Answers with strings

Anca Doina CIOBOTARU*

**Abstract:** Carles Cannelas is a puppeteer who has a fine knowledge of the *craft*, an artist trained in the spirit of the creativity specific to visual arts, and of passion for shape and mechanism. His experience helps him dynamize his sculpture, control his emotions, and manage crises – onstage accidents. His gaze carefully supervises the state of the marionette, his fingers stroll through the strings with firm, yet delicate moves. He loves the character that was born out of his forty-year long experience that could be summed up by these numbers: tours on three continents, in seventeen countries, invitations to participate in two hundred and fifty-one festivals. His journey in the world of theatre has given him a mythical aura; in a way, there is an air of legend surrounding him.

**Key words:** Carles Cannelas, puppet, myth, Luceafărul Theatre in Iaşi

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I took advantage of the fact that he was present at the 10th edition of the International Festival for the Young Audience – organized by the Luceafărul Theatre in Iaşi – and I invited him to answer to several questions. Although his written answers are short, even parsimonious, the truth of his beliefs were revealed to me by his discourse during the workshop he held, in the same context. It contained the metaphysics of the marionette, the search for essence – embodied by the animated figure of the marionette, out of which the character is born. His eyes shine in a certain unique light when he says: “In my work, I have always believed that the string puppet has no limits, it can do anything!”

You can truly understand his passion just by watching him perform, or listening to the story of his most recent character, along which he ventures to win over the public: “I wanted to make a one-hour performance and I came close to contemporary dance; just like it, the art of the marionette is movement, or… nothing. When you dance with strings, you take many risks; it’s like you are tightrope-walking. My partner created the choreography and she gave me many moves – three hundred. The six masks help me, too, along physical attitudes. The electronic music was made by a fifteen-year old composer.”
And – still – what is the secret of a forty-year long career? I find the answer in the same confessional demonstration: “Calm and control are the two words on my mind. The puppet and the puppeteer act at the same time; the audience understands that there can be accidents. When everything becomes normal, the energy pours from the strings, to the public. A puppeteer has to respect his puppet. The puppeteer’s limitations come from… the strings and the puppeteer’s incapacity.”

I left from that meeting with more than the promise of an interview, with the energy that can be given only by the passion felt by an artist who has made a way of living out of his art. Carles Cannelas is a person who gives answers through strings; words are too meager.

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**Anca Ciobotaru:** What does it mean, for you, to be a “marionettist”?

**Carles Cannelas:** A marionettist is an actor who manipulates on stage a dramatic instrument called marionette, which consist of three elements: control, strings and the articulated puppet.

**A.C.:** What is the secret of a successful career in the world of puppeteers?
C.C.: Depends on what you understand for a successful career. In my case, I do not think I had a successful career, but a long career where I experienced different forms of dramatic expression in each of my shows.

A.C.: What qualities does the ideal puppet / marionette have?
C.C.: The ideal puppet or marionette must have the capability to express what his creator has intended.

A.C.: What is useful to a puppeteer at the beginning of the journey?
C.C.: To bring a large suitcase, where everything that he will learn of the journey can fit.

A.C.: What should he avoid?
C.C.: To believe that he already knows everything.

A.C.: Who / what has influenced your career?
C.C.: I have not nothing and no one that I can consider to have influenced decisively in my career. I am primarily self-taught. I have never studied
theater. I always based my work on my intuition and in my desire to learn and to experiment in everything I do.

A.C.: What are your three most important values?
C.C.: Intelligence, persistence and nonconformity.

A.C.: What was the price of professional journey and notoriety?
C.C.: When you choose the career you want to do, because you like it, it is priceless. Obviously, this is a hard and demanding profession, like many others artistic disciplines. Moreover, as in all of them, finding notoriety makes no sense. The most important prize is personal satisfaction. This must be the main goal.