



LOGIC OF THE WORST

A show by

Étienne Lepage

In collaboration with Frédéric Gravel

LOGIC OF THE WORST

by Étienne Lepage



ORIGINAL TITLE Logique du pire
DURATION 70 minutes (no intermission)
PREMIERE June 3, 2016 | Festival TransAmériques, Montreal (Canada)
VIDEOS Teaser: <https://vimeo.com/189812982>

"Étienne Lepage is not one to censor himself. Not one of those who refrains from saying out loud what they really think. Not one of those who embellish or use tweezers for fear of shocking."

— Christian Saint-Pierre, *Le Devoir*



© Gunther Gamper / Yannick Chapdelaine

ARTISTIC INTENTION

This show presents us with five performers who will explore the idea of the “worse” in front of their audience. Through anecdotal stories, demonstrations and flights of fancy, the worse proves to be a powerful philosophical acid that exposes our relation to the world, shining a playful but unforgiving light from which even the performers cannot hide. While being a primarily scenic project, Logic of the Worse coordinates text, movement, music and stage set, searching for a universe capable of not only seducing spectators, but of also making them the privileged accomplices of a truly original world view.

Étienne Lepage creates shattered worlds that are both witty and dark. His most recent project, Logic of the worse, renews his collaborative work with choreographer Frédéric Gravel.

Contact: com@danielleveilledanse.org | (+1) 514 504-8715 | danielleveilledanse.org

This production receives administrative/development support from Daniel Léveillé Danse company as part of its sponsorship project.

LOGIC OF THE WORST

by Étienne Lepage



CREDITS

ARTISTIC TEAM

WRITTEN BY	Étienne Lepage
DIRECTED BY	Étienne Lepage AND Frédéric Gravel
PERFORMERS AT CREATION	Alex Bergeron, Yannick Chapdelaine, Gabrielle Côté, Renaud Lacelle-Bourdon, Marilyn Perreault
SET AND COSTUMES DISEGN	Romain Fabre
LIGHTING DESIGN	Alexandre Pilon-Guay
TECHNICAL DIRECTION	Caroline Nadeau
MUSIC	Robert M. Lepage AND Frédéric Gravel

The piece *Stronger Everyday*, has been written and composed by Stéphane Boucher for *Cirque Eloize Cirkopolis* show.

A production of	Étienne Lepage
Executive producer	Daniel Léveillé Danse
Co-production	Festival TransAmériques + Théâtre de l'Ancre (Charleroi)
Creative residency	Place des Arts
Development	Marie Andrée Gougeon; George Skalkogiannis
With the support of	Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec AND Canada Council for the Arts

This production receives administrative/development support from Daniel Léveillé Danse company (Montreal, Canada) as part of its sponsorship project.

SHORT BIOGRAPHIES

ÉTIENNE LEPAGE | Author, Co-Director, Production manager

Graduated in Dramatic Writing from the National Theatre School of Montréal in 2007, Étienne Lepage is a playwright, screenwriter, translator and transdisciplinary creator. Based in Montreal, his work is shown all over North America and Europe. *Rouge Gueule*, *L'Enclos de l'éléphant*, *Ainsi parlait...* and *Histoires pour faire des cauchemars* are just a few of his many noteworthy creations. Their astonishing richness and diversity have revealed his huge talent.

"Étienne Lepage has made his mark on the dramaturgical landscape. His theater - translated and played overseas - is the voice of a generation that rejects the status quo."

– Luc Boulanger, *La Presse*

FRÉDÉRIK GRAVEL | Co-Director

The choreographer, dancer, musician and lighting designer Frédéric Gravel has been active on the Montreal scene for the past dozen years. He turns the structures of choreography upside down, merging into his work various elements from rock and performance art. His productions *Tout se pète la gueule chérie*, *Gravel Works*, *Usually Beauty Fails*, *This Duet That We've Already Done (so many times)* and the work *Ainsi parlait...* co-created with the author Étienne Lepage, have received great national and international reviews.

"Frédéric Gravel is a pioneer choreographer who wants to break the elitist image of contemporary dance and open it to a wider public. (...) Having it all, he is a rising star on the international stage."

– Fabienne Cabado, *Voir*

LOGIC OF THE WORST

by Étienne Lepage



PRESS QUOTES

"There is everything but the "worse" in this rhythmical and powerfully concise text which explores with relentless radical momentum – with an urgency of understanding – each and every dark side of these characters to better highlight the complexity and brightness of their battered human conditions." - **Le Devoir, Montréal (Canada)**

Étienne Lepage is a demanding not to say uncompromising creator, both in relation to himself and to human beings in general. He looks straight ahead and forces us to do the same. The fragments he delivers, these seemingly independent scenes, are much more inter-related and well balanced than what may appear upon first examination. They question our love affairs, our friendships, our convictions and our belonging to humankind. - **Revue Jeu (Canada)**

"A show both funny and powerful on the issues that we face, the future generations. Étienne Lepage knows how to tackle them and have his actors say and look their parts with scathing authenticity" - **Magazine Inferno (France)**

"*Logique du pire* opens up the possibility of facing our human condition and waking up our consciousness by searching through our flaws. It does so in a theatrical act that does not fear rubbing against deep thought or everyday life." - **La Libre (Belgium)**

"It is through an almost simple-minded pragmatism that Lepage very brutally tackles the absurdity of the human condition; our primal instincts, desires and bruises ... The members of his quintet are all equally talented and such a level of precision is necessary to properly transmit these stories full of hurt ... With constant changes of rhythm, and a beautiful work on lighting, sound and choreographed movements, this show is as modest as it is implacable. And it is also outstandingly funny." – **Le Petit Bulletin (France)**

ON TOUR

WORLD PREMIERE | June 3-5, 2016 | Festival TransAmériques, Montreal (Canada)

November 24 to 26, 2016	Théâtre de l'Ancre (Charleroi, Belgium)
November 15 to 18, 2016	Théâtre La Chapelle (Montreal, Canada)
October 4 to 14, 2017	Théâtre de la Bastille (Paris, France)
April 4 avril, 2018	Théâtre Gilles-Vigneault (Saint-Jérôme, Canada)
November 15, 2018	Maison de la culture Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (Montreal, Canada)
March 12 to 15, 2019	Maison de la Culture de Bourges (Bourges, France)
March 19 to 30, 2019	Célestins, Théâtre de Lyon (Lyon, France)



INTERVIEW by Diane Jean (Festival TransAmériques 2016)

As was the case with *Ainsi parlait...* presented at the FTA in 2013, this piece consists of short texts, with each one featuring a character living in an extreme situation. Why not simply have one character with a story the audience would follow?

Étienne Lepage – For me it is important that it be a group pursuing a shared quest. Had I created only one character, I fear I might have created the impression that it was a personal quest, a personal problem to be resolved. By creating a group, what is at stake becomes an existential human concern. Their presence is not to disturb or disrupt, but marks an inescapable need for truth, for criticism, a sort of mental hygiene that involves a heroic confrontation with the implacable. I think that each of my scripts takes a fairly harsh look at the world. The tone may be comical, touching or brutal, but they all have a sort of philosophical concern about probing the worst, the ugly, the cruel, the dark side. Sometimes the character is clearly seeking that harshness, or sometimes he finds it despite himself during the course of thinking about something or remembering something. It is that attitude of the characters, that need, which is crucial and productive, aggressive and essential, closing in on what is harsh and unpleasant, that motivates the piece. I've always found a lot of light in intellectual rigour. My work as a writer is not to say what I think or what I experience, it is to fabricate valid experiences that I find amusing and demanding on both the emotional and the intellectual level, and in order to achieve that goal I select whatever has the most potential. I find an attitude of harshness to be dramatically rich, capable of bringing to life things of interest to the audience.

This is your second collaboration after *Ainsi parlait...* Each of you has a well-defined style. What points do you have in common?

Frédéric Gravel – We are more or less the same age. We both question the role of our art in society. Our respective works convey our points of view as regards that questioning. And whether alone and together, we create original material. I don't see myself as a director who knows where he is going and takes his collaborators along with him. I create images, movement, music and lighting. I try to understand

how all those elements can work together, how all my collaborators can express themselves and play with the material. Étienne also writes like that, proposing material to play with, to explore. It's rare that he shows up with a script that we don't rework and play with. His ideas and thinking are there in the script, and even if we play around with the text the essence of the script remains. We create tools, stage material. Once that's done, we all work together.

Étienne Lepage – When working in stages with material, I tend to want to quickly create meaning, try to develop a connecting theme, but he stops me from doing so and that's a good thing. When working alone, I want it to be meaningful in short order.

Frédéric Gravel – That's what I appreciate about him! He will apply a layer of interpretation or meaning, whereas I tend to create more images, which would make for a show with a lot of baggage, loaded with various elements but bearing the risk of being unable to grasp the through line, the progression, of establishing a clear, well defined meaning. In my work as a choreographer I'm not trying to say something specific but to show the symptoms of what exists, and to derive poetry from that. In dance, as soon as the meaning of an action becomes more important than the image or movement, I think there is no point creating that image or movement. That's why in general I'm wary of meaning.

Is thinking of the worst a way of responding to the absurd or the disorder of the world?

Étienne Lepage – I like to present to the audience certitudes and convictions that then fall apart, to destroy structures of thought, to provoke in order to break pre-conceived ideas. An accumulation of failures makes us become aware of the unbearable aspects of each scene.

Frédéric Gravel. – We philosophize with a hammer! It's a position that's quite constructive, that suddenly wakes you up like a slap across the face. It allows us to change perspective at once. The challenge then is to strike a balance between humour, ideas and darkness.

MORE INTERVIEWS...

- **Radio CKUT, programme Upstage | Montreal | November 2016** | interview with Étienne Lepage <https://soundcloud.com/la-chapelle-2/entrevue-etienne-lepage-logique-du-pire-ckut-upstage>
- **Journal de Montreal | May 2016:** <http://www.journaldemontreal.com/2016/05/28/regard-dur-et-humour-acide>
- **Voir | Montreal | May 2016:** <https://voir.ca/scene/2016/05/24/frederick-gravel-l-anti-heros-de-la-danse/>

WORKS LISTING

ÉTIENNE LEPAGE

Logique du pire (Logic of the Worst)	2016
Le cœur en hiver	2015
(Very) Gently Crumbling	2015
Ainsi parlait... (Thus Spoke...)	2013
Histoires pour faire des cauchemars	2012
Robin et Marion	2012
L'enclos de l'éléphant	2011-2013
KICK	2010
Éclats et autres libertés	2010
Rouge gueule	2009
Acné japonaise	2008
Cabaret au bazar	2007-2009

FRÉDÉRIK GRAVEL

Fear and Greed	2019
Some Hope for the Bastards	2017
Logique du pire (Logic of the Worst)	2016
This Duet That We've Already Done (so many times)	2015
Ainsi parlait...	2013
Usually Beauty Fails	2012
Tout se pète la gueule, chérie	2010
Gravel Works	2008



LOGIC OF THE WORST

by Étienne Lepage



LOGIC OF THE WORST

by Étienne Lepage //in collaboration with Frédérick Gravel

PRESS REVIEW
| Selection |

Daniel Léveillé Danse

Marie-Andrée Gougeon, General Manager

2025, rue Parthenais, suite 302, Montréal (Qc), H2K 3T2

Phone: (+1) 514 504-8712 | Mobile: (+1) 514 567-7840 | email: dq@danielleveilledanse.org

www.danielleveilledanse.org

LE DEVOIR

LIBRE DE PENSER

Cruelty to (thinking) Animals

Le Devoir - June 4, 2016

Fabien Deglise

It is a classic strategy: you claim failure, loudly anticipate mediocrity, defeat, the resulting fiasco... but then stand up even taller in the end, basking in the glow of a luminous victory that had been certain since the very start.

When you were in school, there was perhaps a Nathalie or an Alexander who tried to pull this trick on you during the exam period. But in theatre, at Montreal's Festival TransAmériques, it is the duo formed by Étienne Lepage and Frédérick Gravel that is cunningly taking this course by announcing loud and clear their intention to explore the Logic of the Worse (*Logique du pire*) only to re-emerge with a formidably hard-hitting object.

The idea takes root at a time when our exposition to cruelty, malaise and everyday violence is steadily expanding. Logic of the Worse, supported by a cast in perfect symbiosis with their object, harnesses this condition in a series of short scenes exploring the toughness of daily life, endlessly aiming for the worse, the bad, the ugly.

A girl smashes the skull of a worker when opening her apartment door, a guy is stuck in a formal event with dog mess incrusting the sole of his shoes, another person is confronted about his casualness and simplicity to then be called "asocial", an obsessive relation to sex does not finish well... Each of these life fragments, as we are told in the introduction, can be taken separately, but they can also add up to form a whole that reaches beyond itself. And far from being worse, it is effectively true!

There is everything but the worse in this pulsating and powerfully concise text that explores with an implacable radicality, with an urgency in the desire of understanding, every dark side of these human lives to better highlight their battered complexity and luminosity. Nothing worse either in this organic and pared down stage direction that lets every voice tell its story, on its own or in duos. And still no trace of the worse in the acting that sends its emotional range into precisely dark spaces, always guided by this autopsy of a certain form of lucidity that pretends to be despair.

In the end, this Logic of the Worse works out quite well indeed!

Logic of the worse | Review

Mon(theatre).qc.ca - June 4, 2016

Daphné Bathalon

Étienne Lepage is known for his uncompromising and direct writing. And Frédérick Gravel's is known for his work that puts the emphasis on image rather than conventional "making-sense". At the 2013 Festival TranAmériques (FTA), they jointly created the intriguing and cynical *Ainsi parlait...* in which different characters successively stand behind the microphone to confess, assert themselves and provoke. With *Logic of the worse* (*Logique du pire*), the two creators embark on a similar path. With more confidence and more bite, they now set their gaze away from the creative process upon which their first collaboration was based, to present a more mature work.

The five performers leisurely inhabit a large and very bright stage that has been freed from its wings. Almost dead center is a sharp green sofa; all around there are spotlights that seem to emerge from the floor. And there is a console table at which the performers will successively take turns. And finally, obviously, there are the microphones that change hands.

The show's title comes from a philosophical essay by Clément Rosset, but its content is considerably removed from the essay (with the exception of a passage about chance and the notion of an anti-ecstasy). It is built around the different characters and their monologues and conversations that shift from addressing the audience to interrogating their kin. From the start, an actor presents the show as being a series of stories and testimonies that can be understood separately, but that taken together, will exceed the global effect to tend towards a logic... of the worse. During an hour that goes by very fast, this is what they will attempt to do with corrosive humour and stunning detachment.

One character rejects his doctor's advice to stop drinking because, nowadays, dying has stopped being painful. Another is questioned about his life habits by an incredulous host and answers he does not care what the others think, and that there is no good reason to make any efforts because... what would be the point? Still another character masturbates until his penis becomes a mass of bloody flesh (which creates rather amusing reactions of disgust amongst audience members), barely registering the transition from pleasure to pain. And they parade successively, displaying this same apparent indifference towards themselves and others. There is even a woman who when opening the door to her apartment, accidentally and brutally crushes the skull of a worker who had been standing behind it (as hilariously demonstrated by the excellent Marilyn Perreault), and then gets rid of the corpse as if it were an old carpet.

Lepage's text, supported by the very natural and quasi-minimalistic movements of Gravel and Lepage's stage direction, is raw without being vulgar, cynical without being depressing (far from it!), and really funny even if these five thirtysomethings characters make cruel observations and are jaded with everything. They are neither good friends, nor good partners, nor good sons, nor good human beings, nor good citizens. They insult, brutalize, destruct and do not smell very good. They are cruel but not unkind, for only cruelty can find war during times of peace, but also peace during wartime. They are on a collective quest in search of the worse in themselves, in each other and in society. Very much at ease on stage, the five actors materialize the loss of bearings and the associated suffering, while maintaining a troubling mask of indifference. The actors do not deliver the text; the actors themselves are the content.

The stories of these disenchanting and passionless "bad humans" – who consider cruelty with a detachment that should make us shudder but that is fascinating and makes us laugh – are irrepressibly attractive. *Logic of the Worse* is a lucid quest led by a duo of creators who are clearly able to get the best out of the worse.