed a deal with Time Warner (who owns HBO), and is gradually implementing its new business model, which consists in developing programmes in collaboration with partners that Snapchat then builds up through advertising. In France, players such as Studio+ or BlackPills aim to conquer the 15-34 year market. The Altice Studio channel announced a budget of €160m, including €40m dedicated to drama production. As for Orange Studio, it will invest €100m over five years into production of series, with the support of OCS.

Innovative creation

The area of TV fiction is in a particularly dynamic phase. In 2016, French and foreign financing was on the increase across the board, namely contributions from French broadcasters, which make up 70% of the total, from producers, and from the CNC. Another point to consider is that the volume of works of supported fiction

increased by 21%, reaching nearly 900 hours. In terms of performance, for the second year running, French drama has taken the top spots in the ratings charts for drama.

In terms of exports, drama comes in at second place, up 21%, with almost €50m in sales revenue from series such as *Candice Renoir* and *Les Petits Meurtres d'Agatha Christie*.

The volume of French programmes coproduced with foreign investment reached a 10-year high: 90% of the hourly volume of animation programming is coproduced abroad (10 points higher than in 2015). And 44% of the volume of drama are now also co-productions with foreign companies. In this context, the SACD has, with Arte, just created a writing support fund for series with a European nature, so that more French projects might be seen internationally and so that European culture in general might shine its light throughout the world (see p.11).

A New Deal

This new "ecosystem" brings about fresh questions regarding how the various players and creativity in general is financed. The current business model can quickly become outdated and is already significantly imbalanced. We must define new rules and new mechanisms for protection. ■

OPCA*: focus on drama

The 2016 conclusions of the Permanent Observatory on Audiovisual Contracts showed the need to build new rules in order to protect authors and place higher value on drama creation. What will happen in 2017?

Following the 2012 protocol

Better, but... Overall, although recent contracts show that the principles of the 2012 protocol on contractual practices between screenwriters and producers have been better applied, closer examination reveals that 9 out of 10 contracts do not respect the entirety of these principles. The main emphasis had been on questions of payment, which already means some progress is made, but not enough. The 2012 protocol, signed by producer representative organisations and authors' representatives, was extended by ministerial decree in 2013. Since then, all the provisions contained should have become compulsory for every producer. But four years later, this is still not the case:

- 80% of contracts commission the writing of scripts covering the entire writing process, up to the final shooting script.
- The substitution clause governing how authors can be replaced dur-

ing the course of development only appears in 47% of contracts. This percentage has certainly increased by 10 points over 2016 but it's still a long way from 100%.

- SACD efforts to secure a bonus for authors on top of their fixed payment has borne fruit: 95% of contracts respect this provision. On the other hand, the minimum amount of 30% bonus has become the de facto rule. The number of authors' contracts providing for a bonus higher than 30% have melted away. In 2016, for 52' programmes, the rate was 39% and it has fallen by 17 points to 22% in 2017.

Limited power of renegotiation for authors, sustained exploitation required

OPCA in 2017 confirmed a tendency already observed last year: the duration of rights transfers to producers are getting longer and longer, thus limiting the possibilities for renegotiation. In 2012, the proportion of contracts determining a transfer of rights for over 30 years was 29%; 5 years later, that figure has risen to 77% (including 15% extending the duration to 70 years after the death of the last co-author, as against 7% in 2012). Seen in this light, the 2016 agreement, obliging producers to ensure a sustained exploitation of works is all the more significant. It is im-

portant to verify producers are effectively doing all they can to fulfil their obligations.

Writing budget

The last sensitive point concerns budgets for writing. The 2017 OPCA demonstrates once again the low levels of investment in writing in drama budgets: 3.1% of the overall budget for screenwriters of 52' dramas, and 4.5% for the screenwriter and director. Moreover, the writing budget is inversely proportional to the overall budget. For 52' dramas, the higher the budget, the lower the proportion of budget set aside for writing. Same observation for 90' dramas.

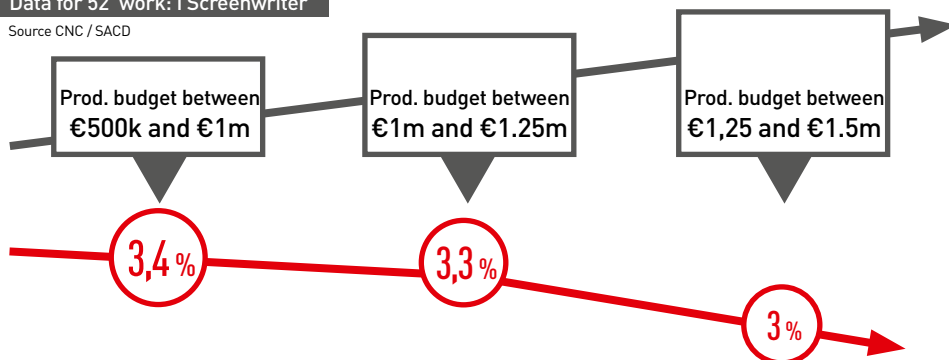
Author/producer relations needing framework

In a general way, the need for a type of framework to guide relations between authors and producers is being felt more and more keenly. While producers enjoy protective rules when dealing with broadcasters, authors on the other hand are relatively unprotected in their often mismatched relations with producers. The number of agreements setting out producers' contractual practices with authors can be counted on the fingers of one hand: the Development Charter signed with France Télévisions (see p.10), the protocol on contrac-

Writing budget / Overall production budget

Data for 52' work: | Screenwriter

Source CNC / SACD



tual practices between screenwriters and producers signed in 2012, and the agreements on transparency signed last summer. We need to go further, and the restart of

negotiations on the transparency agreements is the chance to do so.

* Permanent Observatory on Audiovisual Contracts.

Transparency Agreements, continued...

On November 8, authors and producers will restart discussions to extend the Transparency Agreements signed 6 July last. Authors have two major objectives: seeing more rewards in the case of success of their works and getting better protection in the contractual relations with producers.

The Transparency Agreements signed last summer as the extension of the 2016 "Loi Création" have one major benefit: reinforcing commitments by industry professionals towards greater transparency. For producers that means providing detailed and precise accounts about production spending but also about sales revenue generated by the exploitation of works. There is much at stake, since payments to authors depend on it! The 6 July Agreements were already useful and led to a harmonised definition of "net profit." Another achievement: once producer has recouped costs on the work, the minimum guarantee no longer applies and the author gets

a share (proportional remuneration) on sales from exploitation of his/her work. The only twist to this is that, for the time being, the author is only paid for each individual mode of exploitation (a share of video sales, a share of derivative rights, and foreign sales outside of collective management). One of the challenges of the discussions opening shortly will be to negotiate the introduction of a post-recoup pay schedule covering all revenue from sales (including collective management). The implementation of a strict framework governing contractual relations between screenwriters and producers will also be at the heart of discussion. To be continued...

The 6 July 2017 agreements

AUDIOVISUAL

- Harmonisation of the definition of net profit-authors;
- Minimum guarantee covered once production costs are recouped;

To be discussed collectively at a later date:

- Minimum remuneration for drama screenwriters;
- Improvement of contractual practices between screenwriters and producers;
- Modalities to tie in certain drama authors to the success of their works, once costs recouped;

CINEMA

Production Agreement

- Formalisation of the 16 December 2010 Agreement
- Standard formats for production accounts:
 - Detailed cost of the film;
 - Totality of finance plan;

Exploitation Agreement

- Obligations of the distributor:
 - Transmitting sales reports to the delegate producer;
 - Listing minimum required information in the sales reports;
- Obligation of the producer: transmitting authors the sales reports received from distributor.

Proposing drama to France Télévisions: what will change

The signature of a Charter between France Télévisions, authors and producers will facilitate the reception and development of drama projects. It's good news for authors!

During the TV Drama Festival in La Rochelle, France Télévisions, the SACD, the Screenwriters Guild, the 25 Images Group, the SPI and the USPA signed a Charter aimed at drama development. Keen to develop more series projects in accordance with the ambitions of the "Creativity Plan" (budgeted at 420 million euro per year, of which drama takes a large share) the France Télévisions group decided to clarify its rules concerning how it receives and develops projects. This decision can only satisfy authors and producers all too often demoralised by the long waiting periods for decisions, sometimes even the absence of any decision, and the lack of transparency in the ways their projects were or weren't selected by one of the channels. Considering that the group today accounts for over 50% of investment in French creative production, the stakes are sizeable.

This new Charter – which extends the first Charter signed July 4 2011 and which is unique in the audiovisual landscape – puts into place a precise and formalised procedure for submitting and developing TV



From now on authors will have to pitch their projects.

series projects, facilitating dialogue between France Télévisions, authors and producers and making the development process

What will change:

- The Charter introduces a pitching process for producers and authors to present their projects before the France Télévisions commissioning teams, creating a new dynamic between authors, producers and the France Télévisions commissioning editors;
- Intermediate stages in the writing of the first scripted episode are to be cancelled;
- Overall shortening of deadlines for writing periods, development phases, and the decision-making process;
- Bonus payments for authors (30%) for delivery of the first episode, in exchange for a priority commitment and shortened delivery deadline (3 months);
- Involvement of the director at an earlier stage;
- Increased transparency: France Télévisions commits to communicating to authors and producers the total amount of writing contracts handed out each year;

Beyond these new principles, the signing parties wished to reconfirm and maintain the overall balance of the original Charter. This still depends on the responsible actions of each party – author, producer and commissioning editor – during each of the phases of development, while maintaining the option to cancel projects at appropriate moments.

Two new funds for drama

France Culture – SACD Native Podcast Drama Fund

France Culture and the SACD teamed up to create the Native Podcast Drama Fund and the launch of the first ever call for projects towards authors for writing serialised radio programmes. Launched in July 2017, this fund was conceived by the SACD and France Culture in order to foster new talent and offer authors fresh opportunities. The first productions will be released in the form of podcasts that can be listened to online from January 2018, before being broadcast on the France Culture airwaves. Convening on October 9 last with

France Culture director, Sandrine Treiner, and SACD president, Jacques Fansten, the jury was composed of Blandine Masson, head of France Culture drama department, Céline Geoffroy, literary advisor, Cédric Aussir, director, Baptiste Guiton, director, Katell Guillou, screenwriter and literary advisor, François Pérache, writer, and Baya Rebaz, screenwriter. In the end, 7 high quality projects were selected by the jury, thereby launching the new fund with a big splash. The first two projects received €7500 each, and the 5 others received €7000 each.

7 prize-winning projects

- Mahi Bena, *Probation*
- Arny Berry, *Le Paradis des ombres*
- Tanguy Blum, Christian Brugerolles et Antoine Piombino, *Projet Orloff*
- Léon Bonnaffé, *Hasta dente*
- Sébastien Dicenaire, *Dreamstation*
- Juliette Rose et Cyril Legrais, *Des profondeurs*
- Emmanuel Suarez, *Bolobo*

France-Europe Series Creation

Announced at the latest TV Drama Festival in La Rochelle, this new resource, created in association with Arte, aims to support the writing and development of audiovisual drama series or mini-series projects in French and with a European calling. Based on the belief that universality can be found in the most local of topics and realities, the intention of this prize is to select and support projects open to all genres, which, through their foundation in reality, culture, or

politics of French life are likely to find a wider audience throughout Europe. It is open not only to audiovisual authors but also web series authors. There is one prerequisite for applications: one must have written at least 52 cumulated minutes of broadcast material. A dozen projects will be selected and will be awarded writing bursaries of 8,000 euro to write a first draft (ten weeks allotted to write a developed draft of 20-40 pages). After this period, the new draft is submitted to the

jury, which will select five projects for fresh development support of an additional 17,000 euro. The selection will be made by various European public figures.

Application deadline: **until early December 2017**
More precise details on www.sacd.fr

Audrey Vernon

“Performing in a factory is an aesthetic act”

Comment épouser un milliardaire ? (How to Marry a Billionaire?) For 8 years now Audrey Vernon has been poking fun at very large fortunes in her biting droll one-woman show against inequality. A conversation with writer-performer whose caustic texts on stage or on the radio have earned her the SACD New Comedy Talent Prize. PROPOS RECUEILLIS PAR **GUILLAUME REGOURD**

You started to look into the lifestyles of billionaires in 2009 for the purposes of your show. How are they all doing today?

Their fortunes have all increased and inequality has only grown deeper. It wasn't quite as flagrant when I was talking about it at the time. I was relying on academic studies like those by Thomas Piketty, which weren't well known but which have become more publicised today. No one denies anymore that inequalities have amplified. The world population of billionaires has risen from 793 in 2009 to 2,043 now. I've witnessed an incredible rise of very young company directors into the list of richest people on the planet. The CEO of Amazon is 2nd. The Facebook head, Mark Zuckerberg, only made the list in 2010. I look at what we've both done since: at the time, he was 200th, and now he's 6th. And I'm still doing the same show [laughs].

What drew your interest as a comedian towards billionaires?

The riots in the suburbs in 2005. I found the imbalance in treatment in the media between rich and poor to be very unfair, particularly how the people in the suburbs were stigmatised, while the super-rich were committing social and environmental crimes and getting away with them. Steve Jobs is considered as a kind of benefactor of humanity, but the devices his company makes are not recyclable, and people die in his factories. A poor person who doesn't pay his taxes is fined straight away, but Apple doesn't pay any taxes in France and in the end it's all right.

How did you write the show?

Over two years I read everything I could about economics. And then I went through the Forbes fortune list. It's updated every year and I used it to keep my show up to date.

How was this naïve character that you play created?

At first, the text I had written was very much on the nose. It was just criticism that wasn't very interesting. Then one day, I was passing by a nice wedding gown shop and I thought that a bride could make a very good character. It's the most beautiful day of her life, and she is giving up the stage to marry a billionaire. That allowed me to turn things around. Instead of criticising billionaires, she loves them. They are human beings, after all. They're just not subject to the same rules as everyone else, and don't have to obey the laws of any country. They're just like very badly brought up children.

What gave you the idea to devote your biographical show *Marx and Jenny to Karl Marx*?

In *How to marry a billionaire? (Comment épouser un milliardaire ?)*, Marx intervenes at one point to interrupt the wedding. I didn't know anything about him and I wanted to find out. I read a biography and lapped up his correspondence with Engels. It was more addictive than *Grey's Anatomy*. There are a lot of similarities with our own times. Everything written in *Das Kapital* is what we see today. Marx was a funny guy. He was a contemporary of Hugo, Dickens, Darwin... His life is something to be rediscovered.



Timeline

.....
2017: SACD Prize for New Comedy Talent

2015: *Fukushima work in progress, une légende japonaise*

2014: *Chagrin d'amour*

2012: *Marx et Jenny*

2009: *Comment épouser un milliardaire ?*

2005: first one-woman-show, *Le spectacle le plus drôle du monde*

2002: starts in Canal+

.....

Making people laugh with Marx is not an easy task...

The subjects I tackle are so sad... It's a kind of alchemy to take these topics and make them funny. A lot depends on the level of complicity between the audience and me. In *Marx and Jenny*, for twenty minutes, people are immersed into this world they don't know and this group of four people: Marx, his wife Jenny, the maid, and Engels. I bombard them with information to familiarise them with this universe and then bring them to a level where they are in on all the private jokes. It's a kind of laughter that is born from shared intelligence.

But your kind of laughter is often a little bit sour rather than full-hearted, isn't it?

For the show *Fukushima* work in progress, I read about the topic for months. It was appalling. But there were still funny aspects, including how the catastrophe was managed: lining up car batteries together to power the instruments measuring the reactor core, the whole ramshackle way of approaching this uncontrollable matter... it's all quite funny. Man is reminded of his own powerlessness. Capitalism tries to make us believe that it can manage this kind of catastrophe. But when it happens, the leaders of these companies can't do anything about it.

You have performed several times in factory yards, such as Continental or Fralib... Has any political movement tried to recruit you? Does this type of activism tempt you?

Yes, I've been approached. But I express my activism

only on the stage. And performing in a factory is not activism. It's an aesthetic act. There's a particular acoustic. And there's also a real buzz: playing Marx in front of the workers, people who have this culture of class struggle, a real literary culture, and take pleasure in playing with language. It makes sense to perform in front of the people I'm talking about.

What are your projects?

I'm touring with *How to Marry...* I still perform *Fukushima* and *Chagrin d'amour* from time to time. And I'd love to perform *Marx and Jenny* again for the 200th anniversary of Marx's birth, next year. Otherwise, I'm writing a piece on war that will be called *Chair à canon (Cannon Fodder)* with an academic specialised in these questions. War is a very stupid invention. Very masculine. Why not disarm all individuals of the masculine sex? Let's be honest, you're not able to carry arms in your hands [laughs]. And then I have a film project about furnished hotels in Paris.

Any further details about this film project?

These are hotels rented by City Hall to house people who ring 115, the homeless line of social services. It costs a fortune. It's big business. Re-housed people and regular clients live together sometimes. There are very strict rules laid down by the management. I went to live in one of these hotels to write a synopsis: a comedy about an actress who can't afford to rent an apartment in Paris and who takes a room in one of these places. I haven't found a producer yet. So I'm counting a lot on this interview [laughs]. ■

Marie Rémond

“Desire starts with a detailed and singular story”

An encounter with Marie Rémond, winner of the SACD New Theatre Talent Prize. INTERVIEW BY CAROLINE COLLARD

For each of your productions you partnered up with other people. How would you define this collective work?

It's a particular position. I consider myself as an actress first of all, but sometimes I might discover a text, a piece of material, or a story that touches me deeply, and that I really want to share, and then I feel an energy and a desire that I try to communicate to those people I'd like to work with.

For André, Vers Wanda and *Comme une pierre qui...* I brought the material, the subject matter, and then I spoke with Clément [Bresson] and Sébastien [Pouderoux] and we worked together. It wasn't a typical example of "writing on stage" where we would start with a theme and get into improv. The starting point is a work, a story, and other texts or anecdotes are

then joined on. Improvisations can later complement our work on specific points; they are "framed." For *Le Rayon vert* it was a little different. It was a project by Thomas Quillardet that we co-adapted. In a way we were trying to recreate the working methods of Eric Rohmer with his actress, and bring more personal things into the writing process.

So it's a text, fundamentally, that sparks the desire to do something?

Yes. It's when certain texts or stories resonate in me that I feel the urge to do something and to share them with the audience. The text then acts as a foundation for other material, which doesn't necessarily come from the theatre, or could come from improvisations or ideas. There are a lot of different types of material brought together into the writing that have various levels of poetry and literature. It's a bit difficult to establish rules or define a "working method." Some improvisations might enrich the original material, or fill it out tangentially, giving it a fresh angle; and then there's a kind of "editorial" writing that arranges the various materials and gives the show structure, something we couldn't do with a play already written for the theatre, so this stage is always very exciting.

What I really like, fundamentally, is for the process to be intimate and singular. I need to start with something very intimate and very precise in order to speak about more general themes, not the opposite. It's not themes or subject matter in general that creates in me the desire to make a show. I need a detailed path and story. The more singular the story, the more it will resonate with people, in the end.

Timeline

Feb. 2018: *Bluebird* at Théâtre du Rond Point (Paris)

2017: SACD New Theatre Talent Prize

Soudain l'été dernier (*Suddenly Last Summer*) at the Théâtre de l'Odéon (Paris) - **revival in March 2018**

2016-2017: *Où les cœurs s'éprennent* (*Where Hearts Fall in Love*)

- **touring from April 2018**

Adaptation du *Rayon vert* (*The Green Ray*) with Thomas Quillardet

2015: Wins Molière prize for female newcomer // Produced *Comme une pierre qui...* (*Like a Stone that...*) with Sébastien Pouderoux

2013: Produced *Vers Wanda* with Sébastien Pouderoux et Clément Bresson

2011: Produced *André* with S. Pouderoux et Clément Bresson

- **revival in June 2018**

In collective work not everyone always agrees. Do you have the last word?

Sometimes it's difficult work that asks questions about everyone's role. Ideally, each person can recognise their input in the final work and can claim it is his or hers. Obviously, if there is disagreement on a specific point and after long discussions we can't resolve it, I will decide. On shows several people worked on together, I had the feeling I had a kind of "final cut." But it's also as a result of presenting our arguments and talking, that ideas are enriched as well as mistreated. Every project is different, and there are no set rules.

Whatever the case, there is no room for improvisation in the final text. The question of writing, economy of words, and what we decide to retain is important for me and for those I work with. In the end we arrive at something very exact, where nothing is left to chance. It has to be very sculpted, in the sense that there is a rhythm to be maintained, where words have a certain impact in relation to others. It becomes a text, a finished object. It makes me happy to think that the spectators, when they come to the theatre, will discover something that we made for them. Something new that will move them, make them think, teach them something...

Overall, your relation with writing is fairly joyful?

Yes! I don't feel inhibited in my relation to writing, maybe because I've always written, since I was little, and never made it into something sacred. It's something that I love. And doing it collectively has something reassuring about it, even with the headaches that it entails and the questions on everyone's role. It's more joyful but it also rises other questions.

You need to start with something very intimate and very precise, but also very real, since each time it is about people who actually existed. Does that give you a freer and stronger hand in dramatisation?

In the three projects this was not a deliberate decision of mine! When you're dealing with a theatre play already written, you can see the path the author chose. There is often a unidirectional voice because the work results from the will and sensitivity of a single person. When you start with things that already exist inside you, which have not been dramatised from the outset, it's very different. But a true story is in itself not enough; I need the prism of an author who has taken an interest. The only thing is that when this person is not a theatre author, then it's harder to see the "codes" of a dramaturgy, but there is a different sensitivity. Each of the three productions is about people who are



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not in their right place or marginalised somehow, often with a large gap between the lives they think they are living, how they would like to live, and on the other hand the difficulty in living this life externally and communicating it. This of course also ties in with questions about creativity, the role of the person who creates, but also sensitive and intimate questions about what is expected of us and who we think we are. Ultimately it revolves a lot around questions of identity.

Will this also be the case for your new project *Camp Cataract* (ed. note: adaptation of a novel by Jane Bowles)?

Yes, absolutely! Jane Bowles' writing demonstrates the gap between the interior, where there are non-stop roller-coasters, and reality. She talks about the difficulty in carving out one's own place, in mastering one's own existence and asks troubling questions about relations with others. It's a very singular style of writing, precise, sensitive, surprising, but also with a lot of humour. She leaves lots of space for narration, of course, and to internal states of mind, and it will be interesting to see how we can transpose that to the theatre. All the text will be there in any case. I want for this singular writing to be heard.

Do you have other writing projects?

On the proposal of two producers, I started writing a feature film script, which is very different and new for me. I'd also like to do something in the theatre about *Il Viaggio di G. Mastorna*, a script by Fellini that he never made. ■

Authors in Solidarity, two more

After *Raconte-moi ta vie!* (*Tell me your Life Story!*) and *Un cirque dans ma tête* (*A Circus in my Head*) in Marseille, Authors in Solidarity are launching two new actions in the Paris suburbs.

Emboldened by these first two experiences, Authors in Solidarity is now launching two new actions in the Parisian suburbs. *La vie rêvée* (*Dream Life*), in Nogent-sur-Marne, proposes intergenerational meetings between 9-11 year-old children and "old folks," aimed to shed a different light on the delicate subject of the human condition. Until June 2018, guided by professional authors, children from four youth centres (in Champigny-sur-Marne) will attempt to invent the past lives of people who have passed from this life and who are unknown to them. The children will write their stories and play them on stage. In order to place these imagined destinies in the right time setting, they'll be relying on stories from older people



Un cirque dans ma tête in Marseille.

(residents of a retirement home) who have knowledge of these long ago times, either through direct experience or from stories handed down by parents or grandparents. Also launched in early October with the pupils of the Collège Voltaire in Sarcelles –guided by two professional authors–, the project *Raconte-moi ta vie!* invites young people recently arrived in France, who don't speak French, to tell and write down their stories and those of their families. Those who cannot write the stories down will be assisted by transcription. The idea is then to tell the stories in images or on stage. A school offering integration classes for immigrants seems like the ideal place to situate this encounter between authors and young migrants, at a crucial time in their lives, that of a new start in a new country. Collaboration between authors and the pedagogical team is assured in order to initiate and share this ad-

venture. The goal, on both an individual and collective level, is to build self-confidence and trust in others by giving these youths character-building points of reference. The action for this class will take place over a period of 8 months, enough time for the youths to get their bearings in their new environment. During the creative workshops, led by the two authors, they will discover different artistic disciplines, taking into account their level of French: writing workshops, improvisations, role playing, initiation to the image.

Authors sharing

Convinced that cultural activity and the creative act are essential vectors towards positive personal and collective development, SACD authors were behind the creation of Authors in Solidarity in November 2014. A grant fund in the spirit of solidar-

The partners

- RACONTE-MOI TA VIE ! (Marseille) : L'Alhambra Ciné Marseille, SACD Copie privée, Google, 9th and 10th Marseille district town halls, the Académie of Aix-Marseille
- UN CIRQUE DANS MA TÊTE : Archaos , SACD Copie Privée, Google, Fondation France Télévisions, MACD
- LA VIE RÉVÉE : FNAGP, SACD Copie privée, Maison nationale des artistes
- RACONTE-MOI TA VIE ! (Sarcelles) : Accueil et Culture, SACD Copie privée, Caisse des écoles de la Ville de Sarcelles



©MATTHIEU PARENT

Raconte-moi ta vie !, collègue Louise Michel à Marseille.

ity that has long been a tradition in the authors' society, its mission is to initiate projects and cultural activities in places where the social tissue needs to be maintained or reinforced. These are projects moderated by motivated authors and carried out in partnership with local interests: municipalities, social services, institutions, schools, associations, sponsors, beneficiaries, etc. Entitled *Raconte-moi ta vie!* (*Tell me Your Life Story!*) the first operation of Authors in Solidarity took place in Marseille. All during the last school year, two classes with children aged 13 to 14, from the city's 10th District (Pont-de-Vivoux and Louise Michel) worked with 7 authors from the performing arts and the audiovisual sector (playwrights, screenwriters, stage directors) in creative workshops. The goal was to incite

these secondary school students to reconnect with their family histories and their roots. Over 60 hours were spent collecting stories about their lives and those of their parents or loved ones, followed by the exercise of various artistic methods leading to the creation of short films, theatre scenes, etc. In September 2016, still in Marseille, the project *Un cirque dans ma tête* (*A Circus in my Head*) got underway. Here the idea, in collaboration with authors and circus artists, was to propose to handicapped children to discover the world of circus, giving them the opportunity to actually take part, either as a performer or as an author by sharing their imagination with a performer.

More information:
www.auteurs-solidaires.org

Activities intended to:

- **Liberate creativity:**
each person benefits individually from shared, collective creative experiences;
 - **Respond to local issues:**
organise specific projects responding to each locality's needs, in partnership with local interests;
 - **Generate social and intergenerational links:**
allowing professional authors to take part in innovative activities with a social and civic calling
-



©MATTHIEU PARENT

Raconte-moi ta vie ! , collège Pont-de-Vivoux in Marseille.

Questions for...

Rodolphe Belmer,
chairman of Authors in Solidarity

What are the challenges in store for Authors in Solidarity?

R.B.: We want to develop and multiply the number of projects. There are two types of challenges facing us, creative and financial. On the financial side, the first issue is to secure the major finance we have on a perennial basis, by associating new partners to future actions. Acquiring new sponsorships will allow us to encompass the whole range of sectors covered by the SACD. From a creative point of view, one of the challenges facing us is to expand and spread this kind of funding grant so that it can have a strong presence throughout the world of culture and creativity.

Jacques Fansten,
founder of Authors in Solidarity

Why did you create Authors in Solidarity?

J.F.: Authors are first of all citizens, who, like everyone, are concerned about erosion of the social fabric and loss of points of reference. For a long time now, we've been reflecting together, especially at the SACD, on possibilities for imagining and organising social interaction with authors, in the conviction we have that culture (which gives us our individual and collective foundation and ability to build ourselves) and cultural activities (everyone needs to be able to express themselves) provide us with essential responses. In parallel, we are aware of the precarious situation of many

authors who, over their career paths, can find themselves isolated. We've been asking ourselves about solidarity initiatives and ways we can help them get back on their feet through new activities and meeting new people. Gradually, by tying these two questions together, the principle behind Authors in Solidarity emerged: offering professional authors the opportunity to put their talent and experience to the service of people a bit distanced from the centre of cultural life, by framing innovative and shared creative projects. To do this, we've been building partnerships with sponsors wishing to act for the common social good by supporting these different and ambitious initiatives.

Francophone Authors: in honour of Cameroon

Two Cameroonian authors, Sufo Sufo and Edouard Elvis Bvouma, were awarded the SACD Francophone Dramaturgy Prize and the 2017 RFI Theatre Prize, respectively, during the Francophonies festival in Limousin.

2017 SACD Francophone Dramaturgy Prize

Attributed to the author of a work in French, chosen from a selection of texts proposed by the Maison des Auteurs in Limoges, 2017 SACD Francophone Dramaturgy Prize was awarded this year to the text *Debout un pied* by the Cameroonian author Sufo Sufo. Author, actor, and stage director, Sufo Sufo has participated in many workshops and writers' residencies in Africa and Europe (Contexthéâtral, Univers des Mots, Tarmac des Auteurs, Maison des Auteurs de Limoges, etc.). He published his plays *Je suis libre donc je danse* and *Haute court 6600* with the Cameroonian publishing house Scènes d'Ebène and in France with the ETGSO association. His *De la Mémoire des Errants* won the Best Text award in 2014 at the "Univers des mots" competition in the Guinean capital, Conakry.

Sufo Sufo won bursaries for the residency programmes "Visa pour la création" and "ACCR Odyssée" as well as the French government bursary. He staged some of his own texts, such as *Croisement sur l'échelle de Richter* and *De la Mémoire des Errants* in Conakry and in Cameroon. They were performed many

times in Africa and in Europe. In 2010, he toured Africa with his show *Les deux frères*, based on a text by the Cameroonian novelist, Séverin Cécile Abega. Since 2009, Sufo Sufo runs an artistic research laboratory in Cameroon called "Scènes Expérimentales" also taking part in the organisation of the "contemporary building site of theatrical text" known as Contexthéâtral.

2017 RFI Theatre Prize

The 2017 RFI Theatre Prize (in collaboration with the SACD) was also awarded to a Cameroonian author, Edouard Elvis Bvouma, for his text, *La poupée barbue*. Edouard Elvis Bvouma, who already won the SACD Francophone Dramaturgy Prize in 2016, is an author, director, and actor. He has completed residencies in Africa and in France. Designated 2008 Author of the Year by the "Grands Prix Afrique du Théâtre Francophone," his texts have been produced in Cameroon and elsewhere in Africa. He wrote and directed *Petit à petit l'oiseau perd son nid*, and *Le Deal des Leaders*, and he also directed Goethe's *Iphigenia in Tauris*, Aristophanes' *Assemblywomen* as well as *Don't cry, stand-up!* by the comedian, Charlotte Ntamack. He published



Sufo Sufo et
Edouard Elvis
Bvouma.

the novel *L'Épreuve par neuf* and the short story collection *L'Amère patrie* with L'Harmattan publishers, the short story *L'Impasse* at the Lille foundation, and the short story *Ave Mariana*, at Magellan publishers, re-published by Magnard. As co-founder of the company Zouria Théâtre, he organised the writing biennale Contexthéâtral (contemporary building site of theatrical text) in Cameroon. Bvouma was one of the authors selected for the RFI/SACD series of readings *Ça va, ça va, le monde* during the 2016 Avignon Festival with his text *À la guerre comme à la Gameboy*. ■

FESTIVALS

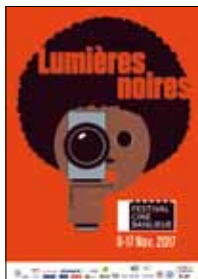
NOVEMBER



FESTIVAL DANSES OUVERTES

Organised by the Camargo dance c^{ie} – Dominique Rebaud, this festival is devoted to new forms of dance performance: participative, immersive, interactive or contemplative. It is open to proposals from either established or emerging choreographers, offering group work and open work sessions all season long, inviting participants to invent and experiment with the forms proposed. Presented works, from the most contemporary of forms to the most primal, are gathered and displayed together in a united space to be experienced from the perspective resembling that of a museum visitor, or perhaps a theatre spectator. The space is a large gymnasium designed for the occasion, shared by participants, artists, and the public.

3, 4 and 9 November, Fontenay-aux-Roses.
www.camargo-dominique-rebaud.com



FESTIVAL CINÉBANLIEUE

Created in 2006, this festival arose out of a realisation that there were no major events devoted to the suburbs as seen from the angle of their social, cultural and economic wealth. It aimed to prove that representations of the suburbs and their residents should not be limited to that which the media wishes to show. The main idea is to show these spaces as areas of inspiration and artistic flourishing rather than sources of tension and destruction. Alongside a selection of films in competition, the festival features essential opportunities for meetings between public and professionals, through conferences, debates, workshops, forums and round tables.

8-17 November, Cinéma l'Écran (St-Denis), Comedy Club Paris, UGC Ciné Cité Paris 19.
www.cinebanlieue.org



FESTIVAL COURTS DEVANT

This international short film festival offers a panorama of the year's audiovisual output with a programme of innovative and original productions, a selection of films in competition (*Fiction et Compagnie, Les Petits Courts Devant, Docs et courts, Films de Musique, Si loin Si Proche, Bord Cadre...*), events for the general public and for professionals, and script readings. During this event, the SACD will award a prize to a student film in competition in the selection *Du riffifi dans les écoles d'animation*. The SACD also supports the organisation of the "Pitches - Nouveaux Ecrans" workshop, devoted to new writing and digital creation.

16-21 November, MK2 Bibliothèque et BNF, Paris.
www.courtsdevant.com



BRUITS BLANCS

Created in 2011 in Anis Gras, Arcueil, the idea behind Bruits Blancs (White Noise) is that of a laboratory, with all it entails in terms of risk, discovery, overtures, and its place in contemporary artistic musical and literary life. Performances and meetings between composers, musicians, video artists, writers. Confrontation of languages and genres opens a path of exploration different for each person.

23-25 November, Anis Gras, Arcueil and La Muse en Circuit, Alfortville ; 9 December, Viala (48).
www.bruitsblancs.fr



LES JOURNÉES DE LYON DES AUTEURS DE THÉÂTRE

The "Journées de Lyon des Auteurs de Théâtre" (Lyon Playwright Days) has since 1989 been organising a playwright competition whose goal is to discover unpublished texts by authors of today. Selected texts, taken from several hundred manuscript submissions, will be published. They will be presented on 30 November and 1 and 2 December 2017 at the Vaise media-library and ENSATT (Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts et Techniques du Théâtre). In parallel, on 2 December at the Vaise media-library, will take place the 4th Salon du Livre de Théâtre (Theatre Book Fair), organised in partnership with the Lyon Municipal Library.

30 Novembre- 2 Decembre, Lyon.
www.auteursdetheatre.org

SHOWS

DECEMBER



FESTIVAL DE CINÉMA EUROPÉEN DES ARCS

Over 120 films to discover at all the sites of this ski resort, professional events, concerts, DJ sets and virtual reality experiences. This year, the featured country is Germany, with around ten films to discover as well as a short film programme, by the most expressive and promising filmmakers from across the Rhine. Ten films will be in competition for the main prize, the "Flèche de Cristal" (Crystal Arrow), awarded by the festival jury (presided this year by the English director, Andrea Arnold).

16-23 December, Les Arcs.
www.lesarcs-filmfest.com

JANUARY



© VILLE D'ANGERS - THIERRY BONNET

FESTIVAL PREMIERS PLANS D'ANGERS

Revealing Europe's newest directors is the name of the game for this festival of first films. Each year, the official selection is made up of around 100 first works (short films and features, and student films produced in Europe). The SACD not only supports the festival programme but is also partner in five feature film script reading sessions, read by well-known actors.

12-21 January 2018,
 Angers.

www.premiersplans.org

NOVEMBER



© ALAIN JULIEN

BACKLINE

A circle of fifteen microphones on stands forms the stage of the new solo "auto-fiction" by dancer-choreographer Thierry Micouin, derived with the sound plastic artist Pauline Boyer. Photos, personal data, geo-localisation... Over the years, our intimate lives have become less and less private. With their new production, Thierry Micouin and Pauline Boyer evoke the erosion by new technologies of the border between public and private life. This production received the support of the SACD Stage Music Fund.

8 November,
 Le Manège, Reims.



HUNTER

Marc Lainé continues his pattern of subverting genres by taking on horror movies. David and Claire in a suburban house near a forest. One evening, the young couple discover a woman hidden in their garden. Lost and terrified, she behaves quite aggressively and bites David's hand. Half-woman, half werewolf, the creature provokes a series of gory and fantastic twists, accompanied by the electro musician Gabriel Legeleux, alias Superpoze. This production received the support of the SACD Theatre Fund.

14 November,
 Scène nationale d'Alençon.
 16 November,
 Forum de Flers (61).



LE MIRACLE

Alexandra Chouraqui and Patxi Garat, who came from the Troupe à Palmade, invented this dominant/dominated couple whose dynamic is perfectly balanced around their desire to have a child. The couple decide to go on holiday to get away from the daily routine. Far from Paris, they hope to rekindle their relationship. But an encounter with another couple will throw their lives into disarray. This production received the support of the SACD Theatre Fund.

Until 2 December,
 Comédie de Paris.

SACD funding calendar

All year round, the SACD supports creative production through funds financed by its cultural activities.

STAGE MUSIC FUND

choreography, or a circus or street arts show.

This resource helps to overcome the difficulty performing arts producers might have in commissioning a work from a composer for original music for a show from one of these different disciplines. Effectively, the use of pre-existing music has become widespread, undermining creative production.

Allocations reserved for composition have become more scarce, obliging composers to work in difficult conditions.

The SACD Stage Music Fund is a support for writing. Support is offered to a level of €5,000 per project, paid to the production company upon presentation of a commissioning contract and proof of payment to the composer(s).

Application deadline: **15 December 2017**

LYRICAL FUND

The SACD lends our support to the creation and production of contemporary dramatic and lyrical works through funds managed by Cultural Activities. The Fonds de Création Lyrique (FCL/Lyrical Fund), initiated by the SACD, the DGCA, the Adami and the FCM, attributes a support to contemporary and professional lyrical projects both new and reprised. This aid is aimed towards opera and musicals.

Notice: from 2018, there will be only one commission per year. This commission will take place in March.

Application period: **from 1 December 2017 to 15 January 2018**

Apply on line through the SACD
and association Beaumarchais-SACD support portal:
<http://soutiens.beaumarchais.sacd.fr>

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Photos Lionel GUERICOLAS

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