

## **RAYMOND KABBAZ or a PASSION FOR THEATER**

This artistic vocation became clear at a very early age. Raymond Kabbaz enjoyed telling memories of the Jesuit boarding school he attended as a child. Theater was his only hobby and he became famous for his role in several plays.

With a spark of mischief in his eyes, he would say: "At the age of twelve, I declaimed with strength, gestures and vocal effects, the fable by La Fontaine "The animals sick with plague" in front a very enthusiastic audience". He still knew this fable by heart and would recite it to his grand children until the end of his life.

Eager to communicate his passion for theater, his activities did not prevent him from attending classes at the drama academy where he studied drama, learnt the basics of directing and sharpened his inclination for adaptations. As a teacher at Le Lycée Français de New York for ten years, he participated in the creation of its Drama Club and directed plays that enjoyed great success. At the Lycée Français de Los Angeles, which he founded with his wife, he created the Drama Club of Le Lycée Français de Los Angeles and directed several plays each year, with students and teachers participating as actors.

*La Cantatrice Chauve* by Ionesco, performed at the Stage Theater in Hollywood in 1993, will be the keystone of the beginning of the theatrical adventure in the city of angels. The French speaking audiences in Los Angeles welcomed this play with great enthusiasm. It was soon followed by *An aspirin for two* adapted from Woody Allen at the Odyssey Theater in West Los Angeles, then *Boulevard du Mélodrame* in 1995, *Quisaitout et Grobêta* by Coline Serreau in 1996 at the Morgan Wixson theater in Santa Monica, in 1998 *Le Passe Muraille* adapted from a novel by Marcel Aymé, in 1999 *La Vie Parisienne* by Jacques Offenbach, and in 2000, he completed his last production with *La Belle Hélène* by Offenbach, the inaugural show of his new theater.

He spent the last three years of his life building the marvelous theater of Le Lycée Français de Los Angeles, located on the Century City campus. Before leaving us, Mr Kabbaz designated Mr Pierre Leloup, with whom he shared his passion for theater, as the director of his new theater. The theater was named Raymond Kabbaz after his passing away. The programming and the price of tickets, between 7 and 25 dollars, attract a very wide and new audience and succeed in imposing Théâtre Raymond Kabbaz as one of the most lively French speaking and international cultural links in Los Angeles.