

## THE MERRY MARCHING BAND



**Opus Award 2017 for Production of the Year – Younger Audiences**

## THE MERRY MARCHING BAND

An award-winning production, *The Merry Marching Band* delight audiences with discovery and laughter and awakens their own sense of musical adventure. With flamboyant lighting and the great professionalism of the performers, The Merry Marching Band is more than a pleasure for the eyes and ears, it is also a moment of dialogue between the artists and the audience who is invited to react, sing, dance and more. In short impossible to sit during the show!

In a resolutely modern performance that combines world music with the clown arts, *The Merry Marching Band* introduces audiences to old-time *fanfare* instruments, with a nod to body percussion.

Performed by highly skilled musicians in an unrelenting madcap staging, *The Merry Marching Band* is a discovery-filled performance that will leave kids and adults eager to embark on a musical journey of their own.

### An award winning production



*The Merry Marching Band* was awarded in 2017 the very prestigious Opus Prize for the Best Young Audience Production of the year delivered by the Conseil Québécois de la Musique. The show has been touring all over since, receiving only highly acclaimed comments from major festivals, renowned theatres and educators from across Canada. On the picture : left, the marketing director Mrs. Dominique Renaud with the trophy awarded by the Quebec Music Council for the Best Young Audience production of the Year, right

the artistic director, M. Pierre Langevin. The press release announcing this great success for the Productions Strada company is available in the Media Kit.

## ABOUT THE SHOW *The Merry Marching Band*

### SYNOPSIS

In the village of Underpantsburg, there is a very unusual marching band, or *fanfare*, ***The Merry Marching Band***. Under the guidance of a pompous band leader by turns bossy and bird-brained, this merry band sets out to see the world. With plenty of humour, no small amount of eccentricity and a touch of poetry, the band of music-makers makes its merry way—with a honk and a toot and a rat-a-tat-tat—from Quebec to Brazil to Ukraine and back, with a stopover on Planet Mars!



The show begins with all the musicians who sleep exhausted by their journey, finally back in their village after travelling around the world. But the clever little one in the band wakes up and realizes that there is an audience in the hall! Quick! You have to wake up the band leader, take off the pajamas and put on the costumes for the show!



The director wants to present the instruments, but already we understand that each of the characters have their own personality, and laughter sets in. There is the authoritarian leader who likes to dance a lot, the distressful one always, the very strong tuba player who loves her huge instrument, the one who always runs to help the leader, the trombone girl who likes to greet the children and her beautiful clothes, and the percussionist who likes to make people laugh more than anything in the world. During the show, he will even surprise the audience by stepping down from the stage and show his talent by proving that we can make music and rhythms with all the objects that surround us!



The show is divided into a dozen of musical scenes. Each musical scene features the music of a particular country, backed by zany yet sophisticated choreography. The traditional music and dances are from countries like Mexico, Brazil, Ukraine, Spain and even Mars! In addition to the lively and cheerful music, the audience is introduced to body percussion, a musical genre consisting in producing melodies or rhythms using the body as a musical instrument. From a psychological point of view, it promotes an awareness and is a universal game that is understood everywhere in the world.



Come hell or high water, with humour and a touch of lunacy, the music and the drumbeat of The Merry Marching band takes the audience on a magical trip!

# CREDIT

## Designers

Concept, direction: **Pierre Langevin**

Staging: **Genevieve Kerouac**

Costume and props: **Huguette Lauze**

Makeup: **Nathalie Simard**



## The Merry Marching Band

Clarinet: **Pierre Langevin**

Saxophone : **André Larue**

Trumpet: **Simon Tremblay**

Trombone : **Dominique Poirier**

Tuba : **Julie Houle**

Percussion : **Olivier Forest**

## **INTERVIEW WITH M. PIERRE LANGEVIN - ARTISTIC DIRECTOR**

“Do you remember the first time when you saw a street brass band?” At the very beginning of the project, I was thinking about what I wanted to create, and what kind of emotion I wanted to convey to the public, what I wanted them to feel during and after the show. Then a childhood memory came back to me, something that I had completely forgotten. Quebec City is in Canada and in winter it is very cold, there is a lot of snow. We Quebecers enjoy a lot doing things outside with our family and friends. There are big parties and especially an international festival which we call “The Winter Carnival of Quebec City.” It is a tradition that goes by back a long time. Every year, at the end of January, takes place this carnival and all the activities are outside. Even if it is very cold, families stay warm and can have fun, make winter sports as skis or skate.

The most important moment of this big party is the Night parade, with allegorical tanks fully illuminated, public entertainers, clowns for the children, and a lot of street brass bands. I remembered the first time I saw a marching band it was in the Carnival of Quebec when I was 9 years old. All the crowd was packed on each side of the biggest boulevard of the city, and I, my brothers and sisters were with my father. As I was a child, the adults blocked me the view. Then my father took me in his arms and put me on his shoulders. I was so happy! I saw everything! I saw many allegorical tanks with lights, colours, music.

And suddenly I heard a noise far off. It was like a kind of beat: boom, boom, boom. At this moment my father who is always serious because he works a lot began dancing and shouting cheerfully: “carnival! The Marching band! Hurray!» And finally I saw it. The Street Brass band. There were dozens and dozens of musicians all dressed in red velvet with big white fur hats. They played with trumpets, saxophones, drums and bells that were shining in the night as they were made of gold. The music was so powerful that everybody began dancing and singing to the sound of the brass band. It was very moving, and the fact that my father took me on his shoulders and danced made very happy.

Since then, for me, the word brass band is always associated with this very joyful childhood memory. And I knew I had my answer about The Merry Marching Band: this show is about a feeling of happiness like a wonderful childhood memory, with a taste of candy.”

## About Productions Strada



**Productions Strada** is a musical and artistic company that has been working since 1986 on the road of traditional street music and brass bands, from the Mediterranean to the Balkans, from the Americas to ancient times. Strada is the street, a place suspended between origin and destination, where stories cross and destinies are woven together.

It's also here in the four corners of the world that we gather to party! Versatile musicians

and singers master many genres: Klezmer, Gypsy, Occitan; Greek, Italian, Irish, traditional Quebecois, Martinique, Cajun... Multilingual, their colourful songs recreate amazing musical landscapes. Driven by contagious enthusiasm, the musicians of the Strada ensemble do not seek to only transmit their knowledge of world music, but much more, the pleasure they bring to the audience!

A little unclassifiable, at the crossroads of multiple tendencies, the company pursues with ardour its cheerful and disconcerting quest for the unheard of.

## What We Do

The word **Strada** comes from Italian and means "the street, the place where everyone can meet and be together." Our company was founded more than 30 years, and our goal is to make people discover traditional music from all over the world. To achieve that, we include many other artistic disciplines like theatre, clown technic, circus and body percussions to the music. This multidisciplinary approach is very modern, creating a whole cultural and artistic experience for the public. All our artists are professional musicians, and also are well trained in those artistic disciplines and have many other skills.





We strongly believe in being close to the public, without distance in order to establish a proximity and create a very unique complicity, and a dialogue between the artists and the audience.

For more than thirty years, our artistic director has worked hard to build the reputation of Strada Productions. We tour a lot, playing in some of the most popular music festivals in Canada, France, Germany, Austria, the United States and Mexico. We recorded many CDs, and won awards for the quality of our work.



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Supported by :

Contact : Dominique Renaud — 581-888-8777 — [strada@strada.ca](mailto:strada@strada.ca)

Web site [www.strada.ca](http://www.strada.ca)



