

THE WHITE CHURCH THEATRE PROJECT

In 2010 the Theatre de l'Ange Fou acquired a property in the United States, the Wyoming Valley Church (deconsecrated in 2008), situated in the country side near Spring Green, Wisconsin, and have transformed this 1902 church into a theatrical space.

The goal of The White Church Theatre Project, its company in residence, the Theatre de l'Ange Fou, is to create and co-ordinate events specifically dedicated to modern movement theatre through the presentation of performances, lectures, films, and training programs. The White Church Theatre Project also welcomes other Physical Theatre Artists from across the USA and abroad, and is open to local performers. The Mission of the White Church Theatre Project is, as well, to preserve and improve The Wyoming Valley Church, home of the White Church Theatre Project.



The White Church Theatre Project is made possible by funding provided by individual donors, the Wisconsin Arts Board, SGACC, the BMO Harris Bank, the Alec Van Berchem Trust, Mrs. Doris Wasson and Ms. Aude Gotto.

BACKGROUND

Mime is the most ancient performing Art in the world and, still today, attracts people in a very deep, intuitive way. Why? In its portrayal of emotion, thought and experience through the body, mime transcends cultural barriers because it is based on expression and not appearance. Mime is a spontaneous language and an elaborate craft.

History

Historically, mime has passed through many different forms, from Primitive Dance to Greek and Roman Pantomime, from Commedia del Arte to the tradition of Debureau, from Asian Theatre to the Russian and Polish Schools of Mime, from the Music hall and Vaudeville to the Cinema... Over centuries, in both the west and east, many artists and masters contributed to the evolution of this art form. The art of mime is a multi-faceted world, at times totally silent and at others welcoming the use of spoken text and music.

Etienne Decroux

In the 20th century, Etienne Decroux (French 1898-1991), student of Jaques Copeau, actor with Charles Dullin, Louis Jouvet, Gaston Baty, Antonin Artaud, Marcel Carne...) known as the "Father of Modern Mime and one of the great luminaries of the theatre world" (Sunday Times), gave Mime a true autonomy with a specific vocabulary, Repertoire and philosophy. He invented the most modern form of mime, "Corporeal Mime", an innovative method and precise technique focusing on the vital importance of the body and physical action in theatre.

OUR HOME IN WISCONSIN

Where is the White Church THEATRE Project taking place?

Wyoming Valley Church, 6348 State Road 23, Spring Green, Wisconsin 53588 USA (5 miles south of Spring Green off Highway 23 – see map below)
Tel: 1 815 441 8828



The church is down the road from Taliesin (taliesinpreservation.org) the home and school of the great American architect Frank Lloyd Wright, and near the summer residence of The American Players Theatre (americanplayers.org).

Accommodation:

Please contact the Spring Green www.springgreen.com and Dodgeville Chamber of Commerce www.dodgeville.com for Motel, Bed and Breakfast, and camping facilities. Alternatively we can put you in contact with people who rent rooms.

Theatre de l'Ange Fou

Email: infoschool@angefou.co.uk
www.angefou.co.uk and www.thewhitechurchtheatre.org

Closest Airports:

The closest major airports are in Madison, Milwaukee and Chicago. From Chicago O'Hare Airport, the *Van Galder Bus* has an hourly service to 800 University Av. Madison, WI: www.coachusa.com/vangalder (Look under *Scheduled Services: O'Hare Airport* for details, departure times, ticket prices and to buy tickets online.) From Mitchell Airport, Milwaukee, *Badger Bus* runs every 2 hours or so to: 700 University Av. Madison, WI: www.badgerbus.com/tickets/schedule.aspx (Select Mitchell Airport as the departure point and Madison Area, UW Madison: Chazen Museum as the arrival point for details.) If you need transportation from Madison to Spring Green, a car can be arranged to pick you up at the Madison bus stop.

PERFORMANCES, LECTURES, FILMS & EVENTS:

For specific dates, please go to www.angefou.co.uk and click on the White Church Project page or contact infoschool@angefou.co.uk

PRESS:

"A beautifully staged, atmospheric piece of total theatre"

THE SUNDAY TIMES

"If Beckett had ever produced a ballet, it would have looked something like this!"

THE SCOTSMAN

"A journey around the labyrinths of the mind... where Steven Wasson can give free rein to his sublime dance in a no man's land where the statue like pallor of the faces gives way to the arrival of a wild angel of death."

HYSTRIO XVIII

Design & production: paulmckenziestudio.co.uk. Cover images from 'Memory of Dust'.

Theatre de l'Ange Fou
presents

The White Church
THEATRE PROJECT

Spring Green, Wisconsin

Experience the multi-faceted world
of modern movement theatre...

Directors: Steven Wasson
and Corinne Soum

ABOUT US

The Theatre de l'Ange Fou and the International School of Corporeal Mime (formerly known as the Ecole de Mime Corporel Dramatique) were created in Paris in 1984 by Steven Wasson and Corinne Soum, the last assistants of "the father of Modern Mime" Etienne Decroux. Based in London from 1995 to 2014, the company and school are now permanently located in the USA with The White Church Theatre Project.

The Theatre de l'Ange Fou, has toured throughout Europe, Russia, the United States, Canada, Brazil, Mexico, Japan, Argentina and the Middle East. The Theatre de l'Ange Fou has created over 30 original plays, devised pieces, as well as adaptations, ranging from duets to large ensemble works such as: The Little Dictator - parts I & II, Beyond the Garden, Crusade, Resonance, Entangled Lives, The Government Inspector, The Orpheus Complex, Across the Seven Seas, and their latest, A Promethean Dream, Etienne Decroux - The Father of Modern Mime, Waiting for Ulysses, A Strange Day for Mister K, Memory of Dust ... revealing different aspects of the spiritual and human quest, portraying the frailty and complexity of relationships between individuals longing for love.

Impressions of the mind, the absurdity of life and the resulting questions are a constant source of inspiration for both the directors and the actors. Using Corporeal Mime as the base of their creative work, the dramaturgical construction of their plays takes the form of a voyage where the characters traverse varied imaginary landscapes and lifetimes.

The world of the Theatre de l'Ange Fou, this visionary world of contrasting light and darkness, of metamorphosis, is populated by a family of invented archetypes in unknown yet familiar settings. Throughout their various productions, the Theatre de l'Ange Fou explores the infinite possibilities of the interaction between the corporeal score and the spoken text, music and film.



From 'Waiting for Ulysses'

Alongside this personal artistic development, Steven Wasson and Corinne Soum, in 1992, took up the challenge of re-introducing to the public the Repertoire of Etienne Decroux with their reconstruction, and performances of most of his major pieces (including La Meditation, Les Arbres, L'Usine...) in The Man Who Preferred to Stand, and more recently, Passage of Man on Earth, Resonance, A Promethean Dream, Etienne Decroux - The Father of Modern Mime. This was the beginning of the transmission process that became today the base of teaching at the White Church Theatre Project.

"Subtle balance between Chaplin's 'Modern Times' and certain paintings of Fernand Leger ... public acclaim was endless."

CORRIERE DELLA SERA

TRAINING PROGRAM

Steven Wasson and Corinne Soum combine the experience of having been students and assistants of Etienne Decroux, and having taught, developed and directed Corporeal Mime with their Company and School for over 30 years. The White Church Theatre Project Training Program offers the possibility to study Corporeal Mime in depth from a creative point of view.

The White Church THEATRE Project Training is designed for the professional and pre-professional actors, dancers, mimes and performers wishing to give a physical reality to their own ideas. Corporeal Mime created by Etienne Decroux, is an innovative method and a precise technique focusing on the body and physical action in theatre.

"THE THINKING BODY"

A leap into transformation and dream...

Technique: "The Architecture of the Thinking Body"

The study of the Corporeal Mime Technique will include the gestural grammar, body articulation, counterweights, walks and displacements in space, Figures of Style, Mobile Statuary, Dynamorhythm and the Musicality of Movement.

Repertoire: "A Modern Mythology"

Participants will study pieces from the Repertoire of Etienne Decroux such as *The Factory, The Touch, The Carpenter, The Washerwoman, The Chair of the Absent One, The Prophet, Love Duet in the Parc St. Cloud, A Woman like a Bird, The Meditation, The Combat, The Cunning Spirit, The Morning, The Statue, Love Duet II, The Passage of Man on Earth...* and from the post modern repertoire pieces such as *The Chair, The Newspaper, As I Remember, The Lost Angel...*

The apprenticeship of this repertoire is not only a challenging and valuable tool in the mastering of a physical theatre expression, but can become a constant source of inspiration for creation. In the history of mime, the pieces of Etienne Decroux stand unique as a sort of modern mythology of movement theatre from which performers and teachers may draw a theatrical dynamism and method for the creation of personal work.

Improvisation: "Theatrical Spontaneity"

Exploring a wide range of themes: "How to be" and "What to do" will stimulate the student's imagination; learning to develop a corporeal interpretation in solo, duet and ensemble work.

Composition: "The Reverse Metaphor"

The practical approach to a contemporary mime dramaturgy, this creative process in Corporeal Mime is called by Etienne Decroux, "La Metaphore a l'Envers" (The Reverse Metaphor): Trusting the action to progressively devise a play. Different themes, situations and poetic texts will be used as the starting point in devising creative material. This process allows space for imagination and intuition.

Theory and History: "Spontaneous Language, Elaborate Craft"

Lectures, archival viewing, discussions on Etienne Decroux and on the world of the Theatre de l'Ange Fou will be part of the program.

Training Schedule

There are different possibilities to train at the White Church Theatre project: Ongoing full time training program, intensive Summer School, workshops, private classes. For schedules and application forms and fees, please go to www.angefou.co.uk, and click on the White Church Project page, or contact us at infoschool@angefou.co.uk.

The White Church THEATRE Project is a 501 c(3) non-profit organization. You can help support the White Church THEATRE Project by making a tax deductible donation or gift.

BIOGRAPHIES

Corinne Soum

Born in France (1956), Corinne Soum is the co-director of the Theatre de l'Ange Fou and the newly created White Church THEATRE Project in Wisconsin, USA. She was the co-founder and director of the International School of Corporeal Mime in London (1995-2014). She studied corporeal mime with Etienne Decroux, and became his assistant, sharing in his research, teaching and creations. Decroux created three pieces on Corinne: *La Femme Oiseau, Le Fauteuil de l'Absent* and *Le Duo dans le Parc*

St. Cloud, and re-worked numerous classic pieces for her from his repertoire. She studied classical dance with Yves Casati of the Opera Comique, modern dance with Jeanne Jolly, graduated from the Ecole Irene Popard in gymnastics and contemporary dance, and studied voice with Georges Roiron. Corinne taught corporeal mime at the National Theatre School in Amsterdam.

Corinne has a long collaboration with Steven Wasson in directing, creating and playing many leading roles for their company. She was the professor of Corporeal Mime at the Ecole de Mimodrame Marcel Marceau for seven years. Corinne has travelled throughout Europe, North and South America, Asia and the Middle East to teach mime and physical theatre, and as an invited performer, director, lecturer and writer on Etienne Decroux and corporeal mime.



Steven Wasson

Born in the United States (1950), Steven Wasson is the director of the Theatre de l'Ange Fou and of the newly created White Church THEATRE Project in Wisconsin, USA. He was the co-founder and director of the International School of Corporeal Mime in London (1995-2014). He studied literature and drama at the University of Northern Colorado with Dr. Lloyd Norton, and mime with Dr. E Reid Gilbert at the Valley Studio near Madison, Wisconsin, and with Thomas Leabhart as a member of The Corporeal

Mime Theatre. Coming to Paris, he was a student of Etienne Decroux and later became his assistant, participating in Etienne Decroux's teaching, research and creations. Decroux created two pieces on Steven: *Le Prophete* and *Le Duo dans le Parc St. Cloud*, and re-worked a number of his classic repertoire pieces for him. Steven studied voice in Paris with Georges Roiron. Steven has created and directed all of the plays for the Theatre de l'Ange Fou, and has performed in many of them.

He has worked as an actor in film, TV and live radio in the U.S. and France notably with award winning documentary director Dominique Benechetti and Oscar winning filmmaker Serge Bourguignon. Steven taught corporeal mime at the National Theatre School of Amsterdam in 1981. In 1989, his play "Le Petit Dictateur" was awarded the 'Label of the Revolution' in France. In 1996, Steven reconstructed and directed the mime scenes for Simon Callow's Royal Shakespeare Company production of *Les Enfants du Paradis*. Steven has acted, written and directed for the Avatar Meher Baba Theatre in India, and has led workshops in mime and physical theatre throughout Europe, North and South America, Asia and the Middle East for thirty years. He is the in house film director for the Theatre de l'Ange Fou creating artistic and pedagogical films for the company and the school.

