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Object : Theater of the Full Moon

Number of pages : 5

 Please find a serie of first notes about the Theater of the Full Moon programme.

As we talked about, I would need quite urgently a first sketch of plan, both for the financial partners and for the bull dozer work.

I do not plan to move from Gourgoubès in the coming week or two, and I can answer any questions or points that you would need me to extend.

I plan to send you in the coming days a second serie of notes more specifically oriented on the moon system itself in connexion with theater lighting datas.

J'ai besoin d'une première " facture " de RFR portant sur les 30% à la commande, afin que je puisse faire un virement dès la mise à disposition des fonds courant février.

 Jean Claude Carrière (Président de la FEMIS) scénariste de cinéma (Bunuel/Peter Brook etc) fait maintenant partie du Comité de Gourgoubès. Il est enthousiaste sur le projet.

Amitiés et à bientôt.

Humbert Camerlo

1. Activities in the "Théâtre de la Pleine Lune" of the Gourgoubès Center.

The **Théâtre de la Pleine Lune (TPL)** is the basic equipment of the Center of Gourgoubès. The finalisations of the works realised in the various "ateliers" (Music Salon- Cinema workshop- Plastic Arts workshops etc...) all end up more or less in the TPL. Therefore it is conceived to welcome works in progress : theater pieces, opera sketches, ballet, open air movie studio, concerts, recitals, lectures etc...

* The TPL is a laboratory theater :

It's public is made of :

- * the professionals using and experimenting in the Center (directors , producers , managers , choreographers, conductors, actors, singers, dancers, creative artists, scientific research etc ...)
- * the financial or institutional partners of the Center (State Department for culture and communication, Languedoc Roussillon Provincial Council, State Department for Research and Technology, Sponsors and Patrons).

It is not open to the regular public. Therefore it's security equipment, it's capacity as well as it's standard of comfort doesn't have to respond to regular rules, it is directly influenced by it's laboratory activity.

* Year schedule of activities and general datas :

The TPL will be running from mid- April to mid-October. In the winter time all fragile or mobile equipment will be put in storage, the TPL will be basically a summer theater.

Δ Average temperatures in Gourgoubès for the period concern run from 18° Cel to 35° Cel in the day time undercover (under the sun it can go over 40°) and from 14° Cel to 25° Cel at night. The sun shines for about 2600 hours a year, and the temperature can go down to -10° Cel for small amount of time (few weeks) between December and February. Snow is very rare (1947-1956-1986-1987).

Δ The wind can blow quite strongly in Gourgoubès, the main wind is a north wind (tramontane) that blows in blasts (from 40 to 100 Km per hour- we get at least one tempest a year in the winter) and periodically Gourgoubès gets some blasts of Mistral but not as strongly as in the Rhone Valley. The south east wind coming from the sea is a soft wind that brings rain, and that is always welcome.

Δ The various projects will be produced in sequences, alternatively. The curves of activity (stage rehearsals, technical rehearsals, laboratory performances) will follow the moon calendar which therefore will influence the entire programming of the Center.

Δ According to the curve of light intensity reflected by the moon the laboratory performances will take place in the 3 nights of full moon. The other 6 nights, when the system can be activated, will be used for

Δ The day to day schedule of the TPL will be as follow :

April/May/mid-June/September :

- morning : 9:30 am to 1 pm
- afternoon : 4 pm to 6:00 pm
- evening : 7:30 pm to 1 am

Mid-June/July/August :

- morning : 8:30 am to 10:30 am
- afternoon : 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm
- evening : 9:30 pm to 1:30 am

1. Theatrical datas :

The various surfaces, capacities and volumes are all connected and interdependent: House Capacity, Visibility, Stage surface, Wings surface, Environmental Equipment, Access.

1.1. House Capacity :

Δ The house of the TPL is designed according to the necessities of rehearsal work (access to the various point of views and angle of vision for the artistic and technical operators) more than for the public. A show must be seen under various angles and distances from the stage, but the house is not necessarily homogenous as it would be for the regular public, with seating rows in sequences (though it can be).

Δ The house should integrate the natural environment of the TPL which is part of its originality (trees, rocks, natural rakes etc...) with its architectural and equipment necessities. The design of the various levels should be integrated with the regular architecture of the terrasses around the Center, walls in stones etc...(when the technical design will be finalised there is a project of integrating a symbolic graphic design with the various stone walls, going from an astronomical moon calendar to musical rhythms of stone arrangement). The different levels or terrasses can be designed according to the collectors implantation.

Δ If there would be an equivalent, the TPL would be a large pocket theater, with access to one or two distant perspective point of views (15 to 20 meters).

Δ Rarely the TPL will welcome more than 40 to 50 people, it's most regular public will be of around 25 people, though it should be capable of housing 150 to 200 people for the presentation of the " Somnium " once a year (the résumé of the various pieces produced each year for the partners of the Center). This extra capacity doesn't have to implicate a special seating equipment, but can be based on using the natural ground and the various spaces accessible among the technical equipment.

1.2. Visibility :

Δ The rake of the house should follow as much as possible the natural rake of the place, in order to minimise the Bulldozer work, but it should primarily integrate the visual necessities and the optical settlement of the Moon Collectors.

Δ The distance of the public seating areas to the stage should be included between 3 meters and 18 meters. One or two observatory positions (for 4 to 6 people) could be between 20 and 30 meters if it doesn't collide with the equipment.

Δ The visibility has to be optimum from all sides of the house.

Δ The purpose of the TPL being of presenting "esquisses" of shows for producers and distributors, the stage should have the possibility of bringing producers, directors and spectators for at least some areas of the

Δ The architectural options do not have to follow any traditional theater basic plan (Greek, Roman, Shakespearian, Italian, Japanese), but the stage should allowed frontal acting as well as central acting, to an extent that has to be determined along with the studies.

1.3. The stage :

Δ The shape and the size of the stage has to be the result of the combination of 4 parameters:

1. The space limits of the lighting through the moon collectors system (moon terrasse) *
2. The integration in the natural environment just as another terrasse more or less like the ones for agriculture in the neighbourhood
3. Large and deep enough to accept ballet performances
4. A shape that can include and be adjusted into a circular, a rectangular space and a prominence into the public, by a mobile limitation of it's wings and a simple mobile arrangement of the front stage. It also has to be visually effective without using wings limitation.

* Even though the size of the stage is connected with the lighting power available through the moon collectors system, the actual size of the stage can be larger. The lighted area being moved according to the various scenographies and lighting designs.

Δ The stage should be flat (if a rake is needed for perspective reasons it will be built according to the specific show that requires it).

Δ Several possibilities can be explored for the material of the stage ground (Concrete, stone or any hard solid ground are ruled out). If grass or sand are chosen, a movable wood floor should be able to be set up for ballet performances (in case wood floor is retained as permanent floor a covering or easy to remove system should be studied for winter and bad weather protection).

Δ Depending on the environment, on the space availability on site and on the projected activities, an articulate total stage size (acting area+wings area) could be include in the following figures :

- total width : from 14 to 20 meters
- regular acting width : from 8 to 12 meters
- stage depth : from 7 to 12 meters

* Those figures are indicatives and can move according to the shape, the use or not of a permanent proscenium etc....

Δ Like for most of the open air theaters there is no permanent machinery equipment required for the stage. If pieces of machinery are necessary for a show, they are built "à la demande". For the TPL, the possibility of obliterating the back stage in order to cut the direct back light from the moon, can be achieved in different ways:

- A rising curtain stretched from two side poles set up in the last ground (Permanent holes could be waiting in the ground) or any other practicle solution.

- A tree plantation could be examined, though it should not cut the last ground landscape.

1.4. Stage access and wings

The stage should be accessible through a side entrance for equipment, running entrance for

1.5. The dressing rooms and stage workshops

The dressing rooms are planned to be built in a very rustical way in the close vicinity of the TPL.

On a lower terrasse behind the stage, a workshop is programmed to be built for supporting the various handyworks and preparations that are required for the stage activity as well as for the cinema workshops (wood work- prop workshop- painting shop etc...) It will have a surface of 15m x 5m.

2. Planning for the construction

The plan is to start the bulldozer work in February 1991. All the embankment is almost ready. The embankment is made mostly of pieces of concrete, stones and broken tiles taken out during the restauration of the Mas de Gourgoubès. So the embankment work would consist of dispatching it according to plans.

The stone work should be started in the course of March to be achieved before the end of April. The actual planning is to do it in the traditionnal way the stone walls are made in the area.

Following our experience of rebuilding stone walls in the last 4 years, we consider that building the major stone wall of the back stage will take between 2 and 3 weeks.

The TPL should be accessible by the end of May 1991, in a testing activity.

3. First theater programming in 1991

The Center plans to have it's first testing program : " Cubism, Jazz Chamber and African Art " for the May Full Moon (rehearsals starting 18 of May - performances 27/28/29 of May)

The program will be used as a testing process for the adjustment of the moon collector system.

This first program will then tour in the area in June, July and August, without the moon lighting system, in regular theaters and festivals.

The first pieces " Galilée, Kepler, Newton " (working title) are programmed to be operated in June/ July and September full moons.