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PRESS RELEASE

FAMILY FAVOURITE AT ARTS CENTRE

Award-winning adaptation of Jean Giono's environmental classic 'The Man Who Planted Trees' tours to Aberystwyth Arts Centre on Fri 27 Feb at 7pm

Winner of the Total Theatre Award for Story Theatre 2008

The Eco Trust's Eco Prize 2007 for Creativity 60 minutes

Suitable for adults and children aged 7 + www.puppetstate.com



Information begins....

The award-winning adaptation of Jean Giono's environmental classic 'The Man Who Planted Trees' by Puppet State Theatre tours to Aberystwyth Arts Centre on Fri 27 Feb at 7pm.

A captivating adaptation of Jean Giono's environmental cult classic, it tells the tale of a French shepherd who sets out with his dog to plant a forest and transform a barren wasteland. Hear the wind, feel the rain, smell the lavender in this multi-sensory theatrical delight. A unique blend of comedy, puppetry and inspiring storytelling, this unforgettable story that shows us the difference one man (and his dog!) can make to the world.

"IT IS VERY, very rare to find something that appeals as effortlessly to children and adults as this magical show ..." Scotsman, 5 Stars

"Laughs, heartbreak, war, regeneration, scented breezes, sparkling wit, the best dog puppet ever. Perfect for children and grown-ups. Terrific." Guardian



There's a fascinating story behind the story. Jean Giono was originally asked by Reader's Digest to write something for a feature entitled 'The Most Extraordinary Person I Have Ever Known'. They loved his story until they discovered that Elzéard Bouffier, the main character, never actually existed! Giono said, *'If you didn't want fiction you shouldn't have come to a novelist'* – but they never printed the story. It was first published in Vogue and Giono subsequently gifted it to the public domain. He said in 1957 *"I wrote this story to make people love trees, or more precisely to make people love planting trees. Of all my stories it is one of the ones of which I am most proud. It has never earned me a penny and for that reason it has accomplished the very purpose for which it was written."*

There is some debate, however, as to whether Giono based the character of Elzéard Bouffier on a real person. The team at Puppet State met a headteacher on the Isle of Mull who used to work as a forester in France and told them that there were forested areas of Provence which according to the maps should be just scrub land. No-one knows where all these trees came from....



But this is much more than a story about forestry: it is a wonderful parable of life - the tale of a human being who saw a need and decided not to ignore it but to "put things right". He received no payment or recognition, yet his life of dedication brought him great happiness and health. The story is also known as 'The Man Who Planted Hope and Reaped Happiness'.

The company has tried to dramatise the story as Giono wrote it - i.e. as if it were a true story - and in many ways it is. Fiction can be full of truth. Maybe we all have a supply of acorns hidden away somewhere...



Tickets for this production are £7 (£6) and can be booked by contacting the Arts Centre ticket office on 01970 62 32 32 or online at www.aber.ac.uk/artscentre

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Notes to editors:

Further information is available from Louise Amery on 01970 622889 email l1a@aber.ac.uk