



THE KING STINKS

A SURREAL SOREAL THEATRE PRODUCTION

Written by Jon Lachlan Stewart Directed by Olivier Morin Featuring Jon Lachlan Stewart and Clara Prévost Puppets Angela Rassenti Costumes & Set design Diana Uribe
Lighting design Claire Seyller Stage Manager Marguerite Hudon



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THE KING STINKS

Theater and Puppets, in English.

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*Our last president was a real stinker.
But Victor Dowager will blow away those past failures like dried crap in the wind!
Social justice!
Environmental consciousness!
The United Province of Peoples will be a leading country for change.
And most importantly, we will resolve the civil unrest from the Hun province within the UPP.
But something isn't right.
When Victor became president...
He began to stink.
The air is thick.
Bodies are falling.*

CONTEXT & INSPIRATION

The idea for THE KING STINKS began when writer Jon Lachlan Stewart had been reflecting on the election of Trump, Brexit in Britain, the oil and environment crisis, all at the same time. Jon became fascinated with how absurd and confusing politics have become: the words one uses as a politician can not really be trusted, just as a popular meme cannot really be taken seriously.

How do we “save” our world? What is it going to take to reconcile all of the issues threatening the sustainability of....everything right now?

Jon’s interest in Kafka and absurdist writers like Ionesco led Jon to pursue the idea of a modern contemporary myth. He wanted to tell the story of a “good king”...a king or president in which the world could put all their hope...a king who, despite their good intentions, would be slowly ROTTED away by the system he decided to lead.

THE KING STINKS aims to make us laugh and be horrified at the same time. Through twisted puppetry and an absurd over-abundance of political jargon and text, we want to reflect the world we live in through a twisted fun-house mirror.

In a world where politics is a circus show and comical memes are mixed in with horrifying news stories, THE KING STINKS uses grotesque humour and horror to talk about the world.

After all the abrasive humour of the production, there is a very specific feeling or thought we want to leave audiences with: the world is frightening. We all want it to change. But what can we really do, and is it too late?

SURREAL SOREAL THEATRE

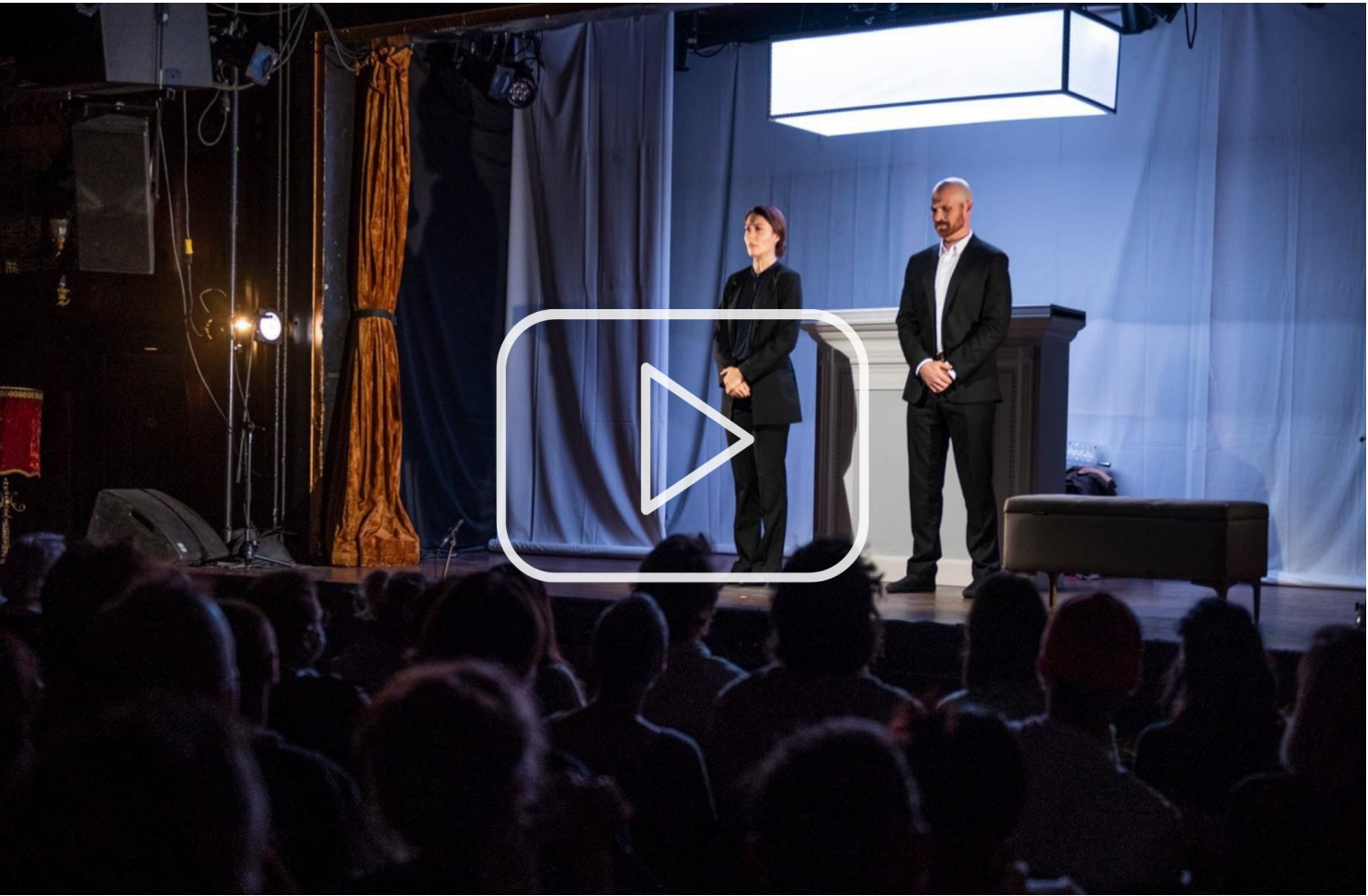
Artistic Director Jon Lachlan Stewart founded Surreal SoReal Theatre (SSRT) in 2006 with Vincent Forcier. From its humble beginnings, SSRT has focused on challenging and innovating theatrical forms through highly physical work, and bringing together English and French speaking artists.

« Physical theater is always at the heart of our aesthetic. No matter what piece we create, we want to avoid psychological realism, and work within a minimalist aesthetic in order to leave room for the imagination and poetry of the body on stage. »

Anglophone from Alberta, Jon Lachlan Stewart has been working with Francophone artists since he was 18. Moving to Montreal for training in directing at the National Theatre School of Canada, Jon found an echo in the fragmented art forms present on Quebec stages and decided to make Montreal his home. SSRT works in both French and English.

« By being involved in both the English and French scenes, our company seeks an aesthetic common to both solitudes through various artistic forms that go beyond language, in order to evoke in our audiences reactions that take hold of them. »

FULL LENGTH SHOW



PRESS

Jim Burke, Theatre Funhouse
October 2021

« The last president was a real stinker, says the blurb for *The King Stinks*, the latest from the ever-imaginative Surreal SoReal Theatre. The new incumbent, Victor Dowager, carries within him real hope for healing, both environmental and political, as well as showing a forward-looking inclusiveness. But then a mysterious, literal pong begins to emanate from him, casting a fetid pall over the land and threatening democracy itself.

Jon Lachlan Stewart's script for this delirious South Park-like clash of physical theatre and cartoonish puppetry, which is playing as part of this year's Festival Phénomèna, isn't exactly coy about its allusions to the current situation across the southern border (with a pinch of Trudeaumania dropped in for good measure). The title might throw a curveball to those associations, but the fact that it refers to "king" rather than "president" is perhaps to give it a cod-Shakespearean ring, a bit like the grandeur evoked by, say, *Olympus Has Fallen*. In fact, *The King Stinks* has a similar feel to Surreal SoReal's previous exploration of executive egregiousness, their wonderfully deranged *Macbeth Muet*, which they co-produced with *La Fille du Laitier*. Its irreverent, anarchic style also puts it in the tradition of Jarry's *King Ubu*.



Olivier Morin directs the cast of two, Stewart himself and Clara Prévost who, between them and with the aid of Angela Rassenti's gloriously grotesque puppets, portray the new president and first lady, their troubled, knife-wielding son, a pair of secret service agents and various cabinet members, media figures and celebrities.

The structure is deliberately jagged and zippily episodic, the actors launching themselves into each scene with a strobe-lit whirlwind of movement before snapping into rigorously-controlled performances, deathly serious amid the insane mayhem.

There are some truly astonishing and frequently very funny stage images along the way, culminating in a B-movie sci-fi climax featuring a robotic colossus with a bowl full of disgusting pink goo for a head.

[...] it does make some serious observations about the tenacity of a rotten system and its capacity to taint even the most potentially decent of rulers. And the delightfully zany yet focused performances from Stewart and Prévost, along with that irresistible array of puppets, earned the show a thunderous standing ovation from an audience that had turned out in full force on a cold Monday evening. »





JON LACHLAN STEWART

author and performer

Jon is a bilingual actor, director and artistic director of Surreal SoReal Theatre. He is very interested in the possibility of a better exchange between French and English speakers in Canada. He has performed in many productions across Canada with companies such as The Citadel Theatre and L'UniThéâtre (Edmonton), La Seizième and Zee Zee (Vancouver), The Segal Centre and Théâtre Prospero (Montreal).

He has directed Madame Catherine prépare sa classe de troisième à l'irréversible (Prospero, Carrefour International, L'Uni Théâtre), Le Petit Prince (Crows' Theatre), Ruddigore (Lakeshore Light Opera), Macbeth Muet (international tour), TONG (La Fille du Laitier) and Samuel Beckett's Before Her Time: 3 Plays (National Theatre School), as well as translating Tracy Letts' Killer Joe (reading, La Licorne).

He has written and performed in his bilingual solo Big Shot since 2008 across Canada and in Montreal. Jon is currently working on a production loosely based on Richard Bach's Jonathan Livingston Seagull, which he is creating with dancers and actors living with a physical disability, for the Théâtre Denise-Pelletier in Montreal in 2021.

Jon is a graduate of the National Theatre School of Canada (directing) and Studio 58 in Vancouver (acting program).



OLIVIER MORIN

director and dramaturge

Olivier Morin is an actor, author and director. He has performed in more than thirty theatrical productions since graduating from the Conservatoire d'art dramatique de Montréal in 2002. With his company, Le Théâtre du Futur, which he co-directs with Guillaume Tremblay and multi-instrumentalist Navet Confit, he co-wrote and directed Épopée Nord (2015), L'assassinat du président (2013) and Clotaire Rapaille : l'opéra rock (2011). The Théâtre du Futur was in residence at the Jean-Claude-Germain Hall of the Centre du Théâtre d'Aujourd'hui during the 13/14 and 14/15 seasons. He also directed the Reading List show at the International Literature Festival in 2014 and David-Alexandre Després' La mort de Kubrick at Théâtre la Chapelle (2012). His role as Klaus in Le grand cahier, by Agota Kristof, directed by Catherine Vidal, earned him an acting award at the Gala des Cochons d'Or in 2009. He has often acted under the direction of Luce Pelletier (Le vertige, La resistenza, La coopérative du cochon) and Serge Denoncourt in Projet Andromaque, Il campiello, Fragments de mensonges inutiles (Fragments of useless lies), La leçon d'histoire (The history lesson), Gertrude (le cri), Le peintre des madones (The painter of the Madonnas), Oreste, the reality show, and Les feluettes. He also participated in Du vent entre les dents, directed by Martin Faucher, Élisabeth, roi d'Angleterre, directed by René Richard Cyr, Louisiane Nord, directed by Claude Poissant and in the comedy Toc toc, directed by Carl Béchar. On television, he played in Série noire, October 1970, Tranches de vie, Smash and Tout sur moi. On the big screen, he played in Tom à la ferme and Les amours imaginaires, by Xavier Dolan. On the web, he played in Dakodak, La boîte à malle, Offre d'emploi and Capsule mobile. His music groups Otarie and Les Frœurs perform regularly in Montreal bars. He has also been a painter for almost fifteen years.



CLARA PRÉVOST

performer

2015 graduate of the National Theatre School of Canada, Clara Prévost has performed in several plays such as Wombat (directed by Jean-Guy Legault), Dans ma maison de papier, j'ai des poèmes sur le feu (directed by Éric Jean), Anne of Green Gables (directed by Frédéric Bélanger), Filles en liberté (directed by Patrice Dubois) e.s. Patrice Dubois), Nos cœurs remplis d'urethane (m.e.s. Jean-Simon Traversy), Amours propres (m.e.s. Claude Poissant and Louis-Karl Tremblay) and Macbeth Muet (m.e.s. Jon Lachlan Stewart), which toured in New York, Houston, Toulouse and at the prestigious Charleville-Mézières Festival, in France. She also participated in several theatrical readings (Strange Fire, La blessure, Zombies-Princesses, Licornasse, etc.) and made a few television appearances (Lac noir, 30 vies, etc.). With her company Productions Fil d'or, she produced two plays, including her first text, La place rouge, which was directed by Isabelle Leblanc at the Salle Fred-Barry of Théâtre Denise-Pelletier in 2018. In 2020, she directed her first short film, L'un l'autre, co-produced with Chasseurs Films, which won four awards at the Gala Prends ça court! 2021. She has just finished shooting her second film, Entre-deux, which will be released in spring 2022. She is currently participating in the creation of The Rise of the BlingBling - La Genèse, a text by Étienne Lepage, alongside director Philippe Boutin and choreographer Elon Höglund. She will soon be seen in The King Stinks, a new creation by Jon Lachlan Stewart, directed by Olivier Morin, as well as at Théâtre Denise-Pelletier in Quatre filles, an adaptation by Julie-Anne Ranger-Beauregard, directed by Louis-Karl Tremblay.



ANGELA RASSENTI

puppets design

Angela Rassenti works in many visual and performative spheres. She is a designer and craftsperson primarily of costumes and props for dance, theater, circus and museum environments, with a particular interest in interdisciplinary and immersive creation. Her interest in visual arts collaboration led to a degree in set design at the National Theatre School of Canada where she currently teaches prop design and fabrication. THE KING STINKS is her first collaboration with Surreal SoReal Theatre.



MARGUERITE HUDON

stage manager

Graduate of the National Theatre School, Marguerite Hudon was production manager and technical director for *Catastrophe et autres dramaticules*, directed by Stéphanie Jasmin and Denis Marleau. She also collaborated with Brigitte Poupart and Stéphane Crête in a collective creation as lighting designer, assistant director and stage manager.



MARIE LÉPINE

technical director

Originally from France, Marie is a young artist-scenographer.

She studied literature and art, notably at the École des Beaux-arts de Nantes (France) where she obtained her Bachelors and Masters in Visual Arts, in 2012 and 2014.

She develops her artistic reflection in a sculptural practice by exploring sculptural installation through different mediums. Marie plays with scale and moves from the model to the monumental work, always in a close relationship with the body - hers and/or that of the spectators -.

It is thus quite naturally that Marie turns to scenography. She collaborates on collective exhibitions, artistic performances, short films and theater and street art shows.

In 2017, she decided to move to Montreal and complete her training there, by integrating the Baccalauréat en Art dramatique, concentration Scénographie, offered by UQAM. After graduating in 2020, Marie multiplied her projects as a set designer, artistic director, technical director and carpenter. Her favourite mediums are: set, prop and puppet design, as well as lighting design.



CLAIRE SEYLLER

light design

Claire Seyller is a graduate of the University of Strasbourg (2015) with a degree in Performing Arts-Theatre, as well as the National Theatre School of Canada's Creation and Production program (2018).

Navigating between theater, dance, and performance, she is a faithful collaborator of artists and companies such as Charles-Alexis Desgagnés, Jon Lachlan Stewart, le Théâtre des Trompes, Satellite Théâtre, Théâtre Kata, Grand Poney and more recently Mayday.

Claire also assists various lighting designers on dance, theater and music shows.

Inspired and trained through collective creation in the European visual and scenic arts, Claire is passionate about the links between the different mediums and their possible common writing. It is while developing an expertise in lighting while integrating herself into the emerging multidisciplinary Quebec artists that the question of collaboration takes center stage in her research. In 2019, Claire began a master's degree at the École Supérieure de Théâtre at UQAM, and focused on developing a collaborative practice that she called «CIRCULAR». A good part of her results were presented during a conference-demonstration in September 2021.



DIANA URIBE

costume and set design

Diana is a Colombian theater designer, visual artist, interior designer and a perennial child based in Montreal. She has worked for over 25 years in design and the arts. In 2000, she moved to the United States where, along with three other Colombian artists, she created Interrorism, an art movement that denounces violence and injustice in her native country. Sixteen years ago, Diana moved to Canada and found her second home; In 2011, she graduated from the Theatre Design program at the National Theatre School of Canada and launched a new career. Diana is interested in how theater reaches people, in the world of possibilities, dreams and changes inherent in theatre practice. Her passion for space and its relationship to humans, and how it affects the body and mind has inspired her work, creating spaces and costumes that evoke a metaphor for our environment. As an artist and a human, she is aware of the footprint we leave and the importance of engaging in the exploration of ecological materials and renewed theatrical practices. She has had the pleasure of designing sets and costumes in both official languages, in 2011 she was invited to represent the National Theatre School in the Czech Republic 2011 Quadrennial in Theatre Design, in 2019 she received a Meta's Costumes Awards for Geordie Theatre's "Little Witch". She had been nominated for Meta's Awards in 2014 for set and costume design for Imago's If We Were Birds and in 2020 for set design for Persephone's Bound, by Scream Goats Collective, Imago Theatre and Geordie Theatre; She has been a regular instructor at the National Theatre School since 2015.