

Guignol, a French puppet born in the early nineteenth century in the hands of Laurent Mourguet, a silk weaver often unemployed during the Revolution, celebrates in 2008 his bicentenary. Accompanied by his wife, cantankerous Madelon, and his best friend, drunkard Gnafron, improvising commentaries to the news of the day, he became very popular all over the France. Unlike his colleagues of Commedia dell'Arte, he was close to the daily lives of his working-class audience. In contrast to other regional puppets, Guignol still appears regularly on stages of French theatres.

In my study, I have first explained the origine and the evolution of the Guignol theatre. I have as well tried to show the identity and the behaviour of the Lyon most famous puppet, in one of the traditional pieces, *Le Déménagement* (Moving). Guignol appears to be here a poor, unhappy and unemployed silk weaver, who will lose his apartment, if he does not pay the rent to his landlord. Anyway, he does not surrender, and tries to keep the right to live in his flat by words, and when this does not help, by beating the authorities. Guignol's show is a comedy, but it also has a social message.

There are a few publications regarding Guignols history, but none of them shows Guignol in the context of the other puppets in French modern theatre. That is why, after a look at Guignol's history, I continued with Guignol's position in the contemporary theatre. I have contacted 182 puppet companies. I have found out that only a few specialized theatres offer Guignol shows to their audience. Most of these are geared towards children. Only two Lyon theatres offer regular Guignol shows for adults, once a month, during which Guignol reacts to the news of his city or country.