

Arthur Schnitzler

LA RONDE

Directed by Arthur Nauzyciel

Ten dialogues about love, life, time and being.



Production: National Theatre (Prague, Czech Republic)

Co-production: Théâtre National de Bretagne (Rennes, France)

Czech premiere: November 3 and 4, 2022 at the Estates Theatre in Prague

French premiere: November 23, 2022 at the Théâtre National de Bretagne (TNB)

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STAGING TEAM

Translation	Pavel Novotný
Stage director	Arthur Nauzyciel
Dramaturgy	Marta Ljubková
Sets	Riccardo Hernández
Costume design	Marek Cpin
Lighting design	Scott Zielinski
Sound design	Xavier Jacquot
Choreography	Phia Ménard
Assistant choreographer	Andrea Opavská

CAST

Whore	Jana Pidrmanová
Soldier	Petr Vančura
Parlour Maid	Jindřiška Dudziaková
Young Gentleman	Šimon Krupa
Young Wife	Veronika Lazorčáková
Husband	Robert Mikluš
Little Miss	Pavčina Štorková
Poet	Vladimír Javorský
Actress	Gabriela Mikulková (as a guest)
Count	David Matásek

Duration: 2 hours 10 minutes, no intermission

Language: In Czech with English and French surtitles

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“A man can only love where he finds purity and truth.”

In *La Ronde*, probing the nature of our desires, Arthur Schnitzler holds an unforgiving mirror to the pretences that separate men and women. 10 scenes, 10 encounters, time enough to seduce, make love and leave each other.

Arthur Schnitzler (1862-1931) wrote *La Ronde* at the end of the 19th century but did not have the courage to present it to the public at that time. Published in 1903, *La Ronde* was an immense literary success for its author – and caused scandal. Initially censored in 1904, the play was later the pretext for such an outpouring of anti-Semitic abuse that the author himself withdrew it from production.

Often treated as a light-hearted satire, the play reveals how the intimacy of the bedroom is a matter of class politics. Anchoring his staging on 1930s against a backdrop of rising fascism, director **Arthur Nauzyciel** unfolds the piece in a state between reality and dreaming to evoke a moment of generational upheaval. As one world fades, another appears – unknown and disturbing.

Read superficially, the play is about sex; yet a deeper insight – pursued by the French director Arthur Nauzyciel – gives an account of the society at the turn of centuries, and time.

The distinguished French stage director Arthur Nauzyciel, director of Théâtre National de Bretagne (National Theatre of Brittany – TNB), is acknowledged for highly stylised dramatic expression and meticulous work with literary texts. Indeed, the omnipresent emptiness of human relationships, nowadays often reduced to mere satiation of erotic and sexual needs, has been a theme he has focused on in several of his previous productions. Nauzyciel's *La Dame aux Camélias* was a great theatre event in France before the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic.

Created in Czech Republic, this show brings together 10 performers from National Theatre in Prague, faithful artistic collaborators of Arthur Nauzyciel and the choreographer Phia Ménard for the first time.

The production was prepared in co-production with Théâtre National de Bretagne (TNB) and financially supported by the National Theatre Benefactors' Club.

See *La Ronde* on the National Theatre website [here](#).

ABOUT THE NATIONAL THEATRE DRAMA

The NT Drama is the biggest company of its ilk in the Czech Republic. We strive to include works of the classical and contemporary Czech and international repertoire as well as original projects and Czech premieres in our programming. The productions are visually compelling and exquisitely staged. Our company prepares five to eight new productions a year, while also pursuing a host of accompanying activities, debates and educational programmes. ([See more](#))

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FROM PRESS

Responding to an invitation from the National Theatre in Prague, director Arthur Nauzyciel came with the idea of staging *La Ronde*, a play echoing the times we all lived through during the Covid-19 pandemics. No need to worry, though, as he successfully avoids direct references in his stage adaptation; nonetheless he has managed to capture the spirit of the times and takes the audience on a journey into subconsciousness. The expressionistic atmosphere, syncopated gestures in sexual acts choreographed by Phia Ménard, and the impeccable reserved acting of the Czech ensemble together draw the audience into a social carousel that turns in the wheel of history and suffers from its own emptiness. The production of *La Ronde* is somewhat monotonous, but this monotony is precisely the source of uneasiness and anxiety the play evokes.

- Le Monde, Brigitte Salino

Schnitzler was a physician, and subtextual references are discernible in his play *La Ronde* to the epidemic of syphilis, which affected all social classes in his time – although the author never mentions it explicitly. As a backdrop, Arthur Nauzyciel uses the plan of Germania, the idealistic capital of the Third Reich conceived by Hitler's architect Albert Speer, to illustrate the loose morals of the Viennese society at those times, but also to foreshadow the spectre of Nazism awaiting its rise. A tram brings the individual characters from this ominous darkness to the stage, where their love encounters take place, and then carries them away, back to the darkness.

- Les Inrockuptibles, Patrick Sourd

Far from a burlesque to which *La Ronde* is often reduced, Arthur Nauzyciel rather focuses on the unspoken secrets, innuendos, what lies behind the intimate relationships of these couples, whether legitimate or not, and the class relations they bring to light. Supported by Scott Zielenski's chiselled chiaroscuro light-design and Riccardo Hernández' highly allusive scenography, the director invites the audience to dive into a world of illusions and false promises of love nobody trusts. In this production, passion is a mere façade, the map of tenderness is full of twists and turns, sex and appropriation of the other's body justifies every ostensible act. Phia Ménard's imaginative, quasi-burlesque choreography fits in this conception, leaving no doubts that this merry-go-round of love is ultimately but a dance of death, a dizzying ballet obscuring the imminent fateful events.

- Transfuge, Olivier Frégaville-Gratian d'Amore

The production of Schnitzler's *La Ronde* directed by Arthur Nauzyciel is worth seeing for several reasons. First and foremost, for the play itself – this stunning, humorous and simultaneously melancholic insight into the human soul that yearns for love while engaging in sex remains highly topical to date. Secondly, for the actors' performances in non-typical roles, focusing on the text they render with perfection. It is a pleasure to see, for example, Pavlína Štorková, Veronika Lazorčáková, Gabriela Mikulková or Robert Mikluš find their distinctive approach to portraying their strictly defined characters. And thirdly, for the extraordinary artistic concept and powerful atmosphere of this production of *La Ronde*.

- Marie Reslová, Hospodářské noviny

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PHOTOGRAPHS (© Petr Neubert)

To download the press-quality photographs from *La Ronde*, please go to [the National Theatre website](https://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/la-ronde).

Video trailer: <https://youtu.be/dMuvVONyERE>



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