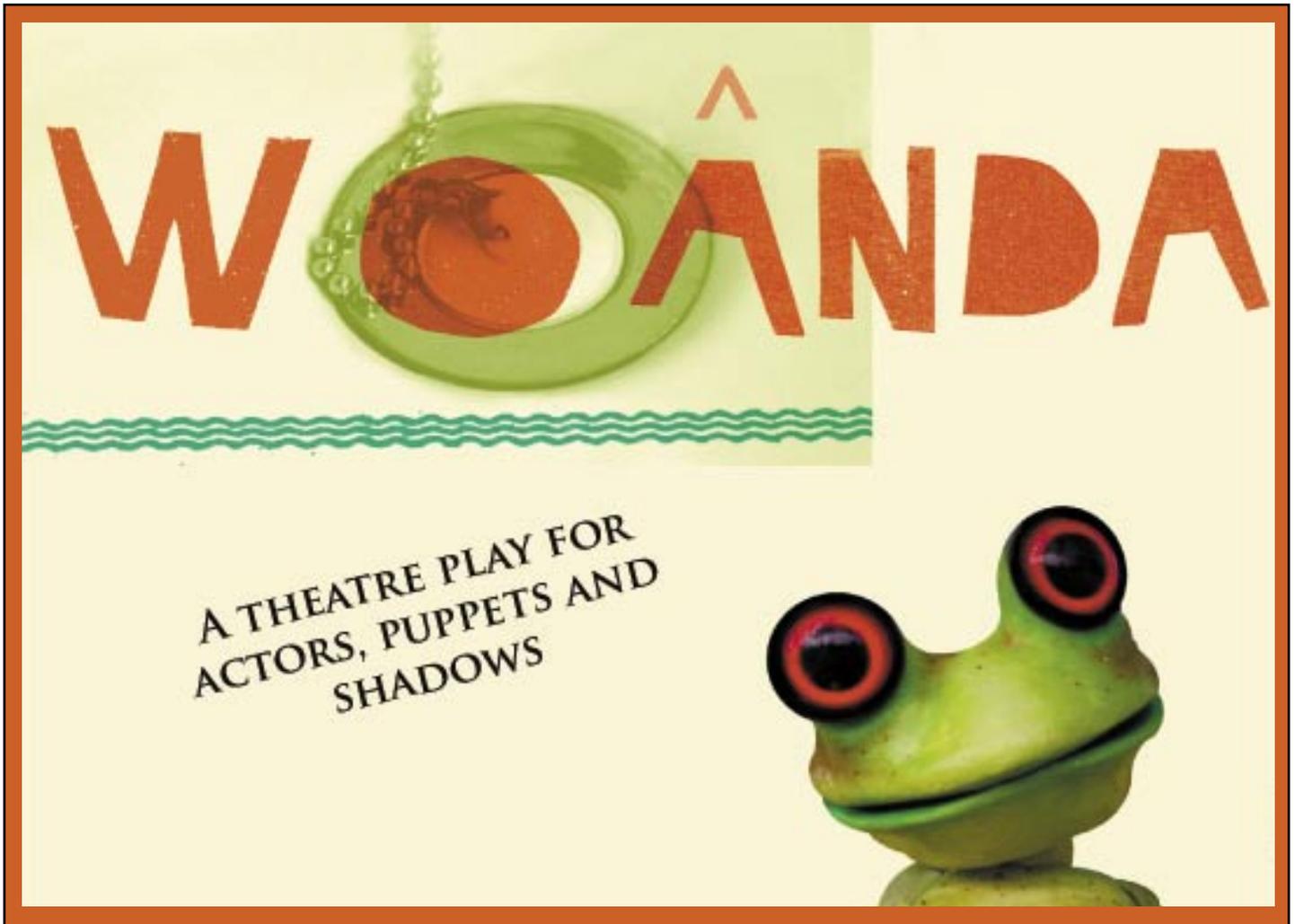


# Teacher's Guide



A THÉÂTRE À L'ENVERS  
production

2016 Edition

## Our Mission

Théâtre À l'Envers wants to create original theatre shows based on a research and experimentation process that focuses on blending different artistic and theatrical forms (puppetry, shadow theatre, mask theatre, video, music, dance).

We develop our shows by alternating creative work periods with series of public performances of the project in order to build from the audience's feedback.

## About *Woânda*

Woânda, a play with actors, puppets and shadows, is **Théâtre À l'Envers's** first production and the result of two years of research and exploration.

We began in the fall of 2005: over a three-month period, the creators gave regular workshops on drama and shadow theatre to two classes of 4th to 6th graders of the **Saint-Isaac-Jogues School** in Montreal. These workshops enable us to develop a direct relationship with the target audience. In april 2006, several groups of adults and children (including those mentioned above) attended performances of the work in progress, presented as part of an artistic residency offered by the **Maison de la culture (MDC) Villeray – Saint-Michel – Parc-Extension**.

On January 30, 2007, Patricia Bergeron, Lynn Katrine Richard and Joëlle Tougas founded Théâtre À l'Envers (TAE). In February of the same year, the company won the competition *Mon accès à la scène*, organized by **La Fondation du maire de Montréal pour la jeunesse**, in collaboration with **MDC Villeray-Saint-Michel – Parc-Extension** and **Cirque du Soleil**.

In July 2007, **Théâtre À l'Envers** received its first grant from **Canada Council for the Arts** to support the production of *Woânda*, and was soon joined by co-producer **Théâtre Quatre/Corps**. A second residency at **MDC Villeray–St-Michel–Parc-Extension** concluded on October 21, 2007 with the premiere of the play.

Woânda was performed more than twenty times during seasons 2007-2008 and 2008-2009, and selected to participate in *La Relève en tournée*, a **Loto-Québec** tour for young artists supported by **Fondation du maire de Montréal pour la jeunesse**, in collaboration with **Réseau Accès Culture**.

In the fall of 2008, *Entrées en scène Loto-Québec 2009's* jury chose **Théâtre À l'Envers** to showcase *Woânda* at the *Bourse RIDEAU 2009* event, held in Quebec City in February 2009. An extract from the show was performed for theater programmers, which resulted in a 60 shows tour across Québec for the 2009-2010 season. This tour was also supported by **Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec**. In 2013-2014, The *Conseil des arts de Montréal* on tour supported the most recent tour of *Woânda* on Montréal's territory.

# CREDITS

WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY **Patricia Bergeron**

TRANSLATED BY **Maurice Roy**

WOANDA IS BASED ON AN ORIGINAL IDEA BY  
**Joëlle Tougas, Patricia Bergeron & Lynn Katrine Richard**

## CAST

**Patricia Bergeron**, puppeteer

**Mariève Bibeau**, as Laura

**Richard Fréchette**, as Grandpa

**Maryse Poulain**, musician

STAGE MANAGER - **Jacinthe Plamondon**

SET DESIGN - **Fanny Bisailon-Gendron**

COSTUME DESIGN - **Sophie Brosseau**

MAKE-UP - **Aurélia Boullen**

PUPPET DESIGN - **Mélanie Charest**

**Daniel Auclair**

SOUND DESIGN - **Maryse Poulin**

LIGHTING & SHADOW THEATRE DESIGN

**Lynn Katrine Richard**

PRODUCTION MANAGER & SHADOW THEATRE DESIGN

**Joëlle Tougas**

## PLAY SUMMARY

What could possibly happen when a frog decides to take up residence in the pipes of the bathroom? A lot of commotion... especially the frog, Woânda, comes face to face with Laura, the child who lives in the same house!

Laura is a lively and spontaneous little girl whose mother is seriously ill. To numb her sorrow, Laura takes refuge in painting: with her brushes full of colors, she fills canvasses with her emotions. But her world is turned upside down the day she loses her lucky charm, a ring given by her mother, down the plug hole of the bathroom sink.

Laura's search for the ring takes her through a whirlwind of twists and turns that combine dream with reality, laughter with tears and fears with friendship. And, of course, Woânda the frog becomes Laura's invaluable ally.

Puppets, shadows and video projections create Laura and Grandpa's world at home, as well as the mysterious world of pipes, dreams and imagination that Laura explores with Woânda. The unusual friendship she strikes up with the frog helps Laura to deal with the uncertain emotions she experiences. Above all, Laura learns how to overcome her fear of the unknown and to look positively towards the future and all it holds.

# AFTER THE SHOW

Here are some questions to help the children to remember visual details about the play:

## What characters have we met in this play?

Laura, a young girl.

Grandpa, her grandfather.

Woanda the frog, who lives in the sink pipes.

## Who are the characters that we hear about without seeing them?

Laura's mother.

Laura's father.

## Where do the different scenes of the play take place?

In the bathroom.

In Laura's bedroom.

In the "world of pipes" (the pipes of Laura's house).

At the hospital (suggested through shadow theatre when Laura says farewell to her mother).

Outdoors (under the rain, suggested through shadow theatre)

In Laura's dreams (or nightmares).

## What were the important objects in the play

The lucky charm ring.  
The tools used by Grandpa (wrench, magnet, fishing rod, coat hanger, plunger).

Woanda's accessories from inside the sink (flippers on the clothes line, Olympic medal, bag).

Stuff found in the sink drain (long seaweed, fish, key)

Laura's medical accessories (glasses, stethoscope, little stick)

Laura's paintbrushes

An umbrella

### Activity

Draw an important moment of the play. Ask the children to pay particular attention to the characters present in the action they have chosen, where it takes place and props used on stage at this moment.

# A discussion about grief and mourning

Laura, the play's main character, lives through grief, both big and small. Here are some questions likely to make children think about the concepts of grief and mourning.

## What does it mean to “mourn for somebody”?

To feel and show sadness because somebody has died; (to feel sad because something no longer exists or is no longer the same) – Oxford dictionary

## Do you think that we can feel the same when we lose something? When we have to give up on a project that is important for us?

## What is Laura's big moment of grief?

The death of her mother.

## What is Laura's small moment of grief?

The loss of her lucky charm ring.

## What are the emotions Laura feels with these losses?

Anger, sorrow, acceptance (she transforms mommy into “the brightest star in the sky”.)

## Is there any sadness that a child of your age is likely to face?

The loss of a loved one (parents, grandparents, other)

The loss of a pet

Parents' divorce

The loss of a friend (school change)

The loss of a precious object

Failure at school (bad grade, etc.)

Others...

## Activity

Ask the children to write, in a letter to Laura, what they wish to tell her after seeing the play. Stress that Laura is mourning somebody very dear to her: their letter can be of great comfort.

# Shadow Theatre

## At what moment was there shadow theatre in the play?

In Woanda's world of pipes.

During Laura's nightmare.

When Laura's mother dies.

When Laura walks with her umbrella in the rain.

## What do you think the shadow represented?

Dream, imagination, emotions, all the invisible "things" eyes can't really see...

## Activity

Create a short sequence of shadow theatre.

### Material:

- blank sheets divided in 4 parts
- an overhead projector
- a large white sheet (as screen)
- cardboard (recycled cereal boxes, for example)
- wooden supports, straws or sticks
- transparent film sheets and transparency markers

### Step 1

Team the children into groups of four or five. Each team has to include a narrator, a stage director (an external view) and two or three puppeteers. Each team gets a blank sheet divided in four squares.

### Step 2

Think of a storyline, in a comic strip format. Each storyline has to include at least four actions, to be drawn successively in each of the four squares of the blank sheet:

The initial situation.

The "hook" of the story (a disturbing event that disrupts the initial situation).

The development (event or series of events that build the dramatic tension)

The resolution (dénouement)

Take the time to explain those notions to the children and give some in-class examples.

### Step 3

Draw the setting of the story on a transparent sheet (refer to the comic strips previously drawn).

#### **Step 4**

Cut the characters' silhouettes out of cardboard and glue a support on each of them.

#### **Step 5**

Rehearsal: place the transparent sheet on the overhead projector, and make the silhouettes move. The narrator can describe the action, since there is a limit to what a cardboard cut-out silhouette can express!

The stage director watches the action from the other side of the screen (as if he/she were the audience) and gives advice to his/her puppeteer teammates to make the performance more interesting and easy to understand for the audience.

#### **Step 6**

Present the shadow theatre sequences to the class.

Suggestion to start off:

You can ask the children to imagine Woânda's adventure to get back to her family and the complications she could encounter on the way.

Note. If you don't seem to have enough time to prepare the shadow theatre sequences, you can conclude the activity by asking each team to present their comic strips to the class.

Théâtre À l'Envers' founders are available to facilitate shadow theatre workshops. For schools in Quebec, it is possible to fund this in-class activity through the Culture à l'école program.



Théâtre À l'Envers wants to hear back from you! We would be delighted to receive the children's creations (or some pictures of them). If you wish, you can mail it to us at:

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photo: Michel Pinault