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news

**For Immediate Release**

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***Seuls en Scène* - Princeton French Theater Festival**

***Celebrated French theater artists converge onstage at Princeton University***

***11th Edition of the Festival***

 A group of people posing for a photo

Description automatically generated A person singing into a microphone

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Photo 1:   Yannick Kamanzi in *Radio Live – La relève*, photo by Herve Veronese

Photo 2: The young, emerging actors who are the subjects of Pascal Rambert’s *8 ensemble*, photo by Antoine Legond

Photo 3: Astrid Bayiha in *Angela Davis une histoire des Etats-Unis*, photo by Jeremie Levy

What: *Seuls en Scène* Princeton French Theater Festival featuring renowned and emerging French writers, actors and directors in eight productions of contemporary works recently presented on stages in France, most performed in French with English supertitles.

Who: Presented by Lewis Center for the Arts, L’Avant Scène and Department of French and Italian at Princeton University and organized by Florent Masse, Senior Lecturer in the Department of French and Italian and artistic director of L’Avant-Scène.

When: September 9-23

Where: Various venues on the Princeton University campus

Admission: Free and open to the public, however advance tickets are required, available online at [tickets.princeton.edu](https://tickets.princeton.edu/Online/default.asp) or at the Frist Campus Center ticket office. All guests must either be fully vaccinated, or have recently tested negative and be prepared to show proof if asked, or wear a face covering when indoors and around others.

Accessibility: All performance venues are accessible. Guests in need of other access accommodations are asked to contact the Lewis Center at [LewisCenter@princeton.edu](mailto:LewisCenter@princeton.edu) at least one week prior to the event date.

For more information: <https://arts.princeton.edu/frenchtheater/>

(Princeton, NJ) Princeton University’s Lewis Center for the Arts, Department of French and Italian, and L’Avant-Scène will present the 11th edition of Seuls en Scène French Theater Festival, which will take place from September 9 to 23 at venues across the University’s campus. Most performances will be in French, and several will include English supertitles; all are free and open to the public.

Seuls en Scène ushers in the 22nd season of L’Avant-Scène, a French theater troupe of Princeton students. It also celebrates professional theatrical achievements from the past year: many of the invited artists to Seuls en Scène are prominent contributors to contemporary theater in France. The festival is organized by **Florent Masse**, Senior Lecturer in the Department of French and Italian and artistic director of L’Avant-Scène, and presented in collaboration with the 51st Edition of Festival d’Automne in Paris.

“I couldn’t be more thrilled to resume the festival in person after virtual editions in 2020 and 2021,” said Masse. “This year we’ll present compelling recent works of contemporary French theater, highlighting diversity and female artists, and extending invitations to artists hailing from the Francophone world, all the while celebrating the festival’s tenth anniversary! Since its inception in 2012, *Seuls en Scène*has been a joyful ride every year. I’m delighted by the festival’s trajectory from its humble beginnings to the ways it’s grown over the years, uplifting students and local audiences.”

The 2022 festival opens with *Stallone* on September 9 at 8 p.m. and September 10 at 5 p.m. The play is based on Emmanuèle Bernheim’s short story published in *Le Monde* in 2001. In this collaboration by actress Clotilde Hesme and film director Fabien Gorgeart, Lise is a 25-year-old medical secretary leading a quiet existence, but everything changes for her after a trip to the cinema; seeing *Rocky III* is truly an epiphany. Following the example of the former boxing champion who gets back in the ring for one last bout, Lise throws herself body and soul back into her medical studies. Combining the poetics of combat, an ode to perseverance, and nostalgia for the pop counterculture of the 1980s, *Stallone* humorously raises the question of the influence an artwork can have in the construction of destiny. With sound design and music by Pascal Sangla, Hesme tells Lise’s story, showing how her existence brightens with the irrepressible life and energy bursting from the film’s hit song, “Eye of the Tiger.” Performed in French with English supertitles in the Wallace Theater at the Lewis Arts complex.

*La Nuit juste avant les fôrêts* relays an encounter by a man and a mysteriously silent passerby. This ebullient text by Bernard-Marie Koltès from 1981 marked a renaissance for the playwright who had not written anything for three years. Thanks to this play, Koltès’ work was staged for the first time at the Comédie-Française and his long collaboration began with award-winning theater director and filmmaker Patrice Chéreau. Forty years later, this visionary text is still as strong in its form, the soliloquy, as it is in the issues it explores — oppression, classism, loneliness, exclusion, precarity and racism – and that still deeply resonate today. In a minimal dark setting reminiscent of paintings by Pierre Soulages, actor Jean-Christophe Folly unveils a luminescent performance. He talks about desire, flight, struggles, work, alcohol and death, blood and betrayal. He stands proud and dignified in his downfall. The music composed by violinist Carla Pallone exalts Folly’s magnetic presence. Performed in French on September 10 at 8 p.m. and September 11 at 5 p.m.in the Matthews Acting Studio at 185 Nassau Street.

*Moi fardeau inherent* is “a call to awareness against wait-and-see and standstill attitudes,” according to its author, Guy Régis, Jr. In the play, a woman talks about a sercret buried for too long in her burdened body as she awaits her odious abuser. Régis’ poetic and powerful text invites audiences to listen to this woman freeing herself from her burden through the release of words. Weary to live among the “defeated,” she stands up and faces her abuser. In doing so, she reverses her fate. Performed in French with English supertitles on September 13 and 14 at 8 p.m. in the Wallace Theater. Due to the themes explored in this production, content may not be suitable for audiences under the age of 16.

The Radio Live collaboration, so well-received at the 2019 French Theater Festival, returns with *Radio Live – La relève.* Aurélie Charon and Amélie Bonnin join forces with cinematographer Mila Turajlić in order to initiate a new cycle in this unique collective and international project, a long-term dialogue between engaged young people from all over the world. *Radio Live – La relève* picks up on this dialogue that was started between Ines, Yannick and Amir, none of whom are content with the state of the world as it is today. The team set off to film in their home cities—Sarajevo, Kigali and New Delhi— and return to the stage with a host of faces and landscapes which tell their own story and address many questions. This new generation takes center stage: each “historical” participant becomes the patron of a 15-year-old youth from their country. Using a mix of filmed images and spontaneous speech accompanied by musician Emma Prat, *Radio Live – La relève* is written live and takes two different stage formats: individual portraits or three-way, interwoven vocal accounts. Performed in English on September 16 and 17 at 8 p.m. in the Wallace Theater.

For 24 years, Talents Adami Théâtre has worked to showcase the talents of early-career actors. In 2021, Adami Théâtre invited Pascal Rambert to create a new play with 8 young actors selected among a field of 1,000 applicants. Embracing diversity, *8 ensemble* recounts their eight respective, sinuous journeys in life and highlights what each actor has to say, addressing the question, “How do you see yourself in 2051?” Presented on September 17 and 18 at 3 p.m. in the Hearst Dance Theater at the Lewis Arts complex, this production is presented in French with English supertitles.

Frequent festival guest Pascal Rambert also presents *Deux amis*, showing on September 17 and 18 at 5 p.m. in the Hearst Dance Theater. Following on the success of *Clôture de l’amour* and *Soeurs* *(Marina & Audrey),* Rambert writes about ardent masculine love in a text anchored on the voices and bodies of Stanislas Nordey and Charles Berling. The two men are battling with their art, profession, madness, and love as they stage four plays by Molière. They both admire and envy one another. As friends, lovers, and artists, they criticize the world of culture and the theater, while celebrating total love for one another. They’ll stay together until the end, either in a burst of desires or a fraternal quarrel. Performed in French with English supertitles. Due to depictions of sexual activity and partial nudity, this production may not be suitable for audiences under the age of 16.

Based on the life of Senegalese academic, philosopher and poet Felwine Sarr, *Traces* is a lyrical text captivatingly performed by Burkinabe actor Étienne Minoungou. Infused with the cultural and historical experiences of the continent, *Traces* serves as a way to bring Sarr’s philosophy to a younger African generation, emboldening them to build a new utopia. With uplifting accompaniment by musician Simon Winsé on the kora, this speech invites a new generation to sow the seeds for a better future. Performed in French with English supertitles on September 19 and 20 at 8 p.m. in the Matthews Acting Studio.

Mixing narration, speeches, video, and rap music, *Angela Davis une histoire des Etats-Unis* tells the story of the American Black activist, professor and author, who faced a turbulent life during the civil rights movement of the 1960s and ’70s. Actress Astrid Bayiha, alone on stage, exudes rage at injustice and discrimination through the power of words and music with the help of musician-composer Balde AliMbaye. Performed in French on September 22 and in English on September 23, both at 8 p.m., at the Class of 1970 Theater at Whitman College on the Princeton campus.

Advance tickets for each performance are required and available through University Ticketing online at [tickets.princeton.edu](https://tickets.princeton.edu/Online/default.asp) or at the Frist Campus Center Ticket Office. Per University policy, all guests must either be fully vaccinated, or have recently tested negative (via PCR within 72 hours or via rapid antigen test within 8 hours of the scheduled visit) and be prepared to show proof if asked, or wear a face covering when indoors and around others.

All festival events are held in accessible venues. To learn more about accessibility of parking, routes, and venues, visit [arts.princeton.edu/accessibility](https://arts.princeton.edu/about/accessibility/). Guests in need of other access accommodations are asked to contact the Lewis Center at [LewisCenter@princeton.edu](mailto:LewisCenter@princeton.edu) at least one week prior to the event date.

*Seuls en Scène* continues its partnership with Festival d’Automne in Paris. Since 1972, the Festival d’Automne à Paris has been assisting artists internationally by producing and presenting their work in contemporary theatre, music, dance, visual arts and cinema at cultural venues throughout Paris.

L’Avant-Scène anticipates a full year of programming with Masse planning to direct students in several plays. This fall, L’Avant-Scène will present *Des Territoires… et tout sera pardonné*(2019) by Baptiste Amann on November 3  through November 5, and an abridged version of *Cyrano de Bergerac* by Edmond Rostand to be presented in early December.

Masse, who curates the Festival, was trained as an actor and director at Lille National Theater alongside his studies in American Literature and Civilization at the University of Lille. He later pursued his theater studies at Amherst College as a Levy-Despas Fellow and a teaching assistant in the Department of French. It is there that he originated L’Avant-Scène, a program that combines language and dramatic training. He has directed nearly 70 full-length productions of canonical and new works of French theater since arriving at Princeton in 2001 and has hosted several prominent theater artists. In 2017, he was named Chevalier of Arts and Letters by the French Minister of Culture.

The festival is presented by the Lewis Center for the Arts, the Department of French and Italian, and L’Avant-Scène with additional support provided by Princeton University’s Humanities Council, Princeton Institute for International and Regional Study (PIIRS), Department of Art and Archaeology, Department of Comparative Literature, Department of African American Studies, Program in Contemporary European Politics and Society, Program in African Studies, Center for French and Francophone Studies, and Rockefeller College. International sponsors include Festival d’Automne in Paris, Cultural Services of the French Embassy – Villa Albertine, FACE Contemporary Theater, ADAMI, the Education Department of the French Embassy, Institut français, Wallonie Bruxelles International, Odia Normandie and FEAC, Fonds d’Aide aux Échanges Artistiques et Culturels pour l’Outre-mer.

Further information about L’Avant-Scène can be found at [fit.princeton.edu/lavant-scène](https://fit.princeton.edu/lavant-scène).

For more information on the Princeton French Theater Festival and the more than 100 events presented by the Lewis Center each year, visit [arts.princeton.edu](http://arts.princeton.edu/).

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**EVENT SCHEDULE**

Seuls en Scène 2022 presents *Stallone*

September 9 at 8 pm / September 10 at 5 pm

Wallace Theater at Lewis Arts complex  
Duration: 75 minutes   
Performed in French with English supertitles

Seuls en Scène 2022 presents *La Nuit juste avant les fôrêts*

September 10 at 8 pm / September 11 at 5 pm

Matthews Acting Studio at 185 Nassau St.

Duration: 85 minutes   
Performed in French

Seuls en Scène 2022 presents *Moi fardeau inhérent*

September 13 & 14 at 8 pm

Wallace Theater at Lewis Arts complex

Duration: 60 minutes   
Performed in French with English supertitles

**Advisory:** May not be suitable for audiences under age of 16

Seuls en Scène 2022 presents *Radio Live – La relève*

September 16 & 17 at 8 pm

Wallace Theater at Lewis Arts Complex

Duration: 75 minutes   
Performed in English

Seuls en Scène 2022 presents *8 ensemble*

September 17 & 18 at 3 pm   
Hearst Dance Theater at Lewis Arts complex

Duration: 75 minutes   
Performed in French with English supertitles

Seuls en Scène 2022 presents *Deux amis*

September 17 & 18 at 5 pm

Hearst Dance Theater at Lewis Arts complex  
Duration: 90 minutes   
Performed in French with English supertitles

**Advisory:** May not be suitable for audiences under age of 16

Seuls en Scène 2022 presents *Traces*

September 19 & 20 at 8 pm   
Matthews Acting Studio at 185 Nassau St.

Duration: 60 minutes   
Performed in French with English supertitles

Seuls en Scène 2022 presents *Angela Davis une histoire des États-Unis*

September 22 & 23 at 8 pm   
Class of 1970 Theater at Whitman College

Duration: 60 minutes   
Performed in French 9/22 and in English 9/23

*Admission to all Festival events is free but ticket reservations are required by visiting:* [arts.princeton.edu/frenchtheater](http://arts.princeton.edu/frenchtheater/).

*For more information on the Festival, please contact Steve Runk, Lewis Center for the Arts,* [srunk@exchange.Princeton.EDU](mailto:srunk@exchange.Princeton.EDU) *or Florent Masse, Department of French and Italian* [fmasse@exchange.Princeton.EDU](mailto:fmasse@exchange.Princeton.EDU)