



BLUE

Marco

**Market Development
Manager**

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**For children
5 years and up**

Story **LARRY TREMBLAY**

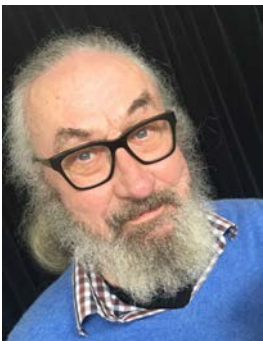
Summary

Marco's life has been turned upside down with the arrival of his baby sister. His mom is so tired, and his father is overwhelmed...

Marco and his friend Gina invent whimsical stories, just for fun. Stories about an alien from a strange planet where children don't have to go to school, where there are only two days in a week, and where life just seems to be so much more exciting than it is down here on Earth!

Then, one night, an entirely blue alien appears in Marco's room and takes the little boy to his fantastical world. When the boy returns from this adventure, he understands that life on Earth can be extraordinary... even with a baby sister!

A word from founder and former Artistic Director André Laliberté



Martine Beaulne has stage directed two original productions for Théâtre de l'Œil: *Zoé perd son temps* in 1995, and *La Cité des Loups* in 2005. I guess she developed a love for puppetry arts, since she was the one who told me about *Même pas vrai*, a book by Larry Tremblay, and about her idea of turning it into a show. Sparked by her enthusiasm, I quickly got my hands on a copy of the book and, just like Martine, was enchanted by its comical twists and turns and by its creativity.

However, I was not convinced that we could turn it into a puppet show. Given my reluctance, Martine suggested that we meet Larry to discuss the idea. And that's when the miracle happened! Not only did Larry share my doubts and questions, he also offered to adapt his story so that it would be more suitable for puppet theatre. This is how *Blue Marco* came to be. Scenographer Richard Lacroix was part and parcel of the project from the very beginning. Richard, a long-time Théâtre de l'Œil collaborator, has also worked regularly with Martine Beaulne. Thanks to his expertise and his sophisticated knowledge of puppetry, he greatly contributed to the aesthetics and the physical layout of our new production.

Developing a show is always an exciting adventure full of surprises and discoveries. I am thrilled to invite you to partake in this new chapter in our exploration of the multifaceted world of puppetry arts.



How Marco made it to the stage

An interview with Larry Tremblay



Larry Tremblay has published a dozen novels, including *L'Orangerie*, a huge international success, which he adapted for the stage with his close collaborator, stage director Claude Poissant. He has also penned some thirty plays, some of which have been translated into several languages and performed around the world. He has also published several books of poetry, a number of poems and an essay. To say the least, Larry Tremblay is a prolific writer! Of course, such a prestigious career has also been crowned with many – just as prestigious! – awards.

Rewriting the story

Même pas vrai is a graphic novel, a collection of short scenes illustrated by Guillaume Perreault. It tells the story of Marco, a little boy who is “seven-and-a-half-and-counting” and his friend Gina who has an overactive imagination that inspires her to tell all kinds of stories. Marco’s view of the world around him is candid and sensible, often funny and at times quite quirky. Marco’s life has just been turned upside down by the arrival of his baby sister who, even though she isn’t pretty and is all wrinkled, hogs all of his parents’ attention and care. The book is slated to be published in France, where a project is also in the works to produce a series of television vignettes based on the story. The book received the youth award at the Saguenay Book Fair in October 2017 as well as the 2017 TD Canadian Children’s Literature Award, a prize awarded every November to “the best literary work by Canadian authors for children aged one through 12”.

When Martine Beaulne and André Laliberté, who had also fallen in love with Marco and Gina, asked Larry Tremblay to bring his story to the stage, he had some reservations:

“I realized that I couldn’t adapt it for theatre because there’s no dramatic conflict, only short conversations between Marco and his father and mother. Theatre requires rising action and conflict. In the book *Même pas vrai*, it’s all play, and no conflict! So, I decided to keep the Marco and Gina characters, the parents and a short scene in the book where Marco asks Gina for a pill that will help him draw. From this point on, I invented the story of *Blue Marco* and established the link between the arrival of his little sister and the dramatic tension”.

As every playwright will tell you, writing for puppet theatre allows for a great deal of freedom. You can make pretty much anything happen: with endless possibilities, *the sky’s the limit*. After a few meetings with the stage directors and Théâtre de l’OEil scenographer Richard Lacroix, Larry Tremblay wrote *Blue Marco*, a truly original production:

“We can open Blue Marco’s head and look at what’s inside,” *says the playwright*. “All my plays include the idea of the body, what I call playful anatomy. Because I was using puppets, I was able to write scenes that I wouldn’t have written for actors because a puppet’s body doesn’t feel pain like that of an actor. We can, as we do here, open up a puppet’s head without causing suffering, and without triggering an identification response in the audience. A certain playfulness settled in and allowed me to revisit my childhood memories... This is the first time I’ve ever done this: bring back past characters and have them live a different story.”

Blue Marco, the alien, lives on a whimsical planet where there are only two days in a week (Saturday and Sunday) and where children eat candies so they can learn about history or geography or even how to draw. Says Larry Tremblay:

“Can being aware of other ways of imagining the world help us be more tolerant? This is what I discovered as I was writing the play and racking my brain to find ways to bring this small planet to life. Red Gina, who lives in a closet, leads us to ask the following question: Do we keep our friends in the closet and only take them out when we need them? I wrote funny little adventures to help children think about these questions.”



From a child's drawing

An interview with Richard Lacroix



Long-time Théâtre de l'Œil scenographer and puppet designer Richard Lacroix has many productions under his belt. He approaches each new show with a fresh eye and the desire to explore uncharted territory.

The ideas

For *Blue Marco*, his inspiration came from a television show called *Tour de terre*, which he watched as a child while growing up in the faraway Abitibi region. The show was written by Réjane Charpentier (who also wrote another beautiful story for Théâtre de l'Œil, *A New World... really, there's no such thing as chance, just coincidences*). *Tour de terre* was hosted by Jean Besré and Lise Lasalle.

"The episode I'm thinking about dealt with the solar system," says *Richard Lacroix*. "The two hosts sang the theme song as they walked around a huge scale model of the solar system, with a giant sun, and giant planets. This made a great impression on me and it's what came to mind when I read the story."





In the show, Blue Marco emerges from a drawing as if he were an origami figure.

“When we first meet Blue Marco, we see him as a child’s one-dimensional drawing that stretches, gets bigger and changes shape. From a child’s drawing, the character slowly becomes real, just like what goes on in Marco’s head.”

The scenographer got a little help from his young godson, who is the same age as Marco and faces the same problems as our hero:

“He thinks he’s awful at drawing!” says *Richard, chuckling*. “I asked him to draw me an alien, or how he saw himself as an alien, and I used this drawing to create Blue Marco, who is very similar to Marco, except that he is blue and has a pair of antennae on his head. My godson also drew me the little sister as an alien, and that was my starting point. But of course, I did tweak the characters’ appearances... just a little!”

Another of the scenographer’s inspirations : *Sol et Gobelet*

« It is a children’s television show that ran from 1968 to 1971 on Radio-Canada. Blue Marco’s world created out of nothing. A very theatrical setting that can be transformed with the help of just a few simple objects – a black backdrop, various props on the floor, large arches made from crumpled paper balls representing the planets and that, when lifted up high, represent the solar system. Behind the performance space, there’s the moon and the stars. A world somewhat like a journey. A subtle tribute to the psychedelic era of the ’70s. »

The Puppets

Marco, Blue Marco and Gina are bunraku-style puppets. The parents are performed by masked actors, whose masks, with their moulded and painted hair, mirror the puppets.

“The little sister is a very lively character,” *adds Richard Lacroix*. “She is a little older than in the novel, so she’s able to do much more! The story hinges upon her: she’s the one who annoys Marco and disrupts the family harmony. Giving her a bigger part in the story makes it easy to understand the big brother’s exasperation. She’s a bunraku-style puppet equipped with springs, so she can hold positions.”

Since Marco’s adventure takes place during the night while he’s trying to draw a picture, one might think that Blue Marco is just part of a dream. Richard Lacroix has a different take. He prefers the idea of entering into Marco’s imagination: “

“In order to make this clear, we never actually see Marco go to bed,” *says Lacroix*. “He stays at his desk to draw and create a story for his little sister. At the end of the show, when he tells Gina about his adventure, he adds a few colourful details. Just like any child playing make-believe. And even if the story isn’t true, the exaggeration allows them to press on and invent a sequel to their story.”

Marco and Gina probably had it all figured out already...



Puppetry's special features

An interview with Martine Beaulne



Over the course of Martine Beaulne's career, she has worked with local contemporary playwrights such as Michel Marc Bouchard and Michel Tremblay, and with playwrights from elsewhere, such as David Mamet, Caryl Churchill and Yukio Mishima. She has also worked on classic repertoire by the great playwrights: Shakespeare, Goldoni, Molière... Martine Beaulne has directed more than 60 productions and has been teaching for over 20 years at UQAM's École supérieure de théâtre. In 2004, she published *The Passeur d'Âmes* (Leméac), an essay on stage direction, and in 2012, she published *Voir de l'intérieur* (Dramaturges Éditeurs), a book co-authored with actor and playwright Sylvie Drapeau.

Martine Beaulne has already stage directed two of Larry Tremblay's works: *Ogre*, in 1998, and *Cantate de guerre*, in 2011, both presented at the Centre du Théâtre d'Aujourd'hui.

Says Beaulne:

"The graphic novel *Même pas vrai* stands alone, but for a theatrical adaptation, we needed to find a dramatic evolution. We prioritized certain aspects, such as Marco's relationship with his little sister – the baby that turns his life upside down. I love the finesse with which Larry deals with great human complexities. That's what I find so touching. In Marco's world, there is fantasy and a sense of unreality that lends itself well to puppet theatre."

Blue Marco is Martine Beaulne's third collaboration with Théâtre de l'OEil. In 1995, she directed the production of *Zoé perd son temps*, by Michelle Allen and, in 2005, she co-directed with André Laliberté *La Cité des loups* by Louise Bombardier. That same year, in her stage direction of *La Savetière prodigieuse* at the Théâtre du Nouveau Monde, she invited Théâtre de l'OEil puppeteers (and their creatures!) to perform a scene in the show:

"What I like about Théâtre de l'OEil is how André [Laliberté] reaches out to dramatic writers, and challenges them to explore this very special discipline. Part of my job is to act as a dramaturgy advisor, to help the playwright tailor the story to puppet theatre. Puppetry conveys much of the story through emotions, actions and gestures, things that don't require any words to get across."

As André Laliberté often says, puppets shouldn't be too talkative!

"Another special feature of puppetry," says Martine Beaulne, "is that everything starts with scenography, which is a language in itself. In this case, Richard [Lacroix] prepared the storyboards, illustrated the play, scene by scene, which enabled us to see the visual and dramatic evolution. We really worked as a threesome: André, Richard and I started by sharing our ideas around scenography, and then we all went to work in our particular field of expertise! André is a manipulation specialist and I direct actors and help them determine what works in terms of movement dynamics."

Alongside the bunraku-style puppets portraying Marco, Blue Marco and Gina, Marco's parents are performed by real-life actors:

"It's easier to direct actors in puppet theatre than it is to direct a puppeteer in actor's theatre. When actors are keenly aware of their bodies and very skilful at conveying expression physically, they are able to transfer this expression to the puppet, and the show's acting stands to gain!"

Blue Marco's playwright can rest assured. Three guardian angels are keeping a close eye on Marco's crib, watching over him and thinking of his future...



The road of Blue Marco

2019-2020

Canada

Maison de la Culture - **MONTRÉAL (SAINT-LÉONARD), QC**

Maison des arts - **LAVAL, QC**

Théâtre Hector-Charland - **L'ASSOMPTION, QC**

VALSPEC - **SALABERRY DE VALLEYFIELD, QC**

SPEC - **SAINT-JEAN-SUR-RICHELIEU QC**

Maison de la culture - **MONTRÉAL-NORD, QC**

Maison de la culture Claude Léveillé - **MONTRÉAL, QC**

Culture Trois Rivière - **TROIS-RIVIÈRES, QC**

Centre culturel - **JOLIETTE, QC**

Théâtre de la Ville - **LONGUEUIL, QC**

Maison des arts - **DRUMMONDVILLE, QC**

Centre culturel - **SHERBROOKE, QC**

2018-2019

Canada

L'Arrière Scène - **BELLOEIL, QC**

Maison Théâtre - **MONTRÉAL, QC**

Les Gros Becs - **QUÉBEC, QC**

Centre national des Arts - **OTTAWA, ON**

To consult the updated dates of representations of *Blue Marco*, do not hesitate to consult our Internet site, on the page "Calendar" : <http://www.theatredeloil.qc.ca/en/calendar>.

You want to promote our Marco? Feel free to contact **Véronique** :
veronique@theatredeloil.qc.ca **514-278-9188**

BLUE Marco

Age : For children 5 years and up
55 minutes

Story and Adaptation : **Larry Tremblay**

Stage Direction : **Martine Beaulne and André Laliberté**

Puppet and Set Design : **Richard Lacroix**

Lighting : **Gilles Perron**

Music : **Ludovic Bonnier**

Production Staff : **Jean Cummings, Ève-Lyne Dallaire, Éliane Fayad, Alice Lepage-Acosta, Noémi Paquette, Angela Rassenti**

Workshop Supervisor : **Richard Lacroix**

Gift Machine : **Christian Hamel**

Performers for the First Run : **Eloi Cousineau, Jérémie Desbiens, Julie Renault, Alex Trahan**

Blue Marco is based on Larry Tremblay's graphic novel *Même pas vrai*, illustrated by Guillaume Perreault (Éditions La Bagnole 2016)

Production of Théâtre de l'OEil



Simon Boudreault - Artistic Director

Joël Losier - General Manager

Véronique Grondines - Market Development Manager

Gilles Perron - Technical Director

Anne-Sophie Deleuze - Marketing and Administrative Assistant

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Blue Marco

Reviews



“Larry Tremblay offers children a clear reading of the necessary learning experiences that help us to grow up, and of the realization that it’s OK to go off and explore what lies beyond in order to come back better and stronger.”

Les blogues, Marie-Claire Girard, February 12, 2019

“... The children were visibly charmed by the show’s aesthetics and humour, and they gave it a heart-felt round of applause.”

Ta tribu, Maude Nepveu-Villeneuve, February 12, 2019

“With its magnificent, mainly bunraku-style puppets and an inventive scenography designed by Richard Lacroix, Théâtre de l’Œil invites young people on an exquisite and comical journey through space, but also along the spectrum of emotions and inside the mind of a seven-and-a-half-year-old who would swap his little sister, in his dreams, for an extraterrestrial friend.”

Qui Fait Quoi, February 6, 2019

“The prodigious Théâtre de l’Œil puppets join forces with Larry Tremblay in this adaptation of the acclaimed children’s illustrated book *Même pas vrai*. Like a promise of a star-filled sky!”

Evensi, Julie Charland, April 14, 2019

“Théâtre de l’Œil (...) draws on Larry Tremblay’s book, *Même pas vrai*, using puppets to deliver a message of tolerance to children in a playful way. The result is effective. The quartet of performers (...) with grace and joy, brought the puppets and little Marco’s parents to life on stage. Both simple and ingenious, Martine Beaulne and André Laliberté’s stage direction is full of great finds.”

Le Soleil, Normand Provencher, February 26, 2019