

## **Young at Heart**

### **Interview with Anne-Marie Ouellet**

#### **Why impatience? What does the title refer to? What does that word mean to you?**

I remember how as teenagers, my friends and I wanted to have the same rights as adults. We were desperate to gain our independence, which was being measured out to us in dribs and drabs. We wanted everything to go faster: fall in love fast, change fast, grow up fast ... To me, it's about a strong life force, not always well channeled but extremely powerful. As a teenager, you want to live life to the full but you don't always know how.

#### **How do you choose the young people who will participate in your project?**

I'd say it's more a case of them choosing us. In our workshops for groups of teens, we test out the exercises we'll use to build the show. After that, we ask participants who are interested in being part of the performance to come forward. If we have to choose, if there are more people interested than spaces available, then we try to pick people from different backgrounds so that the group isn't too homogeneous.

#### **Why did you want to work with two generations of actors, i.e., teenagers and young adults?**

In the fall of 2011, as a member of L'eau du bain theatre company, I was participating in a creative residency at Mains d'œuvres, in a suburb of Paris. I was working with five professional actors. At the same time, I was asked to give workshops for a group of teenagers. I wanted to work with them the same way I was working with the adult actors, adapting the exercises slightly to match their energy and concerns. I was enthralled by what they came up with. At certain moments, they demonstrated the very thing I was looking for in the professional actors: an authentic stage presence. I remember thinking they could teach the professional actors a thing or two about risk-taking, revelation, commitment ... And conversely, the older actors' experience (both professional and personal) could benefit the teenagers.

#### **During the creative process, was there a story or an encounter that particularly affected you?**

There were lots! But there's one moment during the process that I particularly love, and that's the moment when the difference between the adults and the teenagers seems to disappear. The teens start making fun of our quirks, we adopt some words from their vocabulary and venture into their world. *Impatience* is about that, too: drawing on that adolescent energy.