

2nde 8  
EUROPEAN SECTION

2016-2017 YEARBOOK



Lycée Marie Curie Versailles

# The Valley of Astonishment

9 th December 2016  
Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord

## Play reviews by 2<sup>nde</sup> 8

Something captivating happened during last Friday night in the « Bouffes de Nord » theater. In this high and dizzy room, we found a curious and enthusiastic public ... And intriguing atmosphere prevailed in the place ...

Suddenly, the show starts and we witness the astonishing story of Sammy Costas ...

The story begins strangely by a kind of recitation of a poem which explains the character's childhood. In addition, people discover Sammy's gift: she is able to memorize very large numbers or word lists... She links colors, pictures or landscapes with letters or numbers.

After some tests, the doctors discover that Sammy is a synesthete. Because of her boss, she loses her job and is taken on by a magician: she becomes a phenomenon. During the rest of the plot, Sammy is really confused because she doesn't know how to forget all the numbers that she knows. At the end, she offers her brain to scientists to let them study how her brain was created.

The performance was strange, original and we had never seen a show like this one. For the audience, it was easy to understand the speech of characters thanks to the translation on walls next to the stage. The actors were energetic, therefore the show was not boring.

The scenery was strange because the actors were in a stage where there were few objects (like chairs, a table, a coat stand with different costumes and a carpet to delimit the place where the actors played) but the change of places was easy to understand thanks to the moving of some objects and the changing of costumes.

We asked to Alix, a student of 2°8, about her feelings about this play, « For us it looks like modern theater. Sammy Costas was amusing and incredible! At the end of the play, when she was sad, we would have liked to help her. We enjoyed this story but the beginning of the play was difficult to understand and we didn't see the relationship with the rest of the play! »

Alice, Alix E, Justine and Maureen

## Have you ever dreamed of memorising everything ? If yes, Peter Brook will catch your attention with this play, entitled The Valley of Astonishment.

It is the story of Sammy Costas, a journalist with an incredible talent of memory. She has synesthesia, which is a form of autism. She can memorise everything and tell it back without thinking. Her boss finds out about it and encourages her to see a specialist. She then finds out that she was a phenomenon. This could be good news but everything starts to go down. She gets fired from her job and doesn't know what to do before finding a job in a TV show. Considered as a freak, her memory is lacking. She is slowly getting haunted by all the numbers and all the words. What will she become ?

There were only three actors in the play and each one plays two or three characters. Kathryn Hunter plays Sammy Costas, the main character and a doctor. Marcello Magni plays a doctor and a magician in the TV show, and Pitcho Woenba Koega plays a doctor, a synesthete and the TV show director. There is also Raphaël Chambouvet who plays the musician: he plays the piano during the play.

The setting was really simple. There were only three chairs which were placed on a beige square. On the left, there was also a coat rack where the characters' doctor coats were. On the right, there was the piano. Lights were really important in the play because they use it to create ambiances.

Finally, we liked this play. It was very touching and funny. We learnt more about synesthesia. The play was a quite long at the end but we keep an amazing remember of this night!

Angèle, Amandine, Théa

## An extrodinary and poignant play in "Les Bouffes du Nord" theater

The Valley of Astonishment tells the story of handicap persons who are very clever. They can connect different parts of their brains and use them to have better lives. There were only three actors.

In each scene, there were two doctors and one patient.

There were one autistic patient, with an enormous memory; one physicaly handicap person, who had difficulties with his legs; and one traumatised person, who painted his sorrow.

At the end, there was a magical show and the autistic person was called to put on a show with her memory. But, after a lot of performances, her memory was full so she was overwhelmed by the things she remembered (numbers or words).

All the actors were totally in their characters and it was a breath-taking performance. Even if they had to play different roles, they stayed focus on their characters.

The props were restricted, there were only three chairs and one table. It was interesting to make the public participate in the play at the end.

The story was really original. It's not something we see every day.

Estelle, Jeanne S, Baptiste

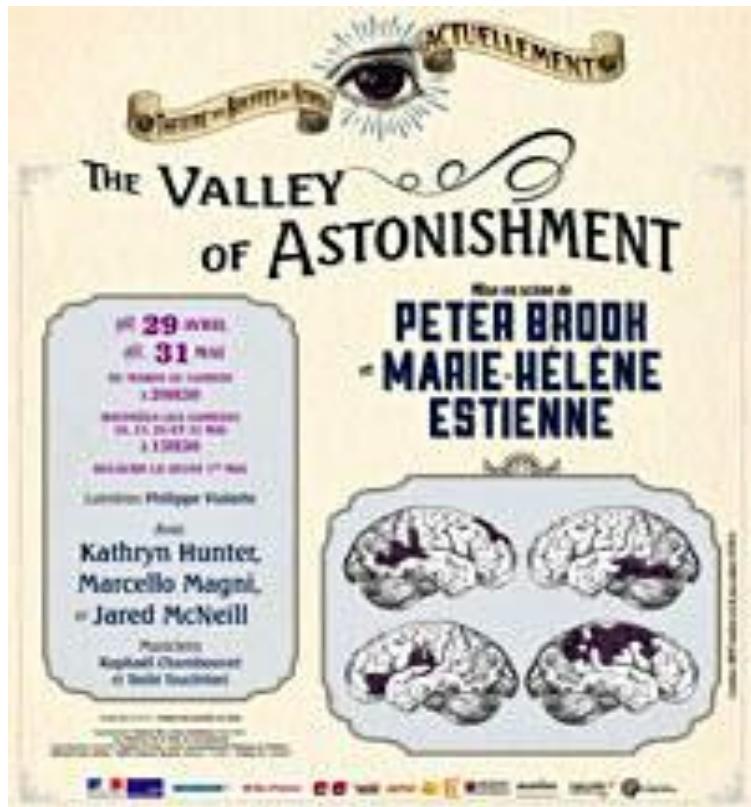
It was a pleasure to see these scenes, there were amusing , there was the show director and he suggested Sammy a lot of things, he wanted than Sammy went in a magical club . In this piece there were eight role for three person It was a good job for the whole play.

They play was imaginative and original, not overly long and not too short.

We saw the play in opening night in December , the play wrote by Peter Brook (British director) and Marie-Hélène Estienne (French playwright and screenwriter). Sammy had playing the doctor as well. Pitcho Womba Konga had playing a doctor, a synesthete and the show director. And the musician was Raphaël Chambouvet.

The sound of this play was normal and there was a giant screen giant who translate in French this play. "the production wasn't very entertaining."

Lévy, Gabriel M, Mattéo



# 09/12/16

# THE VALLEY OF ASTONISHMENT

Like Daniel Tammet, Sammy has an incredible memory. She can remember everything that she is told. After losing her job she sees scientists who analyse her brain. They discover that she is unique. She is hired by a talent show to perform on stage, and impress the public.

IT'S A WOMAN WHO HAS SYNESTHESIA BUT SHE DISCOVERS A NEW JOB WHICH IS TO ENTERTAIN A PUBLIC

THIS SHOW WAS PLAYED BY THREE ACTORS, FOUR CHAIRS, A TABLE, A COAT RACK AND A PIANO

« THE MOST AMAZING PLAY I HAVE EVER SEEN »

THE VERSAILLES BBC

Bouffes du Nord, Paris, Friday 9<sup>th</sup> at the end of the day, 34 students waiting, in a street.  
In the theater, actors, powerful feelings, smile on faces and the beginning.

The valley of astonishment was the title, Peter Brook the playwright. Synesthesia the subject of the play. A poignant beginning, a job, a medical institute, doctors, fabulous brains, losing a job, a TV producer, a descent into hell.

An intelligence so developed, crazy eyes in front of this girl, so skinny, so small, but so smart. A man with a handicap, a brilliant recovery, a way to live and an incredible progress with happiness.

Kathryn Hunter, Marcello Magni and Pitcho Womba Kong were the actors. They had emotion in their eyes, were completely into their characters. "Amazing" is the term for the casting, because the characters were played very well and by especially Kathryn Hunter who plays woman with synesthesia.

Raphaël Chambouvet the musician composed a music full of feelings and emotions along which the actors played as if synchronized.

Simple costumes, simple décor, simple props, an amazing theatre, that was the recipe of the play.

Only a table with four chairs and a coat stand for the setting , doctors' coats, hats and everyday clothes for the costumes.

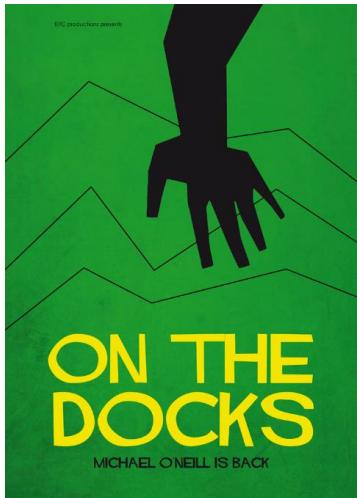
« Les Bouffes Du Nord » is old and typically Parisian. It gave so much charisma and an awesome atmosphere to the play.

The play was very interesting because we learned a lot all along. We learned more on the lives of the people who have synesthesia. We loved the « Magic Show » because we find it very fun. The music was good.

The girl who has synesthesia was fascinating, especially when the doctors tell her to spell a lot of numbers and words.

In conclusion, we find the play and the story original and spectacular, we loved it and advise you to go see it.

Marie, Jeanne H , Paula & Miral



## On the Docks : An Irish Play at Marie Curie featuring MC students. 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2017.

A new case awaits Superintendent Michael O'Neill.

Mike has had to take a trip to Tory Island, a tiny island to the north of Donegal, to say his final goodbyes to his Uncle Jason, who has been lost at sea. What should be an emotional family reunion with his Aunt Bridget and cousin Ultan will quickly turn into an exciting adventure!

### Interviews of the actors and understudies in 2<sup>nde</sup> 8



**Jeanne H. was interviewed by Angèle, Alice, Nicolas, Mathilde**

What did you enjoy about the play?

**Jeanne:** It wasn't really a serious play. It was really cool and a lot of fun. The most difficult was the rehearsal before the show. We were stressed because we only had about 15 minutes to rehearse.

**It allowed me to be less shy.**

What were the good moments of the play?

**Jeanne:** The play as a whole was a nice experience because there was a great atmosphere. The best moment was the rehearsal.

Did you know about the dancing? Did you like it?

**Jeanne:** Absolutely not! But it was awkward and hilarious as well.

Most difficult scene?

**Jeanne:** We weren't really prepared for the funeral scene.

How did you enjoy your text?

**Jeanne:** It was fun to say my part but the lines were a bit hard to learn.

Were the actors good teachers?

**Jeanne:** Yes, very much so. They were friendly and very nice! We immediately had a good feeling.

Did you enjoy the singing?

**I did! I like Queen.**

And finally have you been to Ireland?

**Jeanne:** never!



**Lévy was interviewed by Alix E. , Rémi, Alive, Justine and Miral**

When did you first want to be an actor?

**Lévy: Since I was 5. I always wanted to be an actor. I started drama in 2006**

Have you been inspired by an actor or an actress?

**Lévy: Yes, Yvonne inspired me a lot!**

Do you think anyone can be an actor?

**Lévy: No, obviously not! You have to be talented and funny, like me!**

Is it easy to memorise a long text?

**Lévy: No, but I've practised a lot and now it's easier to memorise long texts.**

Why did you volunteer to play?

**Lévy: I love theatre. It's a good way to relax.**

What is your favourite actor in the play.

**Lévy : It's Mike O'Neil because he's a boy and he plays very well.**

According to you what is the most appropriate word to describe the play?

**Lévy: Spectacular.**

What did you think about the play?

**Lévy: I think it was fabulous, funny and crazy!**

Are you disappointed because you didn't play in the end?

**Lévy: I wasn't sad because at least my friends played. I think the girls played better than me.**





**Maureen was interviewed by Amandine, Théa, Lilou, Elsa, Arthur, Paul, Hugo**

Maureen aka “Student 4”, a fisherman in the play “On the Docks”.  
A really good time, but not her future job.

Were you stressed before the play?

**Maureen: No, not very much.**

Which character were you in the play?

**Maureen: I was a fisherman and a striker.**

Was it difficult to learn your part?

**Maureen: No because it was only 5 lines.**

How were the actors with you?

**Maureen: The actors were very nice to me but a bit weird. They told us: “be cool. It is not too bad if you forget your lines. You can bring your text with you.” The good thing is that they made us forget we were not real actors.**

Who was your favourite actor?

**Maureen: Oisin, the one who played Mike O’Neil.**

Why?

**Maureen: Because he is the less “odd” one and he is pretty good-looking.**

So who was the weirdest?

**Maureen: I think it was the blond girl, Niamh. She screamed a lot, liked speaking reaaly loud. She was very enthusiastic and loony.**

What did the actors say to you about your performance?

**Maureen: They said I was great.**

Did you find it ridiculous to dance?

**Maureen: yes, we were all very surprised but it was fun.**

Would you like to do this as you future job?

**Maureen: Not really, because it’s complicated to have a job in this industry.**

Did you like the experience?

**Maureen: Sure! It was really cool.**



**Estelle was interviewed by Emmie, Baptiste, Emmanuelle, Marie, Gabriel D.**

Were you stressed?

**Estelle: No, because I didn't play in the end.**

How long did you prepare for?

**Estelle: I didn't prepare. I was relaxed.**

How long did you take to learn your part?

**Estelle: Maybe 10 minutes, not more because I learn fast.**

Was it difficult?

**Estelle: No, because I love to do this and I had a small part.**

Do the actors have the same personality on stage and in real life?

**Estelle: They were in their characters!**

If there is a second play, will you play in it?

**Estelle: Yes, I hope to play a real role.**

Why did you want to play?

**Estelle: because Maureen asked me to play with her.**

What did you think about the plot?

**Estelle: I thought it was limited but sometimes funny. Sometimes a bit boring.**

Did you think the actors played well?

**Estelle: In my opinion they did it really well. They did a good job and they are all really smart and cool. They are young, they know how to make people laugh and express feelings. I was happy to be with them.**

Who is your favourite actor and why?

**Estelle: It is Oisin because he was the best actor. He had the best facial expressions. And Mike is the heart of the play.**

Who is your favourite character?

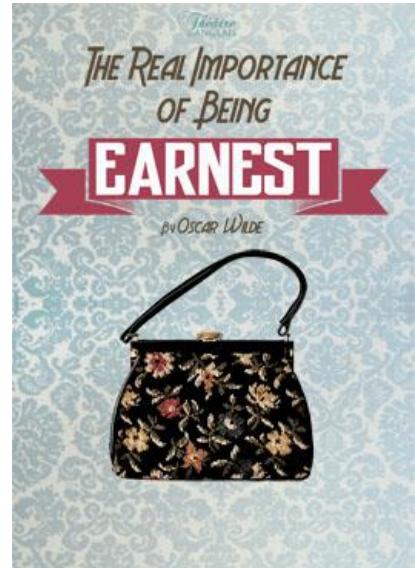
**Estelle: It is Mike's cousin, Ultan, because he has a beautiful personality. He reflects my personality, with my mother and the world around me. He is handsome and I like the way he acts.**

# **Review of the Importance of being Earnest**

## **12<sup>th</sup> May 2017 –The Alhambra - Théâtre en anglais**

### **The ambience**

The show took place in a lovely but uncomfortable theatre. With only 600 seats , the Alhambra is not a big theatre. We were in the stalls. During the play there was a joyful atmosphere with everybody in the theatre laughing. We applauded to encourage the actors who made us smile all along, all of us enjoying this moment!



### **Scenery**

The scenery was really simple but thanks to it it was easy to understand the different places. The props were really amazing and with them we recognised each character. For example Gwendolen always had purple dress, the house maid had her glasses and her apron. Jack and Algernon always had the same shirts and ties.

### **Show**

This was a little too long and difficult to understand at the beginning of the story. But then, once we knew who was who we like the story and its details more. Finally we found the story really interesting with all the twists between Ernest and Ernest, Jack and Algernon ,and the two different love stories between Cecily and Algernon and Gwendolen and Jack!

### **Actors**

When we arrived at the theatre, the actors welcomed us in the room. They accepted to take selfies with us and made some jokes! As a joke they also asked us if we wanted to go on stage with them! Our favourite actor was the man who played Algernon and Lady Bracknell because he can do different voices. The house maid was also really amazing with her funny glasses and her dance when Gwendolen and jack were dancing together.

To conclude, we liked this show and preferred to the first one.

### **Maureen**



## PYGMALION : Enseignement d'Exploration Théâtre en anglais

### **Eliza Doolittle**



### **Clara & Mrs Eynsford-Hill**



Emmie    Miral

### **Freddy Eynsford-Hill**

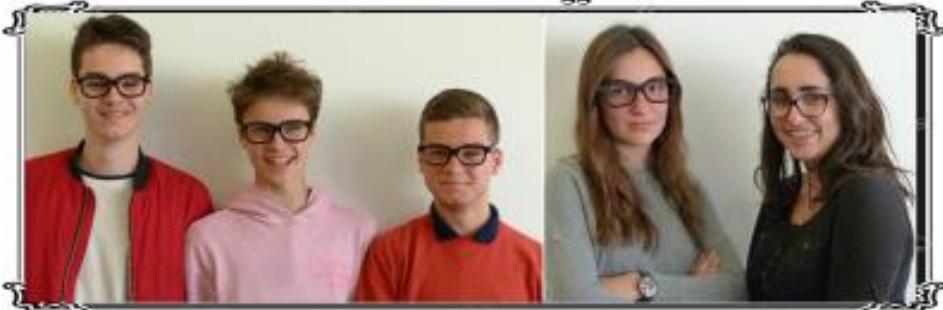


Atlan

### **Colonel Pickering**



**Professor Higgins**



Sam

Baptiste

Gabrielle D.

Marie

Justine



Nicolas

Gabriel M.

Lévy

Matteo

Martin

**Mrs Higgins**



Angèle

Estelle

Jeanne S.

**Whiskers**



Arthur

**Alfred Doolittle**



Rémi

**Mrs Pearce**



Paula

Jeanne H.



## Character List

**Eliza Doolittle:** a poor uneducated flower girl who wants to speak good English to work in a flower shop.

**Alfred Doolittle:** Eliza's father. He is a dustman.

**Professor Henry Higgins:** a professor of phonetics, specialising in dialects and accents. He plays Pygmalion to Eliza.

**Mrs Higgins:** Henry's elderly mother, a lady.

**Colonel Pickering:** a distinguished gentleman, a retired a British army officer with an interest in languages.

**Mrs. Eynsford-Hill:** a lady of the upper-middle class.

**Clara Eynsford-Hill:** her daughter.

**Freddy Eynsford-Hill:** her son. He is enchanted by Eliza on their first meeting.

**Mrs. Pearce:** Professor Higgins' housekeeper.

**Whiskers:** an interpreter, a former pupil of Henry Higgins.

## SUMMARY OF THE PLAY



### Scene 1:

At Covent Garden in London, Mrs Eynsford-Hill, her daughter Clara and her son Freddy take shelter from the rain in the portico of Saint Paul's Church. There is also a flower girl, Eliza Doolittle, an old gentleman, Colonel Pickering, and another gentleman who is following Eliza and taking notes. Eliza notices his strange behaviour and makes a fuss about it. The gentleman introduces himself as Professor Higgins, a specialist in languages, who is interested in Eliza's cockney accent. Higgins tells Colonel Pickering he could teach Eliza and pass her off as a duchess, by changing her manners and way of speaking.



### Scene 2:

In his flat in Wimpole street, Higgins is explaining his work to Colonel Pickering when Eliza is announced: she offers Higgins to pay for lessons of "genteel English" as she wants to work in a flower shop. The professor finally agrees to take her as his pupil. He bets with Pickering that she will be taken for a noble lady at the ambassador's ball in six months' time.



### Scene 3:

The professor and Pickering receive another visitor: Alfred Doolittle, Eliza's father, who claims he wants his daughter back, but in fact tries to get some money from the professor. He sees Eliza who has had a bath and has put on new clothes and hardly recognizes her.



### Scene 4:

- A) Eliza's lessons begin: Higgins is very strict with Eliza, whereas Pickering proves to be more respectful and considerate.
- B) Higgins is quite a tyrannical teacher but Eliza's English is getting better and better.



### Scene 5:

Professor Higgins visits his mother and tells her about his experiment with Eliza. Mrs Higgins strongly disapproves of it.



**Scene 6:**

Eliza is invited at a tea party at Mrs Higgins's home, with the professor and Colonel Pickering. She **tries** to behave like a lady.



**Scene 7:**

At the Embassy Ball, Eliza creates quite a sensation: all the high society guests admire her and want to know who beautiful unknown young lady is. Whiskers, one of Higgins's former pupils and a well-known translator, is sure of himself: she is a Hungarian princess! Higgins is triumphant: he has won his bet!



**Scene 8:**

Back home, Higgins, who hasn't said a word to Eliza, is looking for his slippers. Eliza is upset by his heartless behaviour and they have an argument. Eliza wonders what will happen to her now that the experiment is over.



**Scene 9:**

The argument between Eliza and Higgins gets worse. Higgins is furious because Eliza has made him lose his temper.



**Scene 10:**

Eliza has found shelter at Mrs Higgins's place, and Higgins and Pickering come to see her. The atmosphere is very tense. Will Eliza come back to Wimpole Street? Will she marry Professor Higgins? Or Freddy? Will she work in a flower shop? Or become a housewife? Your guess is as good as ours!



