

**du Capricorne\***

théâtre pour petits

et pour grands

\* *La petite bête qui dévore les planches*



*Marcellin  
Caillou*

UN SPECTACLE D'APRÈS L'ŒUVRE DE  
**SEMPÉ**

**Paper Theatre**  
A family play for age 7 and up

## The company

# Les Ateliers du Capricorne

*Or The little beetle that eats up the stage*

Experts have shown a thousand times that to do anything correctly you need to specialise, **les Ateliers du Capricorne insist upon the richness to be found in polyvalence!**

**The company doesn't hesitate to mix different styles:** theatre and music, theatre and painting, theatre and science, theatre and humour...and even just theatre on its own!

Which is already a plethora of possibilities, but it is not all.

They are convinced that there is as much interest, as much richness and as much pleasure in working on theatre for **children** as there is when doing so for **adults** and vice-versa, **they don't want to have to give up one for the other.**

**A scandalous plurality**, which they have the bad taste to show openly in the plural of workshops: **Ateliers.**

And the proof is in the pudding, master pieces are crafted through being put back onto the workbench many times to be worked and reworked until they are both generous and well crafted.

## « Marcellin Caillou » is the 22<sup>nd</sup> creation by les Ateliers du Capricorne

Les Ateliers du Capricorne have adapted for the stage a comic book by Sempé, one of the most famous French cartoonists and writers for children.

« Marcellin Caillou », is a poetical play for all the family from age 7 and up.

### Supported by:

The Ministry of Culture /DRAC Auvergne

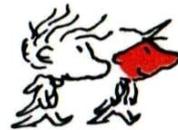
Auvergne Regional Council

Departmental Council of the Puy-de-Dôme

The town of Clermont-Ferrand

The town of Blanzat

The Cour des 3 Coquins



## The story

### Marcellin Caillou

Caillou, an odd name for this little character. 'Caillou' means pebble in French. Marcellin Pebble, is not made of granite, no. More like kaolin; he can crumble, this little being carries inside of him the invisible fracture of porcelain.

**He blushes, he goes red.**

**He blushes when he shouldn't and doesn't blush when he should.**

Oh, it's not a big handicap, it's just a nuisance, a tiny wrench, a vexation, a complex that irritates, the grain of sand in the bottom of the shoe that makes life a little more difficult.

**And...then,** he meets René Rateau.

Rateau, an odd name for this little character. 'Rateau' means rake in French. A rake is for raking, everyone knows that. There are rakes with long tines that make large furrows.

But for Sempé, the René Rake rakes gently, delicately, like a feather.

**René Rateau keeps sneezing, with no reason and without necessarily having a cold.**

Oh, it's not a big handicap it's just a nuisance when you play the violin, annoying to stand out, because Rateau is a shy being, a sensitive child who prefers violins to trumpets.

**On life's highway, young Caillou and young Rateau are going to meet.**

Marcellin Caillou and René Rateau are alike. They recognize themselves in the other. They become **inseparable**.

**René my mate, my friend, my RATEAU !!**



## The why ?

**«I am close to my characters, they are like me»**

(Sempé - interview Télérama)

Sempé isn't a moraliser. He doesn't pass judgment on other people, he doesn't look down on others. There is tenderness in his mockery. When he turns his magnifying glass onto our lives it is in order to shine a light on those little things that make life bearable. In the colourlessness of a world that is too big, too fast, too excessive, the sunbeam is somebody else.

The central theme in **Marcellin Caillou** – the cornerstone- is friendship. Friendship that is like a pullover on a very cold day, like the sound of the sea in a shell: without limits.

Sempé concentrates on everyday things that are part of all our lives and yet in his drawings there aren't any landmarks, they could be set in the past, the present or the future.

This absence of distinguishing marks lets us see ourselves in the work, here and now. This timelessness plays such a sweet melancholy. The stroke of the pencil is clear, the writing without affectation. An exhaustive search for lightness, simplicity: the elegance of keeping only what is essential.

**« Only admiration makes us do things....**

**It is admiration that gives us the desire to »** Sempé

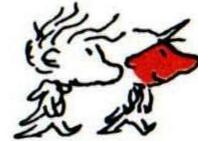
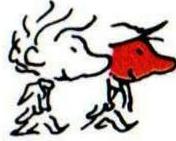
**Yes**, the admiration we have for Sempé's work gave us the desire to adapt « Marcellin Caillou ».

**Yes**, the immediate resonance that sprang up between us and young Marcellin inspired this desire.

So as not to betray our hero we have tirelessly weeded out clumsiness, things that were too demonstrative...at all costs we had to aspire to effectiveness in simplicity.

To conclude, Sempé is an **author whose work is sadly missing from the stage** and yet he is an essential part of children's literature.

We thought it was important to **put him centre stage**, and to **pay tribute to him** so that the greatest number of people (both young and old) can encounter his work.



THE HOW?

## Paper Theatre

It seemed obvious, this was the ideal material for our play: paper!

Something **light**, something **fragile** to touch Sempé's world.

Light, fragile and **white**, because what is white can be coloured and little Marcellin colours up.

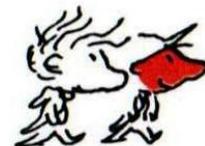
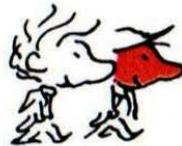
### The passage from the book to the theatre on:

A large blank page.

A blank page, that whispers, that murmurs, that sneezes, that blushes, that talks, that whimpers, that sighs, that laughs...

A talkative page from which the words and the sounds fly up.

A sort of horizontal toy theatre (for visibility: a sloping plateau underneath which the stage-hand/puppeteer is hidden right from the beginning).



From this page Sempé's drawings spring to retrace the story's actions: a character, a backdrop, a set.... all of which form a 3D image in the same way as pop-up children's books using flaps, wheels, springs, tracing paper, holes,...things that are pulled, folded and infolded to make the volumes (stairs, buses, trees, chairs...

**The colours: White, red, black: as in Sempé's work.**

Shadows- projected or thrown are also used: shadow puppets redrawn to resemble Sempé's.

Sometimes the metaphor of a little red diode is enough to represent Young Marcellin's reddening face.

All these appearances are controlled by the stage-hand/puppeteer hidden under the puppet theatre of the white page, he enacts the dialogues of all the characters.

The narrator is downstage, she controls the environment of what happens on the outside, with various manipulations.

We were directly inspired by the two levels on which the comic books work.

In the book, the narrator's lines are **bigger** and the characters' lines are written **very very small**.

**We sincerely hope that these techniques help to create a play that respects Sempé's work.**



## The team

Author/illustrator: Jean-Jacques Sempé

Set design: Yolande Barakrok

Directors: Fabrice Roumier, Caty Jouglet

Outside observer: Marielle Coubaillon

Puppets and sets: Denis Charlemagne, Marie Jouglet, Jean Stratonovitch

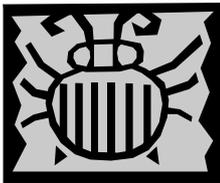
Sound effects: Pierre-Marie Trilloux

Lighting: François Blondel

Actors: Fabrice Roumier et Caty Jouglet



**Ateliers**



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