

Comédie de Genève

# Rêve d'automne

BY  
**JON FOSSE**

A CREATION BY  
**DENIS MAILLEFER**



Creation from 18 to 28 January 2024 at Comédie de Genève

**Adresse postale**

Promenade Louise-Boulaz 2  
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# Credits

Text **Jon Fosse**

Translation in French **Terje Sinding**

Direction **Denis Maillefer**

Director assistant **Juliette Mouteau**

Scenography and lights **Laurent Junod**

Scenography **Wendy Tukuoka**

Video **Jérôme Vernez**

Sound design **Benoit Saillet**

Costumes **Isa Boucharlat**

Maquillage **Rebecca Güller**

Set construction **Ateliers de la Comédie de Genève**

With **Isabelle Caillat, Joëlle Fontannaz, Vincent Fontannaz, Marie-Madeleine Pasquier, Roland Vouilloz**

Production **Comédie de Genève**

Duration 1h45

Show in French

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## **Creation**

From 18 to 28 January 2024 at Comédie de Genève (Main auditorium)

**Available in 2024-25**

## **CONTACT PRODUCTION AND TOURING**

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### **Comédie de Genève**

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# Rêve d'automne

## NOTE OF INTENT

I would like us to see, smell, hear and almost touch desire. Just desire. The desire for desire. The desire to express desire. And perhaps to live, too, in this cemetery – an unusual place for a meeting. In a space for bodies, for light and passion.

The bodies of the actors, and of course those of the characters, who are struggling as best they can in this place where they know that an invisible hourglass is running endlessly. Because here, desire sticks to time, the passing of time, and it passes in a strange way, as if in a dream.

You have to go fast (I am talking about feeling, not speed), you have to live quickly what is left to live. And live in and with words. It is very 'literary', as they say, and it is also direct. It is simple, immediate and certainly a little dizzying, because, as in classical theatre (but in a completely different way), words carry and/yet hinder. Words are poor, so you have to use them to the full, sometimes as bulwarks, sometimes as magnets.

Yes, we go through it as if in a burning dream. Where everything is experienced, felt, suffered, carried with redoubled acuity. Walking with the actors to get close to this: being *hyper-alive*. Which is perhaps one definition of acting. Far from reality because too real. So we try this, we wear this story with too much skin and too much thwarted impatience. We enjoy autumn, when every falling leaf brings us closer to winter and death. It is an obvious fact that haunts all of us, in a joy that is too joyous because it knows that it consumes itself a little more every second.

Restless bodies and voices (without a microphone) in a space where those from whom these bodies were born rest, directly or otherwise. And perhaps this story is played out again and again between sentimental ghosts, in an autumn dream that of course passes like a summer's night.

Denis Maillefer, May 2023



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## A TEXT TO COME CLOSE TO THE HEART OF THE MATTER

A master of dialogue in which unspoken words and silences loom large, Jon Fosse excels in the art of writing between words, building his work on the edge of emptiness, the better to touch on our existential impasses.

We will know little or nothing about his characters, and yet, from rehashed memories to unanswered questions, from platitudes to unfinished sentences, from doubts to uncertainties, we feel that we are approaching the essential, the heart of what makes them *them* – this very silence, which the language highlights, this impossibility of expressing what nonetheless emerges at every moment.

It is late autumn. The trees are already bare. It has been raining. A man walks through a cemetery, reads the epitaphs and sits on a bench. He has been crying, perhaps. A woman enters. He and she have no names, they are The Man and The Woman. A man and a woman who meet, or meet again, in a cemetery. They will love each other, or they have loved each other and have broken up, or they still love each other as if they had already in the past.

As in a dream, time speeds up, or stands still, or perhaps goes round in circles. In the same cemetery appear the man's parents and then his wife, who have come for his grandmother's funeral. They are late, or early. As in a memory, or a dream, time condenses and cancels itself out, bringing living people and ghosts together in a same place.

Because the main character of this play seems to be time itself. Time that passes, as we tell ourselves that time is passing, time that never stops passing, replaying itself in an endless spiral with no resolution other than death.

Fosse delves into our solitude, our emptiness and our fragility, but he does so with infinite gentleness. Nothing morbid or sombre. Quite the contrary. With gentleness and subtlety, he pencils his timeless characters, leading us to feel undying tenderness for these people who, like us perhaps, love each other and meet and miss each other in a place where time no longer exists. Perhaps.

Arielle Meyer MacLeod, dramaturg at Comédie de Genève



Director Denis Maillefer next to Isabelle Caillat, Marie-Madeleine Pasquier and Vincent Fontannaz  
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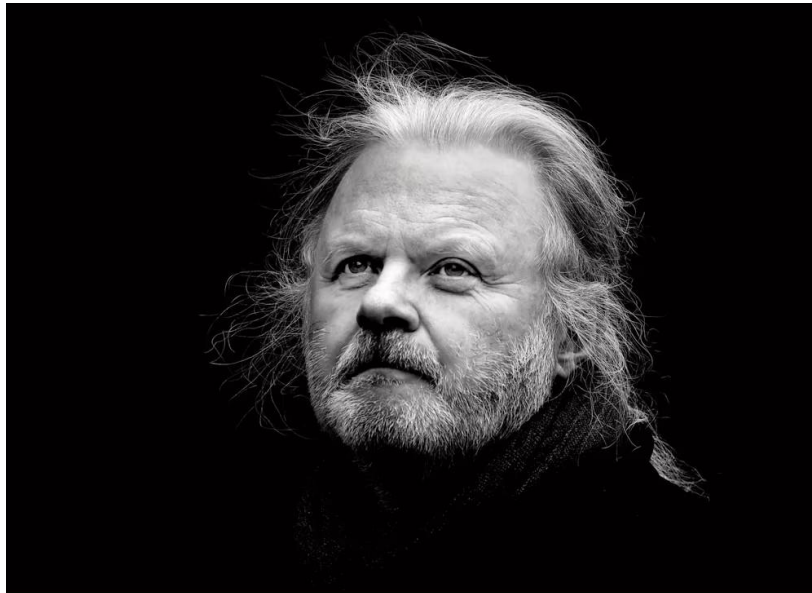
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# Jon Fosse

## AUTHOR



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The 63-year-old Norwegian writer and playwright spent his childhood in a village on the west coast, close to a fjord and in constant proximity to the sea, which would permeate his novels and plays. As a teenager, he got involved in a rock band and started writing. At the age of 24, he completed his first novel, *Red, Black*, and went on to write a series of stories, poems and essays.

Having accepted a commission to write a play for the theatre out of financial need, at the age of 35 he discovered what was to become his favourite field. From that moment on, he began a prolific body of dramatic work, now celebrated internationally and translated into some 40 languages. Although he detests the cultural dimension of theatre, Jon Fosse considers it to be “the most human, and the most intense of all art forms”, capable of creating “moments of emotional understanding that are inexplicable, at least intellectually”.

Often devoid of punctuation, his plays develop, through sparse dialogue, minute variations in language carried by characters who are often referred to by their generic status: he, she, the son, the father, the one, the other... His minimal style inspired Claude Régy and Patrice Chéreau, who helped spread his works throughout the French-speaking world.

A few key dates:

1994: Publication and staging of his first play *And We'll Never Be Parted*

2010: International Ibsen Prize for *Someone Is Going to Come*

2010-2011: Patrice Chéreau returns to directing with *Rêve d'Automne* and *Je Suis le Vent*

2015: Honorary doctorate from the University of Bergen and Nordic Council Literature Prize

# Denis Maillefer

## STAGE DIRECTOR



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Denis Maillefer is a stage director and teacher. He has directed some 40 theatre and opera productions and teaches regularly at La Manufacture – University of Performing Arts, Lausanne, where he was Head of Teaching. He co-managed Les Halles in Sierre then Comédie de Genève, with Natacha Koutchoumov, from 2017 to 2023.

A few key dates:

1987: First production, *Fool for Love* by Sam Shepard, Dolce Vita, Lausanne

1988: Assistant to Patrice Chéreau, *Le Retour au Désert* by Bernard-Marie Koltès, Théâtre du Rond-Point, Paris

2001: *La Supplication* by Svetlana Alexievitch, Ateliers mécaniques, Vevey

2013: *In Love with Federer*, co-written and performed with Bastien Semenzato

2015: *Lac* by Pascal Rambert

2019: *Perdre son Sac* by Pascal Rambert, Comédie de Genève (Boulevard des Philosophes)

2022: Re-creation of *Perdre son Sac* in a light version for touring, Comédie de Genève (Eaux-Vives)