

WONDERLAND



photography by emma mcintyre

Wonderland Synopsis



Welcome to the theatre. Specifically, welcome to Eff's theatre. Wonderland. Come in.

Bouffon creature Eff has invited you here to forge a true connection. Here there is no fourth wall. He sees you and sees you looking back at him. Eff is interested in getting to know you.

Consider yourself warned. No matter how open-minded you believe yourself to be, **Adam Lazarus'** legless, foul-mouthed creation Eff is here to mock your hypocrisies off as he moves through the stages of a conventional relationship, romancing and wooing you, as only God's Unchosen can.

Bouffon is a specialized form of clowning with roots going back to the Middle Ages. It is blasphemous, outrageous, offensive, rude, crude and brutish, and the repellent Eff is all this and more – including alarmingly sweet, charming and loveable. If you can take it, this show is guaranteed to make you laugh and squirm.

Uh oh. Don't look now. I think he likes you.

The History of Eff



Adam Lazarus created/discovered Eff in bouffon workshop taught by Master Teacher Philippe Gaulier in 2002. After the initial discovery and apprenticeship under Gaulier, Lazarus created a one person play for Eff, titled *Fable*. In it, Eff retold the Genesis Garden of Eden myth from his perspective as a bouffon outsider. It was a critical success that played coast to coast across Canada. After a 2 year national run, *Fable* was put to rest while Lazarus focused on other performance, directing and teaching opportunities.

But Eff kept knocking.

Lazarus continued to develop and test new material in Toronto's vibrant cabaret scene, and a new story began to emerge for Eff – *Wonderland*.

In *Wonderland*, Eff asks the audience to step through the looking glass and peer into a fun-house mirror. He is looking for love and understanding in the theatre as he muses on the politics of proper etiquette, sex, beauty and baking. With Genesis out of the way, Eff is on to bigger topics: relationships, cookie recipes, the Beatles, and this city we call *Wonderland*.

Wonderland is a fun place, but it can also be a scary, frightening and strange place. Just ask Alice.

A few words with Adam



Adam, what is the appeal of playing such a Monster?

It's a two part answer:

- 1) In Eff, I find the most play. As I sit in his wheelchair and stare out at an audience, I am able to unabashedly say what I want to say about politics, humanity, art and most importantly, about my own place in the world. I feel huge inside the restricted body I have constructed for myself. I have nothing to lose, so I gamble high. I offend for the sake of social justice. I call out hypocrisies and insecurities, double standards and common fears. I judge them or laugh at them, depending on the vice. I may even love them, depending on the night.
- 2) Audiences love Eff. They are charmed by him, moved by him, excited by him, scared of him, attracted to him, engaged with him. And this is the main point: audiences are very engaged. Bouffon is not a pretty form and it is far from conventional. In it, I ask an audience to really spend an hour in a room with me. I have direct address. When forced to spend that hour with a monster, we will innately run the gamut of emotions: we judge, we're grossed out, we distance ourselves, and then, as we are forced to really look at that which we fear, we develop compassion. People fear Eff, and grow to understand his perspective and sometimes even love him.

– Adam Lazarus

The Creative Team

Adam Lazarus: Performer/Playwright

Adam Lazarus is a graduate and former apprentice of Master Teacher Philippe Gaulier's school in Paris, France. He is a sessional instructor at The National Theatre School of Canada and the University of Toronto. He is a regular facilitator of workshops including recent consultations for Soulepper, The Young Centre, Theatre Passe Muraille, Buddies in Bad Times, DanceMakers, CanStage, Tapestry New Opera Works, and Volcano Theatre. Notable directing credits include Rachelle Elie's *Joe: The Perfect Man* (Best of London Fringe Award); Jesse Buck's *Bubkus* (current Cirque De Soleil performer); Melissa D'Agostino's *Lupe: Undone* (Canadian Comedy Award Nominee), Precious Chong's *Zdenka Now!*, and Misha Shulman's *Apricots*. He sits on the board of Crow's Theatre and is a co-founder and artistic-producer of the Toronto Festival of Clowns.

As an actor, recent notable credits include *Le Fain de Partie* at the Waves festival as Part of Luminato (Young Centre); Crow's Theatre/Mammalian Diving Reflex production of Darren O'Donnell's *[boxhead]* at Buddies in Bad Times Theatre; a collaboration with Alan Dilworth for Luminato, *Le Bibliotheque du Spectacles* (Young Centre); Dora winning sensation *Appetite* (Volcano/Theatre Passe Muraille/Exchange Rate Collective).

Melissa D'Agostino: Director/Co-creator

Melissa D'Agostino is a Toronto-based interdisciplinary artist best known for her live performances as the character Lupe in the hit shows *Lupe: Undone* (Best of Toronto Fringe, Critic's Pick, Canadian Comedy Award Nomination), *A Very Lupe X-Mas*, and *Lupe's Next Top Lupe*. Past productions include: *Apricots* (Quiptake), *Mambo Italiano* (Bellweather Theatre), *Vox Animae* (Young Centre), *The Maddest Kind of Love* (Dreamers Take Your Mark Productions), *Downtown* (The Question Company), *Inmana* (tiny bird theatre), and *In Translation* (Nightwood Theatre). She can be heard in The Novena Sisters for CBC Radio and seen in the Independent film *Calogero* (Mexican Monster Productions). Melissa is a regular performer at The Lunacy Cabaret and The Carnegie Hall Show and her work has been featured in the Waves Festival for Luminato and the Festival of Ideas and Creation (Canadian Stage). Melissa has worked as an instructor/mentor for the AMY Project, the Paprika Festival, Children's Peace Theatre, Canadian Stage, Theatre Revolve, and the Royal Conservatory of Music. She is also currently a television story editor for Buck Productions. Melissa is a graduate of the BFA Acting program at the University of Windsor.

Ann-Marie Kerr – Senior Directing Consultant

Ann-Marie is an award winning director, performer and instructor who resides in Halifax, NS. She is currently associate directing *Five Easy Steps to the End of the World* for Zuppa Theatre Company. She directed 2b theatre company's *Invisible Atom* which won a Herald Angel Award and garnered rave reviews at the 2010 Edinburgh Festival Fringe and has toured to Cork Ireland, NYC's Under the Radar Festival at the Public Theatre, Neptune Theatre, the PuSh Festival in Vancouver, Theatre Passe Muraille and Summerworks in Toronto, and the Belfry Theatre in Victoria. She performed in 2b theatre company's *Homage* that toured to the Magnetic North Theatre Company and the Luminato Festival. Also, she directed *A Rescue Demonstration* for ARD Projects and *The Comedy of Errors* at Dalhousie University Theatre in Halifax. She took part in Nightwood Theatre's Director's Summit where she was one of 10 Canadian directors selected to stage Margaret Atwood's *The Penelopiad*. She directed Daniel MacIvor's new play *Confession* for Mulgrave Road Theatre Company. With her theatre company This is a bird, she co-created and performed *The Long Valley-Stories by Steinbeck* at Soulepper Theatre Company. With Theatre Smith Gilmour she co-created/performed in *Dr. Chekhov's Ward 6* and *Chekhov Longs...In the Ravine*. As an instructor, she has taught at National Theatre

School, Souleppper Theatre Company's Academy and Youth Mentorship Program, Dalhousie University, University of Toronto, National Arts Centre and George Brown College. She is the former Artistic Associate of the Magnetic North Theatre Festival and is a graduate of Ecole internationale de théâtre Jacques Lecoq in Paris and York University.

Michelle Ramsay: Lighting Designer

Michelle Ramsay is a Lighting Designer based on Toronto, Ontario. Recent lighting design credits include: *Night* (Human Cargo/NAC), *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe* (Western Canada Theatre/NAC), *Death of a Chief* (Native Earth Performing Arts/NAC), *A Very Polite Genocide*, *Annie Mae's Movement* and *The Unnatural and Accidental Women* with NEPA; *My Mother's Lesbian Jewish Wiccan Wedding* with Mirvish Productions; *Plan B* with the GCTC; *April 14, 1912* and *The Stronger* with Theatre Rusticle; *Nearly Lear* with Magpye Theatre; *lady in the red dress* and *Banana Boys* with fu-Gen. She has been nominated for six Dora Mavor Moore Awards and has received three. In 2008 she received the Pauline McGibbon Award for a designer. Upcoming productions include *Birnam Wood* with Theatre Rusticle and *Giivedin* with NEPA.

Verne Good: Sound Designer

Verne Good Verne is a Toronto-based sound designer and poet. Recent designs include *Or, 9 Parts of Desire*, and *The Red Queen Effect* for Seventh Stage Productions; *Section 98* for Praxis Theatre, *Communion* for Tarragon Theatre, *Buried* and *In Darfur* for Theatre Awakening, and *The Epic of Gilgamesh* for Groundwater Productions. Verne has just completed a stint as the Assistant Sound Designer for the Stratford Shakespeare Festival, working on *Kiss Me Kate*, *As You Like It*, and *The Tempest*.

Bianca Laudadio: Costume Designer

Bianca Laudadio is an artist/designer and costumer. She has made costumes for several Mirvish productions including *Dirty Dancing*, *The Sound of Music*, and most recently, *Rock of Ages*. Bianca was an assistant set and costume designer on *Romeo and Juliet*(2008), and *A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum*(2009) at the Stratford Shakespeare Festival. She is currently working on an illustration portfolio.

Emma McIntyre: Photography

Emma McIntyre is a Toronto based freelance photographer. Her work has appeared in Frankie Magazine, Corker, Inside Entertainment, Biz Bash, Link, Fazer, Blog TO, and the Photographer's Forum Annual 'Best Of Photography.' Her photographs were selected for the SNAP benefit photo competition in 2008 and 2010. Emma has worked as a publicity and set photographer for the Viva Network's *Rescue Mediums*, Discovery Channel's *Curious and Unusual Deaths*, the Rogers Network's *The Film Student*, and the Alliance Atlantis documentary *Don't You Forget About Me*. www.emmamcintyre.com

Press for Adam Lazarus



Wonderland, QuipTake Theatre, 2010 — solo show written and performed by Adam Lazarus

- SummerWorks Spotlight Award for Outstanding Performance
- Toronto Star's Works Worth Watching
- NOW Magazine's Artist to Watch

Posing interesting social questions, Wonderland is strategic, soulful and expertly engineered.

Jordan Bimm – NOW Magazine

Adam pushes audiences to let go of the polite gentility that dominates our theatre culture. He leads us to speak our minds fearlessly, to expose our darker impulses and to honour our ugliness. I believe that these impulses form the basis of great theatre.

Brendan Healy – Artistic Director, Buddies in Bad Times Theatre

Thank you for your show - man that's good clownin!

Ed Roy – Award winning playwright and director

This was one of the most spectacular shows I have ever seen. Congratulations! It was a stroke of genius!

Sandra Battaglini, Actor and Canadian Comedy Award Winner

Squirmy comedy at its finest!

Steven Berketo – Torontostage.com

Stunning work in every way. Thank you.

Liza Balkan – Playwright and Actor

Appetite, Volcano Theatre/Exchange Rate Collective, 2009 — dora award winning play co-created and performed by Adam Lazarus and company.

A very physical performer

Susan Walker – The Toronto Star

The cast heroically embraces shock value, and no one is afraid to get messy, sexy or anything in between.

Jordan Bimm – NOW Magazine

[boxhead], Mammalian Diving Reflex/Crow's Theatre, 2008 — *written by Darren O'Donnell, directed by Chris Abraham*

A heroic performance
Kathleen Oliver – The Straight, BC

A staggering feat
Robert Cushman – The National Post

Fable, QuipTake Theatre, 2004-06 — *solo-show written and performed by Adam Lazarus*

Bold, bawdy, bad-guy theatre – Fable is the equivalent of a brainy punk-rock concert or an inspired Charles Bukowski rant.
Adrian Chamberlain – Victoria Times Columnist, Victoria, BC

Funny and always, in Adam Lazarus' performance, clearly in focus as he toys with and insults viewers in true bouffon fashion.
Jon Kaplan – NOW Magazine

General

Adam is the Bouffon King.
Glenn Sumi – NOW Magazine

Adam is terrifyingly bilarious, with an astute physical awareness and an inspired eye.
Ann-Marie Kerr – Director, performer and educator

Adam's unique brand of Canadian Bouffon is a gift to a city like Toronto which so deeply needs the dark roots exposed beneath its veneer of politesse. In Adam's character Eff we experience this social acupuncture in spades. He seduces us with pity and humour, only to reveal a darkness that makes our masks fall- a terror for a Toronto audience. And only after we have sufficiently simmered in our socially awkward juices and our own darkness, does Adam shed a relieving light on Eff's, and in turn our own, humanity.

Alan Dilworth – Award Winning Toronto Theatre Director

Photo CD List



Wonderland – Eff #1
Adam Lazarus as Eff
Photo by Emma McIntyre



Wonderland – Eff #2
Adam Lazarus as Eff
Photo by Emma McIntyre



Wonderland – Eff #3
Adam Lazarus as Eff
Photo by Emma McIntyre



Wonderland – Eff #4
Adam Lazarus as Eff
Photo by Emma McIntyre



Adam Lazarus Headshot



Melissa D'Agostino Headshot