

Christine Kotschi : listening to the indescribable.

Christine Kotschi employs a great number of instruments, yet never gives way to fickle and gratuitous extravagance, remaining as close as possible to the sound and the word, working with intense purity and sensitivity. Her approach, which I share, is one in which the purpose of stage music is not to illustrate or create a particular "ambience" corresponding to a particular dramatic or theatrical situation. On the contrary, music is seen as a voice equal to the other voices. She converses, is silent, or extends the words of the actors, creating depth and counterpoints. She tells the story in her own way, bringing an epic and lyrical dimension to the stage. In decisive fashion, she contributes to making theatre what it should be: an experience that reveals sensations and a place in which the invisible and an instant of shared concentration, can be felt.

Together we have worked on two plays that have been very important for the Samovar Company. The first was a subtle multi-lingual work based on one of the classics of Arab literature – The Book of Kalila and Dimna. Christine's instrumental repertoire ranged from the breath used to play the ney flute which opened the play, via the soft, velvety, vibrating cords of the ghichack baloutche, to unusual percussion instruments such as the water drum with its mischievous, dynamic emphasis. Together, through humour and emotion, they added an incredible element of sensitivity to the dramatic twists of the fable and the spoken inflexions. The second play, entitled Bleu Horizon, is still touring. In it, Christine's own voice whispering in German (her mother tongue), reveals the spirit of her music. For she also plays the violin here, boldly taking an opposite course to the brilliance usually asked of her, touching on the very secret of the cord, as though it were a shared confidence or a meditation.

Pierre Longuenesse, actor, musician, artistic director of the Samovar Company and senior lecturer.