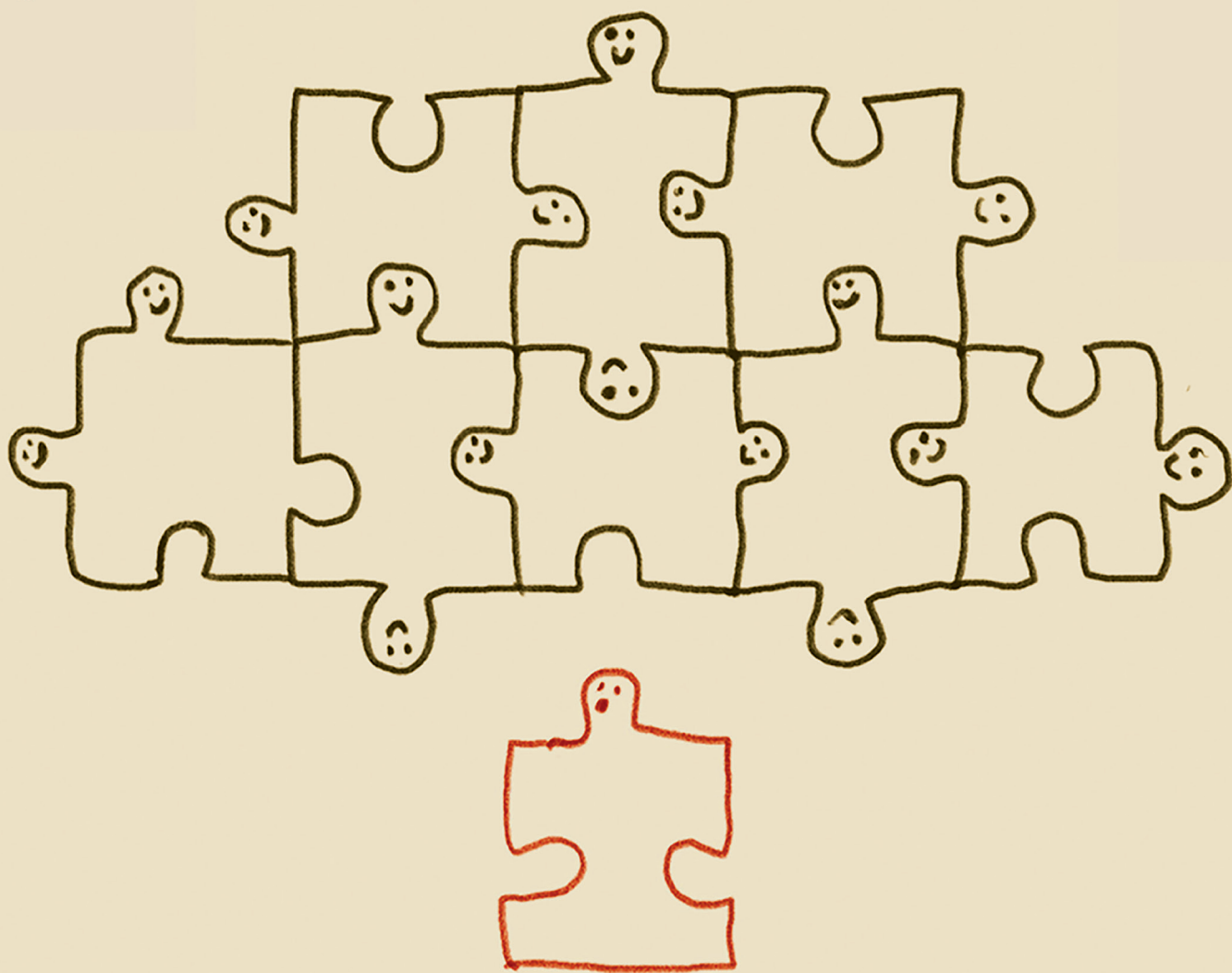


# DANS MA TÊTE



# Mission

Le Gros Orteil company, founded in 2013, has the primary mission of creating high-quality shows, animations, and professional workshops for young audiences, blending disciplines from circus arts, physical theater, and clowning. The company aims to foster improvisation as the starting point for the birth of a show, to translate authentic emotions, and to prioritize friendly interactions with its audience. Because children are sparks of spontaneity and overflowing imagination, our performances give a large space to the imagination, travel, and dreams. Without a fourth wall, the artists embark children into their stories.





# Dans ma tête

Physical theater performance, clowning

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**Artistic Direction and Stage Direction:** Marie-Hélène D'Amours

**Character Direction and Choreography:** Vanessa Kneale

**Creative Artists:** Julia P. Lafamme & James Burke

**Music:** Frédérick Desroches Technical

**Direction, Lighting, and Stage Management for the Production:** Julie Laroche

**Costumes:** Sarah Balleux

**Target audience:** Children ages 5 to 12 and families | **Running time:** TBA

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Upstairs, the party is bursting with laughter and music. Downstairs, in the basement, two children are waiting for the evening to pass: a teenage cousin with dazzling charisma, yet withdrawn and impatient, and a dreamy cousin, lost in a world that eludes him as much as it protects him. At first, she doesn't want to play. Too old, too cool—at least on the surface... But when her cousin transforms the basement into a shifting landscape, where objects roll, dance, and defy balance, she eventually

steps, hesitantly, into his mind. The basement becomes an imaginary refuge, a place where two lonely souls meet and invent their own world together. As the show unfolds and the games evolve—incorporating the Cyr wheel, juggling, and dance—the two children will unite their differences to create a new imaginary space. A great friendship will form, and moments of deep connection, acrobatics, and laughter will be part of the adventure.



## Marie-Hélène D'Amours

Director and Artistic Director

Marie-Hélène D'Amours grew up in Montreal. After studying Recreation Therapy, Drama at UQAM, and Circus Arts at the École de Cirque de Québec, she founded an aerial performance company, Le Cirque en L'Air, which performs in schools and at various festivals across Quebec. This experience led her to a new passion: clowning. Between 2001 and 2003, she trained as a clown with Francine Côté, with whom she developed the character of Mademoiselle Manon. She then presented her clown acts at several international events. In late 2005, she founded the company Swigne la Bacaisse, which produces circus, music, and clown shows in France and Belgium. In 2007, she developed the project Entre Rhône et Saint-Laurent. It was with this project that she set sail with her family on a sailboat for a two-year journey around half the world. She presented workshops and performances combining circus arts and environmental education in France, Morocco, Cape Verde, Senegal, the Caribbean, and Quebec. Upon her return, she founded the company Le Gros Orteil and presented her youth-oriented shows in venues across Quebec.



## Vanessa Kneale

Choreographer and Character Director

After earning a Bachelor's degree in Contemporary Dance and a Certificate in Business, Vanessa continued her training in clowning under Francine Côté, James Keylon, Joe de Paul, Michel Dallaire, and Yves Dagenais. Her career took shape through her roles in Dance Animal (Just for Laughs), Ripopée by Théâtre de l'Aubergine (Canada-wide tours), Les Bunheads (America's Got Talent and other international televised talent competitions), Bibi & The Beast (Clown, Burlesque, and Fringe Festivals), and her solo work as Vana as well as other characters on stage or at events (Les 7 doigts de la main, C2Montreal, d'Ariane, Espace Forain, Richard LaCroix, Les Foutoukours, etc.).



## **Julia P. Laflamme**

In the role of the cousin

A 2018 graduate of the École de cirque de Québec, Julia has been performing on stage for as long as she can remember. She began her career in singing, then moved on to theater, improvisation, and dance. It was in the circus world that she ultimately chose to settle, bringing all her talents together under a single medium that makes wonderful use of her stage experience. While the German wheel remains her signature act, she also excels at hula hooping, clowning, fire manipulation, and singing. Her charisma and her desire to connect with her audience are unmatched.



## **James Burke**

In the role of the dreamy cousin

James Burke's performances invite us to see the world through the lens of wonder and childlike imagination. Drawing on a wealth of experience in training and performing across Europe and North America, James has developed a unique voice in the arts of object manipulation and juggling, blending dance, character play, and technique. His work uses object manipulation and physical movement as means to connect with the audience, drawing them into the emotional landscape he creates. Particularly drawn to intergenerational audiences, James draws on his professional background in youth outreach and social circus, while envisioning the circus arts as a true force for good in the world. James has collaborated with numerous companies, including Cirque Hors Piste, Cirque du Soleil, Chasseurs de Rêves, Operation Bazaar, and Wonderbolt Circus in his hometown of St. John's, Newfoundland. He is now thrilled to embark on a new project with Le Gros Orteil.



## Julie Laroche

Technical Director, Lighting Designer, and Tour Manager

Julie Laroche has had a very diverse career, always in the field of lighting. After graduating in 1998 with a degree in film from CEGEP St-Laurent and in 2002 from the Vancouver Film School, she turned her attention to the performing arts upon her return to Montreal in 2003. From Black and Blue to the International Jazz Festival, Julie initially specialized as a lighting director. Theater and circus arts were added to her repertoire.

She was part of the creative/production team for Cirque Éloize's new show Saloon as lighting project manager and lighting assistant. Since 2009, she has also served as the in-house lighting designer at Espace Go. As an assistant to lighting designer André Rioux since 2011, she now tours Quebec with theater productions for both adults and young children. Since 2015, she has been creating lighting designs for the shows of the Compagnie Le Gros Orteil.

# History of the company

Founded in 2013, Le Gros Orteil has, to date, 12 designs to its credit:

## Hisse et Ho

2013

Sarah Touchette

300 representations in Québec and Europe

## Petit Voilier

2013

Marie-Hélène D'Amours & Yves Dagenais

250 representations in Québec

## Félie

2014

Marie-Hélène D'Amours & Sarah Touchette

75 representations in Québec

## Aweye Manon

2015

Marie-Hélène D'Amours & Soizick Hébert

75 representations in Québec and Europe

## The Librarian

2016

Marie-Hélène D'Amours & Hippolyte

More than 750 representations in Canada, in Europe, in Asia and in Australia

## Move

2016

Marie-Hélène D'Amours

225 representations in Canada

## Octave

2020

Marie-Hélène D'Amours

95 representations in Québec

## Brrr!

2021

Sarah Touchette

130 representations in Canada

## Plouf!

2021

Soizick Hébert & Marie-Hélène D'Amours

65 representations in Québec

## The Lady Next Door

2023

Soizick Hébert

More than 165 representations in Canada

## Maringouin

2025

Sarah Touchette & Marie-Hélène D'Amours

More than 55 representations in Canada

## Dans ma tête

2026

Marie-Hélène D'Amours

Coming soon