

PRESS KIT



Cuckoo

by Graham Soul

The disciplined life inside a cuckoo clock is thrown upside-down when an unexpected intruder mysteriously appears.

Cuckoo, the clock bird, chases after it and discovers a magical world beyond time.

A wordless puppet show for family audiences ages 4 and up
and school audiences ages 4 to 9

Show Teaser: <https://vimeo.com/673477072/c415467930>



Conseil des arts
du Canada

Canada Council
for the Arts



Conseil
des arts
et des lettres
du Québec

THÉÂTRES UNIS
ENFANCE JEUNESSE

Tuej

The Main Characters



**Uncle
Jacquemart**

Janitor-Repairman
(Grumpy)



Cuckoo

Official Clock Bird
(Happy-Go-Lucky)



**Auntie
Cecily**

Singing Teacher
(Disciplined)

Show Description

Cuckoo is a 40-minute show without words for family audiences ages 4 and up, and features rod puppets, a giant creature with long furry ears, an enormous clock as the puppet stage, and includes music, sound effects, and video projection.

Life inside the clock is strictly managed by its inhabitants, Jacquemart, Cecily and Cuckoo, who have endless daily chores to keep the clock running properly. Young Cuckoo, who would love to play baseball or relax, is rather bored.

However, when an unusual critter appears and wreaks havoc in the clock, Cuckoo is pulled into an exciting adventure!

Cuckoo leaves his orderly universe and ends up in a colorful world filled with dense forests, towering mountains and where time does not seem to matter to its inhabitants.

The bird meets a giant animal who shows Cuckoo how to paint with a special paintbrush. And Cuckoo discovers that he can fly! But can he find a way to return home and fix the clock?

The Team



Photo: Marili Clark

Graham Soul, Story, Set and Puppet Design, Music, Video,
Co-Stage Director, Puppeteer

After studying theatre and acrobatics, Graham began his career as an actor acrobat with DynamO Théâtre (*Mur-Mur/The Wall*) and then as a puppeteer (and sometimes a builder) with Théâtre Sans Fil (*Dream Catchers*, *Bilbo the Hobbit*), Théâtre de la Dame de Cœur (*Les dinosaures ne savent pas lire*), and mostly with Théâtre de l'Œil (*Les saisons du poulain*, *The Star Keeper*, *3-Legged Tale*) with whom he still performs.

With *Cuckoo*, Graham has developed new skills as a playwright, designer, composer and stage director.

Jérémy Desbiens, Co-Stage Director

A graduate of The National Theatre School of Canada, Jérémy works as a puppeteer with Théâtre de l'Œil (*Marco bleu/Blue Marco*), *La ruée vers l'or* (*Les Racontars arctiques*), Théâtre de la Pire Espèce (*L'Anatomie de l'objet, traité n°5*), *Les Ombres Folles* (*Les Routes ignorées / Off the Beaten Path*). He participated in the television program *Passe-Partout* and does regular dubbing work as a voice actor.



Photo: Julie Artacho



Photo: Melany Bernier

Eloi Cousineau, Puppeteer

Since training at Collège Lionel-Groulx in Sainte-Thérèse, Eloi has worked as a puppeteer or actor with Théâtre de l'Œil (*Marco bleu/Blue Marco*, *La Félicité/Dear Fizzy*, *Le jardin de Babel*), *Tout à Trac* (*Le tour du monde en 80 jours*, *Münchhausen*), Théâtre de l'Avant-Pays (*Mémoire de Lou*) and other companies. He has been featured on television and has directed shows at Montreal's Biodôme and for Théâtre des Ventrebleus.

Nancy Longchamp, Lighting Designer

For *Cuckoo*, Nancy built an autonomous lighting system and was the stage manager and technical director in 2019 and in spring 2022. She has been developing autonomous lighting systems for puppet companies for many years and has worked with Théâtre des Petites Âmes, Théâtre Magasin, *La ruée vers l'or*, *L'Illusion* Théâtre de marionnettes, Théâtre des Deux Mondes, DynamO Théâtre, Théâtre de Deux Mains and others.



Photo: Caroline Guy

Critique

7 mars 2022 [Daphné Bathalon](#) [Casteliers 2022 Critiques Festival Marionnettes Montréal](#)
<https://www.theatre.quebec/casteliers-2022-coucou-joyeux-dereglement/>

(English translation of the critique in French)

Casteliers 2022: *Cuckoo* – Joyful Malfunctioning!



***Cuckoo*, the amusing and playful production by the Montreal artist Graham Soul, closed CASTELIERS 2022 on a Sunday with warm spring notes. This warmth flowed onto the stage of the Théâtre Outremont, where the play revealed the unpredictability and fantasy at the heart of a daily routine that runs... like Swiss clockwork. To say the least!**

Indeed, *Coucou* opens the (little) doors of a grandfather clock to us to reveal the orderly and uneventful life of a cuckoo bird and two figurines who faithfully mark the passage of time: one “cuckoo” for the quarter hour, two for the half hour, three for the three-quarter hour and then as many “cuckoos” as the hour of the day. But what happens on the other side of the clock, between two quarter hours?

Cleaning the floor, singing lessons, Cuckoo has no time for playing, to his great chagrin. At least until an insect squeezes through the gears and disrupts the mechanics of this well-oiled routine! The aptly-named Ping spreads chaos throughout the household to the delight of the young spectators. And then a surprising and very lovely journey unfolds through time and space in search of a stolen gear. Will Cuckoo learn during his travels how to put a little color and playfulness back into his family life?

Cuckoo's ingenious scenography unveils many wonderful surprises during the show, from slamming doors, a secret passageway to colorful projections, while the very expressive rod puppets, who do not speak except to say their names and those of the others, also make us laugh a lot. Cuckoo and a giant donkey (a body puppet) with whom he crosses paths are particularly effective, and the Ping beetle is a joy to watch, scuttling across the set in all directions. Manipulating all these puppets inside the narrow puppet stage, Eloi Cousineau and Graham Soul give the impression of having 10 hands.

The production sheds light on the value of spontaneity and a certain freedom, beyond the rules that we impose on ourselves, but also on others, often needlessly. The freedom that *Cuckoo*'s characters grant themselves enables them to rediscover the joy and beauty of their daily routine and, who knows, maybe a new way to mark time.

Photo credit Graham Soul

Performances

December 5, 2019 – **Espace -1** of the **Théâtre Aux Écuries**, Montreal. A show for students from the St-Grégoire-le-Grand elementary school.

March 6, 2022 – **La Grande Salle** of the **Théâtre Outremont**, Montreal. The family audience premiere, the sold-out closing performance of the international puppet festival **Casteliers**.

May 28, 2022 – **The Puppet Power Festival** by **WP Puppet**, Calgary. A web presentation of the video recording of the show from December 5, 2019 and a live web presentation of the creative process with sketches, photos, videos and demonstrations.

October 22, 2022 – **Maison de la culture Ahuntsic**, Montreal. A family audience.

November 27, 2022 – **Salle de diffusion Parc-Extension**, Montreal. A family audience.

Production Team

Story, Set, Puppets, Music, Video
Graham Soul

Stage Direction
Jérémie Desbiens, Graham Soul

Puppeteers
Eloi Cousineau, Graham Soul

Lighting, Autonomous Lighting System, Stage Management
Nancy Longchamp

Stage Management
Nancy Longchamp or Jérémie Desbiens

Building Team
Jean Cummings, Graham Soul, Pierre Gélinas, Marie-Eve Fortier, Cécile Viggiano, Geneviève Thibault, Richard Morin

Construction and Painting of the Mask and Hooves
Mathieu René

Painting (Puppets, Set, Props)
Richard Morin

Sewing
Noémi Paquette, Geneviève Marcotte, Graham Soul, Esther Hardy

Original Idea for the Story and Characters
Pierre Gélinas

Additional Brainstorming
Christine Brassard

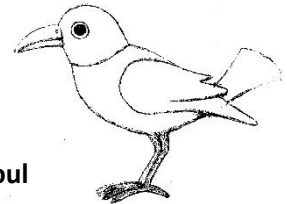
Research and Exploration
Jean Cummings, Graham Soul

Puppeteers in 2019
Pierre-Louis Renaud, Graham Soul

Dramaturgy Coaching
Pierre Yves Lemieux

Scenography Coaching
Richard Lacroix

Sculpture and Molding Coaching
Claude Rodrigue



Contact

Graham Soul

5280 Fabre Street, Montreal, QC, CANADA H2J 3W5
Cell +1-514-638-4221 / Home +1-514-524-1538
graham.soul@hotmail.com