

The Lady Next Door EDUCATIONAL GUIDE

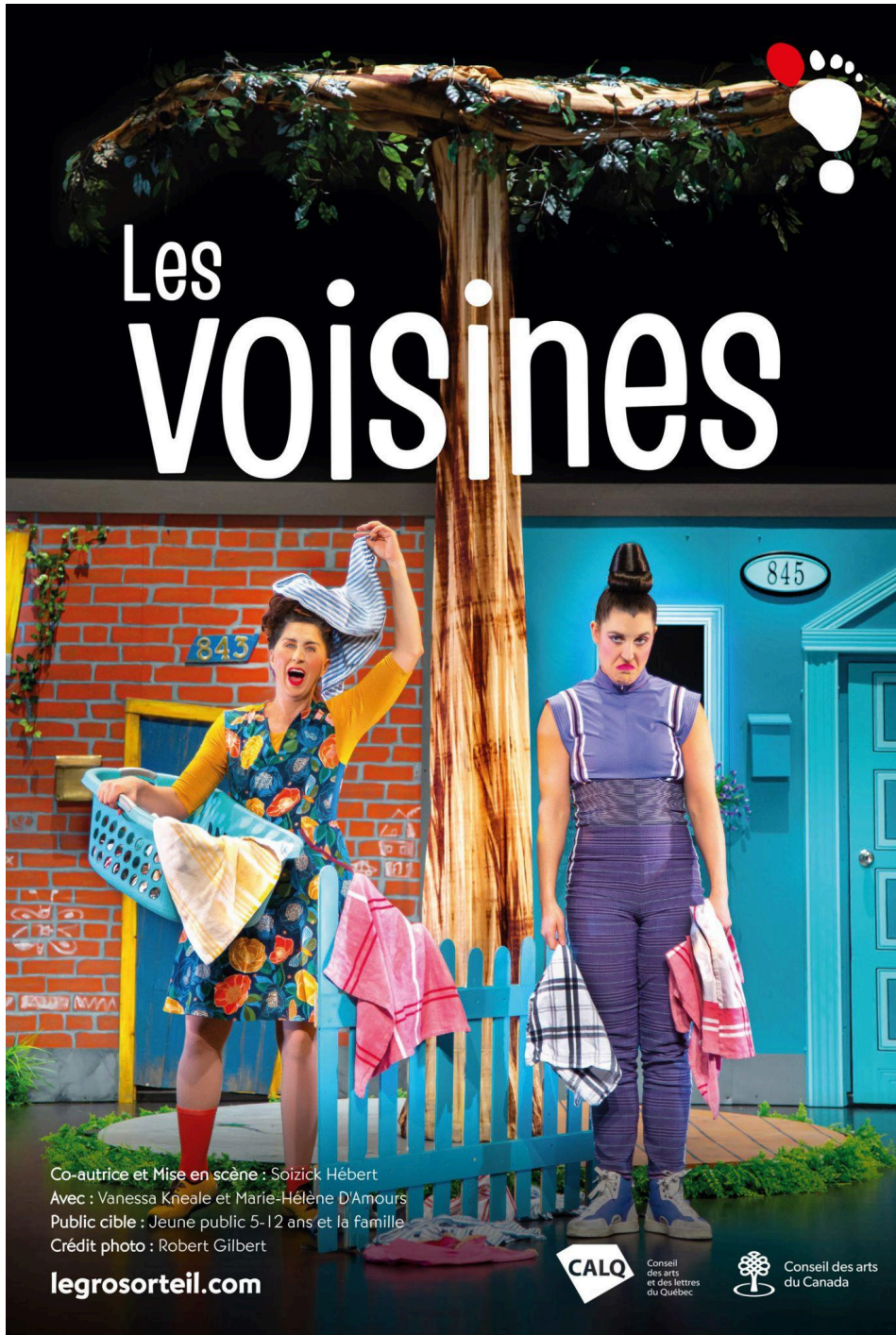




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1. LE GROS ORTEIL COMPANY – INTRODUCTION

Le Gros Orteil is a company dedicated to creating high-quality performances for young audiences, blending clowning, theatre, and circus arts.

We use improvisation as the starting point for each new creation, seeking truth in emotions and encouraging interaction with the audience.

Because children are treasures of spontaneity and boundless imagination, our shows leave plenty of room for fantasy, travel, and dreams. With no fourth wall, the performers invite children to join them in their stories, their emotions, and their reflections.

2. SHOW DESCRIPTION - THE LADY NEXT DOOR

A show combining physical theatre, clowning, and circus arts

Target audience: Children aged 5 to 12

Duration: 55 minutes

Descriptif

This is the story of two neighbors who share a common yard. The two women are very different, even antagonistic. One is rather orderly and organized, while the other is messy and exuberant. As you can see, the first one often disturbs the other one! Huguette, this exuberant woman, takes pleasure in hanging out her laundry with her singing very loudly, setting up her tent for nights of camping in her yard, or practicing her acrobatic bicycle with a disturbance. But what bothers her neighbor Vana the most is her overflowing garbage cans, not to mention her snoring. The neighbors learn to communicate and finally understand each other better. And a glimmer of friendship eventually appears between these two women, who are perhaps not so different after all.

This clownish female duo will make you laugh till you cry!

Original idea: Marie-Hélène D'Amours

Director: Soizick Hébert

Performers: Marie-Hélène D'Amours and Vanessa Kneale

Set design: Ghislain Buisson

Costumes: Marie-Hélène Gervais

Lighting design: Julie Laroche

Sound design and music: Frédérick Desroches

3. CHARACTERS



Huguette

In the role of the noisy neighbour

Performer: Marie-Hélène D'Amours

Huguette is a cheerful, exuberant mother who takes care of her household without paying much attention to her surroundings. Surrounded by her countless objects, she makes noise and constantly spills over into her neighbour Vana's yard. Deep down, she would love to become friends with her elegant neighbour. She's really looking forward to the neighbourhood party.



Vana

In the role of the classy neighbour

Performer: Vanessa Kneale

Vana is a refined woman with a keen sense of style and good taste in home decor. She enjoys gardening, peace, and reading. She is often disturbed by her energetic neighbour Huguette, who's always in motion. She never takes part in the neighbourhood party.

4. SHOW DISCIPLINES

In the show Les Voisines, we explore several circus arts disciplines.
Let us introduce them to you :



4-1 SCARF JUGGLING

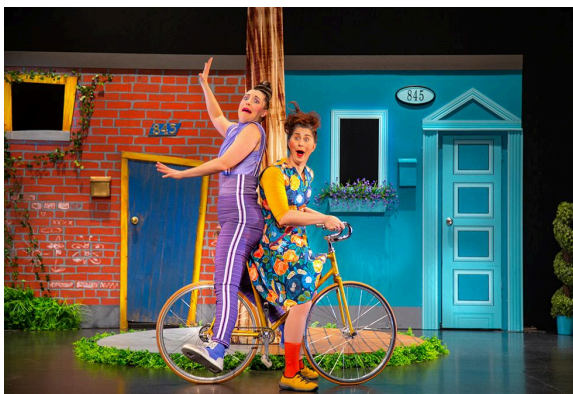
While demonstrating basic juggling techniques, our jugglers make use of the scarves' special quality, lightness. The scarf is the easiest prop to learn juggling with. In the show, however, we use dish towels, which are heavier than the usual nylon juggling scarves.



4-2 PHYSICAL THEATRE

Physical theatre is a form of expression in which movement conveys the impulses, emotions, and meaning of the story being told on stage.

“Les Voisines” was born from physical improvisations. In this show, the physical vocabulary is more important than the spoken text.



4-3 CLOWN PERFORMANCE

A brief history: Originating from English comedy before the Shakespearean era, the clown was initially a comic figure — a rustic fool or acrobatic jester — and later evolved into a grotesque comic character in pantomime and circus performances. Clowning combines dramatic play, mime, slapstick, and burlesque to create sketches that make audiences laugh. The first famous pantomime clown was Joey Grimaldi (1778–1837).



4-4 AERIAL ACROBATICS

Aerial acrobatics emerged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The first flying trapeze act was presented by Jules Léotard in November 1859. Acrobats perform movements on various aerial apparatuses, in this show, the aerial hoop and trapeze, using different parts of their bodies to hang and balance: arms, legs, hips, waist, shoulders, feet, elbows, neck, and hands.



4-5 ACROBATIC CYCLING

The bicycle was invented in March 1861 by Pierre and Ernest Michaux. From its creation, acrobats began using this new device as a performance prop to execute balancing and stunt positions. The performer rides in circles on the ground while demonstrating various balancing figures on the bicycle.



4-6 ROLLER SKATING

In the show, the performer uses four-wheeled roller skates. Inventor Louis Legrand was the first to move away from the inline wheel design by arranging four wheels in two rows in 1849. Since then, roller skates have endured and continued to evolve. The performer showcases different balance and dance movements on skates.

5. ACTIVITIES

5.1. CLOWN WORKSHOPS

Here are a few activity ideas to do with the children before and/or after the show...

Since clowning plays an important role in Les Voisines, here's a workshop focused on rhythm and emotions to help students better understand them.

1. Divide the group into two teams. One will be the actors, the other the audience.
2. The first group goes on stage. An emotion is secretly chosen. One person in the audience is designated to create the rhythm (using a music system or simple percussion beats). The actors walk to the rhythm until the music stops. When it does, they freeze into statues, showing the chosen emotion while facing the audience. (In clowning, the connection with the audience through the gaze is essential.)
3. The music starts again. The actors walk once more with the same emotion. When it stops again, they form a bigger, exaggerated statue of that emotion.
4. The audience applauds loudly for the actors.
5. Then, the two groups switch roles. Examples of emotions: joy, anger, fear, worry, disappointment, shyness, etc.

5-2 PHYSICAL THEATRE WORKSHOP

Invite students to explore different ways of moving through space.

Examples of movement:

- Move quietly without making a sound
Move while dancing
- Move quickly
- Crawl to move forward
- Move loudly
- Move while representing the four elements: fire, water, air, earth
- ...

5.3 NYLON SCARF JUGGLING

The Figure Eight

1. Hold scarf A in your right hand and scarf B in your left hand.
2. Throw scarf A from your right hand toward your left, above your head.
3. When scarf A reaches the top of its arc, throw scarf B from your left hand toward your right.
4. Catch scarf A, then scarf B.
5. Pause briefly after each “figure eight,” then start again with the other hand. Once this technique is mastered, continue the throws without stopping.

** This activity connects with the circus discipline of dish towel juggling featured in the show.*

5-4 A MEMORY TO SHARE

1. Each student presents, as a short oral presentation, a personal memory involving a neighbour.

** This activity ties in with the main theme of the show: neighbourhood life.*

5.5 NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTY WITH MULTIPLE CLASSES

1. Find a large space (gymnasium or schoolyard).
2. Each class prepares a dish and games for the neighbourhood party.
3. Set a date for the celebration.
4. Host the neighbourhood party, focusing on sharing and togetherness.

** This activity connects with the central thread of the show’s story: the neighbourhood party.*