La Compagnie Ni

presents

LÉON SAVES THE WORLD!

A POETIC COMEDY SHOW

Created in 2021

For all audiences, and all languages

Available in a street or theater version

Photo : Dorothée Parent

Compagnie Ni

Association based in Strasbourg, East of France

www.compagnieni.com

This document presents *Léon saves the world!*, a poetic comedy solo show available in a street or theatre version.

Video link to the promotional video of the show:
https://youtu.be/-mE7LOE4JH4

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Preliminary note

Léon saves the world! was presented for the first time at the Baz'Arts de Rue Festival in Vendenheim, near Strasbourg.

It stems from a desire to continue the adventures of the character of Léon, originally conceived for the previous show *Des Pieds et des Mains*.

But it also stems from a desire to address current issues. How can you not talk about global warming when the IPCC has already announced a temperature rise of 1°C caused by human activity? How can you not discuss European immigration policy when hundreds of people are still drowning every year fleeing their war-torn home countries?

For this second work, I deliberately chose to position the show within a question-asking framework, because I firmly believe that one of the roles of art is to confront and expose these issues.

Jean-Nicolas Broyer

Photo : Dorothée Parent

If Léon is still grumpy
It's because he still has good reasons to be.
Planet Earth is burning up
And its inhabitants are acting crazy.
To face up to all this
He'll need to sort out his own problems first!

The story

Léon, an eternal nomad, regularly puts down his bundle to hang out on street corners with sedentary people like us. On this particular day, when he finds a bottle on the beach, he suddenly realises that the planet is becoming less and less capable of even pretending to support its bipeds who dare call themselves "sapiens". In the not-so-distant future, the life that we're used to leading is going to chance, qui probably big-time. The news disturbs him, as it does everyone. How will he react? Denial? Frenzied optimism? Flight? Will he be a Cassandra figure, offer solutions, trying to convince others?

Throughout the play, Léon, with his very personal worldview, such as it is, and his untranslatable language, will lead us on a journey of awareness, though absurdity, laughter, tenderness and love. He, the lonely guy, will enable us to understand that we're less alone than we might think in wanting to break free of our habits and technological cocoons.

Synopsis

Main characters

LÉON (actor), EARTH (a planet), a REGUGEE (his mobile phone), his CONSCIENCE, ESMERALDA his travelling companion (a doll) and the AUDIENCE.

Premise

Léon progresses from introspection to being open to cooperation with others, driven by the need to adapt to a reality full of uncertainty. This transformation gives Léon access to a more complete, joyful existence.

The set

The decor is very stripped back and represents the sinking of a boat. It comprises a plinth / board of 60x80cm centre stage as the ship's bridge, some debris / wooden wedges, two hand balancing canes covered with sacking up stage (garden section), two pieces of the ship's hull down stage in the garden and the courtyard sections respectively as well as sacking hiding a ballast for the guy rope at the back of the stage, courtyard side. Léon arrives on stage with a shopping bag that will become part of the decor throughout the play. The sound engineer will be placed behind the audience if possible.

Summary

Léon enters the stage, living his day-to-day, uprooted life with Esmeralda. This life has made him hard and withdrawn. He refuses any contact with the Refugee. When the storm breaks, Léon takes cover in a corner, abandoning Planet Earth, which appears amongst his possessions, alone on stage. When the storm has passed, he finds a bottle in the sea with a note from Greta Thunberg specifically asking him to play his part in saving the Earth. Esmeralda, his Conscience and the audience push him into accepting his mission. Several scenes follow, with audience interaction, in which a thermometer, a stethoscope and some money appear. Over the course of these scenes Léon's empathy develops, with periods of regression, in which he gets tricked by mirages of money and consumer goods. A second storm, fiercer than first, leads him to understand that these mirages can't withstand the forces of nature. In the last part we successively find all the characters who appeared at the beginning, with whom Léon develops news relationships. The final scene is a big collective moment with these characters and several people from the audience. Léon withdraws himself from the scene to let it unfold by itself, finally no longer wanting to control everything.

Artist statement

Who is Léon?

Léon isn't a character that the author decided to portray. He's his inner clown, who knocked on the door and asked to exist. He came into the world in the show "*Des Pieds et des Mains*" (*Hands and Feet*), created in 2016. Now he's growing up, he's confronting the world and his destiny.

Can a clown be scripted?

If we can say that writing for theatre consists of creating a story - made up of scenarios, scenes and sequences of action - to be interpreted by actors who will assume the skin of a character more or less distant from their personal reality, the same cannot be said for clowns. They provide the spectacle themselves, using the injuries and heartbreaks of their internal reality as mirror of our own. As Henri Michaux put it, "Clowns are men under construction". As a result, the task of writing for them is part of a contradiction: the story will be an opportunity for the clown to push his limits by rubbing shoulders with a reality that is presented to him. The author's writing must take into account the clown's inner feelings to offer him content that will not contradict those feelings. This contradiction results in a fascinating exercise, rich in possibilities to be explored and capable, perhaps, of producing innovative ideas. It is the audience who will decide.

Why this subject?

A sincere clown is a human being without the normal filters of social interaction. To exist, this clown must invent other filters, which also allow him to have an offbeat view of the world. And he can use this view to express his own realities in his own, personal language. Science has been telling us about those realities for over a century, but we chose to ignore them until a few years ago when they became so obvious we could no longer do so: climate change, scarcity of resources, unsuitability of our socio-economic systems for a world of finite resources, mass migration... not to mention pandemics. Theatre, like the other arts and indeed any activity of human society, can no longer ignore them, like it or not. Writers and all those on set must confront it in their own way and help deal with it. We decided to do our part with the grumpy but tender Léon. By opening hearts and freeing minds through laughter and emotion, we hope he can connect people so that we can achieve a future all the more livable because we've built it together.

A multidisciplinary performance

"Des Pieds et des Mains" (created in 2016) allowed us to glimpse a range of disciplines ranging from dance to circus arts, including music. *"Léon saves the world!"* will centre on the clown and the burlesque. The arts of clowning and the burlesque are therefore always driven by writing, supported by strong gestures and a soundtrack that allow Léon to express himself. And since Léon is a loner who cannot live without others, he will once again have to rely on his strength in interacting with the public.

A versatile "4x4" production

"Léon saves the world!" was created to be adapted for different kinds of performance space, be they intended for live shows or not. The technique is deliberately light-handed. A sound engineer will nevertheless accompany the actor for the smooth running of the various effects during the show. This approach is part of the company's philosophy, in order to meet the greatest number of spectators and to play in places where live performance has not been seen before. Consequently, we'd like to perform in a variety of places - parks, squares, school playgrounds etc. - in both urban and rural settings. This show contributes to our desire and need to play without walls, outside dedicated venues, away from home, out of our comfort zone… It's an invitation to experience the strength of togetherness.

The role of music

Music plays a role in itself in the show, in dialogue with Léon and absorbed into the universes and states of mind through which the scenes transport him. A recorded telephone conversation with a Syrian immigrant has been included to convey the hardships faced when fleeing their war-torn country. And a recording by a child of a collection of famous phrases by Greta Thunberg, translated into French, is included to underline the ecological emergency facing our planet and reinforce the show's message.

Photo : Dorothée Parent

Influences

Our understanding is based on our mutual knowledge and our imagination, nourished by sources as diverse as anthropology and Keaton, ancient history and Chaplin, Darwinist biology and Harold Lloyd, the Linea cartoons... Below is a non-exhaustive list of books and films: the older ones have shaped and directed us, while the more recent help us continue to evolve and grow.

Ouvrages

Pierre Kropotkine
Mutual Aide - A Factor of Evolution
Hachette, 1904

Jim Tully
Beggars of Life
1924

Albert Camus
The Plague
Gallimard, 1947

George Orwell
1984, 1949

Laurent Gaudé
Eldorado
Acte Sud, 2006

Françoise d'Eaubonne
Écologie et féminisme
Le Seuil, 1974

Jean-Paul Demoule
Les dix millénaires ignorés qui ont fait l'Histoire
Fayard, 2015

François Vineau
76 Clochards céleste, ou presque
Le Castor Astral, 2016

Pierre Jouventin
La face cachée de Darwin
Libre et Solidaire, 2017

Laurent Gaudé
Salina, les trois exils
Acte Sud, 2018

James C. Scott
Zomia - Le Seuil, 2013
Homo Domesticus - La Découverte, 2019

François Sureau
Sans la liberté
Tracts Gallimard, 2019

Corinne Morel Darleux
Plutôt couler en beauté que flotter sans grâce
Libertalia, 2019

Isabelle Attard
Comment je suis devenue anarchiste
Seuil, 2019

Charles Darwin
The Descent of Man et The Origin of Species

Films

Tod Browning
Freaks, 1932

Charlie Chaplin
The Great Dictator (Le Dictateur), 1940

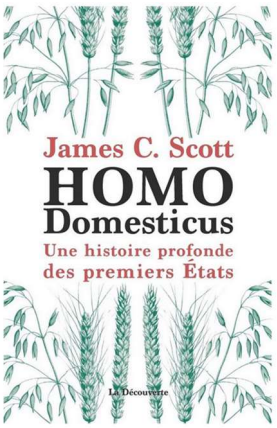
Naomi Kawase
殯の森, Mogari no mori (Mogari's Forest), 2007

Abdellatif Kechiche
Vénus noire, 2010

Naomi Kawase
An (Tokyo Delights), 2015

Noam Chomsky
Requiem for the American Dream, 2017

Kiyoshi Kurosawa
散歩する侵略者, Sanpo suru shinryakusha
(Before we disappear), 2017



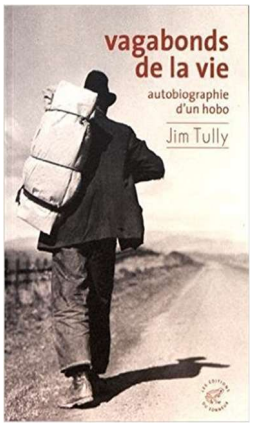


Photo : Dorothée Parent

Credits

Writer, artist	Jean-Nicolas Broyer
Co-writer	Vincent d'Eaubonne
Stage directors	Philippe Lenoir Frédéric Pradal
Sound engineers	Julien Lang and Jérôme Rivelaygue (alternately)
Scenography	Olivier Laurent
Soundtrack	Julien Lang
Production – distribution	Amélie Studer

La Compagnie Ni

The Compagnie Ni owes its name to "the knights who say ni" from the cult movie *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* (1975). Does not life, in its absurdity, just have the meaning that we choose to give to it? The world of the company is built around the irrational, the grotesque and the burlesque through the inspiration of circus artist Jean-Nicolas Broyer. Influenced by Chaplin, Keaton and Lloyd, and taught by Carlo Boso, Claude Victoria and Eliane Dusch, among others, Jean-Nicolas worked with a variety of companies (Les Zanimos, Theater Rue Pietonne, la Trappe à Ressorts etc.) before founding the Compagnie Ni in 2015 at the request of his own internal Léon who couldn't wait to be born. "*Des Pieds et des Mains*" (*Hands and Feet)* was created that same year. The Compagnie Ni offered with this its first production, a source of inspiration as a counterpoint to life in the modern world. Accompanied from 2017 by Manon Woelfli in the role of production manager, followed by Amélie Studer from 2020, the company has presented this show in a wide variety of places, and at festivals such as Au Bonheur des Mômes (runner-up, audience prize, 2018), International Aurillac Street Theatre Festival, Les Zaccros d' ma Rue (Nevers, 2019), le FARSe (Strasbourg, 2019)… Since its creation, "*Des Pieds et des Mains*" has played over 200 times in France, Italy and Belgium.

Jean-Nicolas Broyer

Curious by nature, he left on his travels at a young age and became a seed hunter, climbing into the palm trees of Bolivia, Madagascar and Japan for over 10 years. As time passed his encounters nourished his thirst for learning and discovery. On a stopover in Paris in 1999 he saw *Le Cri du Caméléon,* a show by the National Centre of Circus Arts (CNAC) produced by Josef Nadj. It was a complete revelation, and Jean-Nicolas decided that same day that he'd take the stage to share his view of the world. So he trained in theatre, puppetry, tap-dancing and music, in the various circus arts and as an actor under Mickaël Kroutov (Compagnie On A Beau Dire). He worked in quick succession with various companies: Les Zanimos, Le Coin qui Tourne and Theater Rue Piétonne… Continually polishing his rapport with the stage and the audience, he discovered a desire to write. His sensitivity drew him naturally towards the burlesque, and so he created the Compagnie Ni in 2015 and wrote his first show "*Des Pieds et des Mains*".

Vincent d'Eaubonne

Vincent d'Eaubonne has multiplied his activities in the world of performing arts over the last 20 years, particularly in street theatre and circus. As an author-photographer he has documented the work of over 400 companies in 22,000 photographs. He exhibited, to order, in many places in France and abroad before devoting himself to accompanying creations as an external eye via his images. It was in this context that he met Jean-Nicolas Broyer, of whom he became an assiduous partner, making a key contribution to the emergence of Léon over two years. He devotes himself in parallel to various forms of writing. Chief Editor of the webzine Larscène for the Artsdelascène portal, he produces articles and publishes correspondents who are really immersed in the grass roots of street and indoor theatre (Chtou, of the Quality Street company, Stéphane, ex of the Archaos company…). He also reviews books written by the journalists and political and scientific figures with whom he associates (David Dufresne, Pierre Jouventin, Corinne Morel-Darleu...). Beneficiary of one of the major authors of the 20th Century, he devotes a significant amount of time to republishing the more major works among the 80 books she has published.

Press review

- 11 January 2021 - *L'Avant-Scène, Radio Arc-en-Ciel*, interview with Jean-Nicolas Broyer and Vincent d'Eaubonne during their fifth residency at l'Espace K (Strasbourg), by Clothilde Valette
  https://player.captivate.fm/episode/d6069ab1-b276-4f52-a0a9-03fd7b18bc6c

- 12 October 2021 - Le Quotidien de la Réunion, article on the Ti Pas Ti Pas Festival in which the Compagnie Ni participated, Les Avirons (Île de la Réunion), byr Pascal Entz

10 LA RÉUNION L'ACTUALITÉ

Le Quotidien de la Réunion - Mardi 12 octobre 20

TI PAS TI PAS AUX AVIRONS

Les plus jeunes ont leur festival

Depuis bientôt une semaine, la salle Georges-Brassens des Avirons ne désemplit pas. La première édition du festival Ti Pas Ti Pas, pour les enfants de 6 mois à 12 ans, se poursuit jusqu'au 16 octobre avec des spectacles d'ici et d'ailleurs.

La salle Georges-Brassens des Avirons s'était déjà positionnée sur le festival « Il était une fois les vacances », en partenariat avec d'autres collectivités, elle lance aujourd'hui le festival Ti Pas Ti Pas se positionnant ainsi encore plus sur le créneau Jeune public. « *Nous souhaitons mettre en avant le savoir faire d'une équipe en portant un projet en solo* », dit Sabrina Enault, en charge de la programmation et de la communication. « *C'est un festival pour les enfants de 6 mois à 12 ans, mais aussi pour les familles* », affirme Miguy Payet, la responsable de la salle en soulignant que l'organisation de ce festival s'est faite en équipe et en partenariat.

« *On a travaillé avec Yann Vallée de JM France Réunion pour faire venir le spectacle Boom Boom kids, et avec Fée Mazine pour le spectacle musical Anima de la Cie du Porte-Voix* », dit-elle en soulignant que Ti Pas Ti pas est complémentaire du festival Fée mazine qui s'adresse aux tout petits. La Cie Ni de Strasbourg a, elle, été invitée par l'équipe culturelle des Avirons qui l'avait repérée au festival « Au bonheur des mômes » au Grand Bornand. Elle présente ici deux spectacles: la comédie burlesque « Des pieds et des mains » et sa dernière création « Léon saves the world ».

Il reste quelques places pour voir le spectacle de clown burlesque « Léon saves the world ».

Les spectacles pour les plus jeunes, comme « Bout'de soie » de la Cie Mille et une façons, sont déjà complets.

« Des spectacles oniriques, poétiques et éclectiques »

Cinq spectacles locaux ont également été programmés avec le théâtre visuel et sensoriel Bout' de soie de la Cie Mille et Une façons, Gazouyaz du Collectif Histoire de pour les plus jeunes, Oeuforie le spectacle de magie, acrobatie et jonglerie de Romuald Soiesse et Capitaine Ma capitaine de la Cie Aberash, un spectacle qui aborde la thématique de la discrimination sexiste. Exclue des jeux des garçons parce qu'elle est une fille, Fringa s'imagine en capitaine de bateau affrontant mutinerie et cyclones…

« *On choisit des spectacles oniriques, poétiques et éclectiques* », souligne Miguy Payet. Une recette qui semble plaire puisque certains ont pris des places pour les neuf spectacles du festival et que la plupart des quatorze représentations affichent complet. Il est vrai qu'outre la qualité des spectacles, le tarif de 5 euros est attractif, et les représentations décentralisées dans les quartiers sont gratuites. De plus pour les plus petits la jauge est réduite à 80 places, alors que pour les plus grands la salle peut accueillir 268 personnes. Il reste encore quelques places pour Léon saves the world (clown burlesque) et pour Capitaine Ma capitaine.

Pascale ENTZ

« Capitaine ma capitaine » par la Cie Aberash ce samedi. (Photos DR)

GROS PLAN

AU PROGRAMME

- Aujourd'hui : Léon saves the world de la Cie Ni à 14 h 00 et 19 h 00 à la salle Georges Brassens.
- Mercredi 13 octobre : Gazouyaz à 10 h 00 au Télélave (gratuit sous condition de réservation) et Des pieds et des mains de la Cie Ni à 17 h 00 au Télélave (gratuit).
- Jeudi 14 octobre : Gazouyaz à 10 h 00 à Ravine-Sèche (gratuit sous condition de réservation), Bout'de soie de la Cie Mille Façons à 17 h 00 salle G. Brassens.
- Vendredi 15 octobre : Oeuforie de Romuald Soiesse à 19 h 00 au K'Rié.
- Samedi 16 octobre : Capitaine Ma capitaine de la Cie Aberash à 19 h 00 salle G. Brassens.
- Ateliers : Échauffement du comédien : mardi 12 à 16 h 00 ; Tour de magie : jeudi 14 à 13 h 30 et à 15 h 00 ; Trucage au cinéma : vendredi 15 à 14 h 00. Tarif : 2 €.

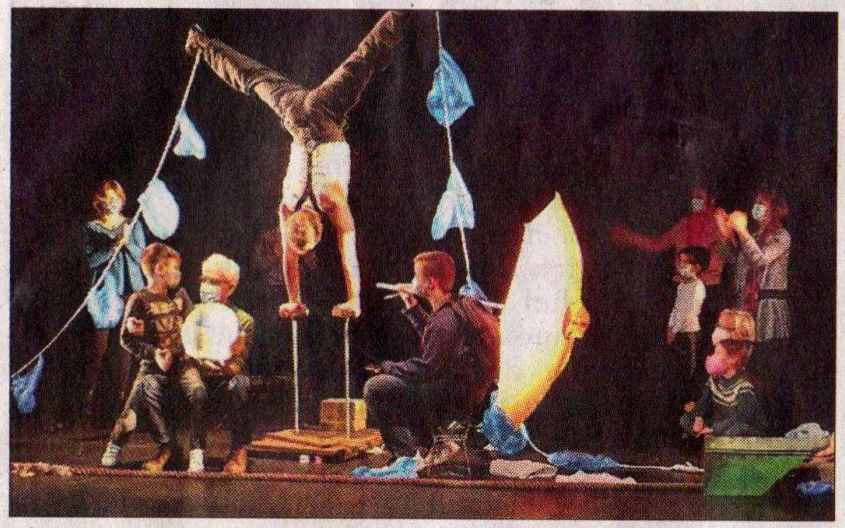
Téléphone : 0262 38 13 40

- 18 January 2022 - Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace and L'Alsace, articles following the representation of *Léon saves the world!* at the Art'Rhena cultural centre, Vogelgrun (68), by Jean-Marc Lalevée

L'ALSACE | Mercredi 19 janvier 2022

VOGELGRUN

Léon mène son monde en bateau



Léon est le mât du bateau qui va emmener les spectateurs au sauvetage de la terre. Photo L'Alsace/Jean Marc LALEVÉE

Même si le nom de la troupe à laquelle il appartient - La Compagnie Ni - fait référence au film culte des Monty Pithon, *Sacré Graal* sorti en 1975, le clown Léon, vêtu d'un smoking élimé sur « un marcel blanc », évoque plutôt un Charlie Chaplin vagabond et poète. La ressemblance est encore accentuée quand Léon tient le globe terrestre entre ses mains, rappelant la célèbre scène du *Dictateur* diffusé en France en avril 1945. Mais contrairement à Charlot, la terre ne lui éclate pas au nez, car lui, sur les conseils de... Greta Thunberg, dont il a entendu l'appel sur un smartphone, va tenter de la soigner.

S'exprimant dans une sorte de sabir « italo-gréco-slave », le brave Léon va prendre la température du monde, l'opérer pour en extraire toutes les « saloperies », et enfin le panser.

Spectacle engagé sur le thème de l'écologie, le numéro de l'acteur circassien Jean-Nicolas Broyer, loin de culpabiliser le public l'invite à la fin de son show à monter sur son bateau, pour poursuivre avec lui sa croisade contre « tout ce qui pollue notre terre où l'argent règne en maître ».

Dommage que les voyageurs n'aient pas été plus nombreux, mardi après-midi 12 janvier, dans la salle de l'Art'Rhena à Vogelgrun qui, depuis son ouverture en octobre dernier, enchaîne des spectacles de grande qualité.

J.-M.L.

Technical specifications – Street theatre format

These technical specifications only concern the outdoor representations and the representations in equipped theatres.

Show: Léon saves the world!
Contact technician: Julien Lang - tel. +336 62 44 11 19 - lang.julien@gmail.com
or Jérôme Rivelaygue - tel. +336 45 73 25 21 - jerome.rivelaygue@free.fr
Contact logistic: Amélie Studer - tél. 06 01 72 17 20 - contact@compagnieni.com

Team	2 people on tour (1 artist + 1 sound engineer)
Audience	General public, age 8 and upwards
Duration	55 minutes
Configuration	Wordless show, calm and intimate. Please provide a quiet place accordingly, with **flat and hard ground** (no grass, no slop). Please send us a photo of the the place so that we can validate it. Semi-circular installation around a staging area, tiering more than welcomed. No passage behind the representation place. Staging area : Width: 8m minimum Depth: 5m minimum Ceiling: 3m50 minimum Plan an alternative, indoor location in case of bad weather. Please take care during periods of extreme heat: in case of lack of shade, avoid performances during the hottest hours (11am - 5pm).

Capacity	200 people maximum
Preparation time	4 hours
Disassembly time	1 hour
Decor	A few small decorative elements will be added to the bare stage.
Lightning	Evenings, or indoors in case of bad weather: → 6 PC1kw spread over 2 rack feet (height 3m min. + coupling bar) → 4 PAR64 CP 62 on turntables → 1 dimmer minimum 6 circuits of 2kW and small light consol → Electric and data cables → 4 main sockets 16A minimum on separate circuit breakers, or 32 tri/PC16 box.
Sound	We provide our own equipment. The sound desk will be placed beyind the audience. Provide a 220V - 16A socket as well as a table and a chair for the engineer. Should it not be possible to provide a table and chair please contact us.
To be provided by the organiser	**Electrical power**: a 220V - 16A mains socket, with access to the circuit breaker. A control table (1m20 long). A dressing room near the place of the performance, bottles of water and snacks. **Car access to the performance location to unload** . Otherwise, provide the help of 2 people. An alternative, indoor location in case of rain or high winds.

Contact our manager. Every problem has a solution!

If you need access to technical specifications on equipped theatre (indoor version of the show) in english, please ask us.

Our patrons

Co-production

Le Diapason, Vendenheim (67)

Relais Culturel, Théâtre de Haguenau (67)

Financial support

Région Grand-Est

Collectivité européenne d'Alsace

Ville et Eurométropole de Strasbourg

Commune de Weyersheim

Palm Centre, Richmond (London), UK

Residences

Collectif des Possibles, Parc de Wesserling (68)
Le Diapason, Vendenheim (67)
Espace K, Strasbourg (67)
La K'Artonnerie, Schweighouse-sur-Moder (67)
Médiathèque Le Trait d'Union, Weyersheim (67)
Palm Centre, Richmond (London), UK
Relais Culturel, Théâtre de Haguenau (67)
Théâtre des Préambules, Muret (31)

Photo : Dorothée Parent

Contact

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CompagnieNi