

REVIEWS

Kid Koala's graphic novel comes to life with puppets

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Just when you thought you'd seen it all, Le Diamant proposed a new genre with *Nufonia Must Fall*: a live projected puppet show described as equal parts cinema, theatre and concert.

The concept comes from an unlikely source, a scratch disc jockey called Kid Koala, turned film composer, theatre producer and visual artist, who has been performing for three decades. In *Nufonia Must Fall: A Making of a Stage Production*, Kid Koala said the idea sprang from the wordless graphic novel with the same name he created in the early 2000s, which was inspired by the sweet memory of watching Charlie Chaplin as a kid with three generations of family members gathered around the television.

Throughout the 75-minute show, the puppets were manipulated by a team of 15 people, including puppeteers, musi-

cians, cinematographers and technicians. The DJ sat centre stage surrounded by turntables and instruments, delivering a soundtrack to the film – which was mostly wordless, except for the mean boss character who yelled a lot in Franglais. Otherwise, the main characters – a lonely, shy robot and Malorie, the brilliant woman he loves – communicate their emotions through live music.

Local references were used, for example an invitation to dinner on Grande Allée or an outing to see *Les Boys* at the movies. L'ANTI Bar & Spectacles was written on the side of a building in the set for the Quebec City audience.

The QCT spotted circus artist and musician Frédéric Lebrasseur of Machine de Cirque in the audience and asked for his impressions. As part of the group Les Batinses, he remembers playing with the well-known DJ 20 years ago in places like Prague, where he drew a crowd. Lebrasseur also attended Kid Koala's recent

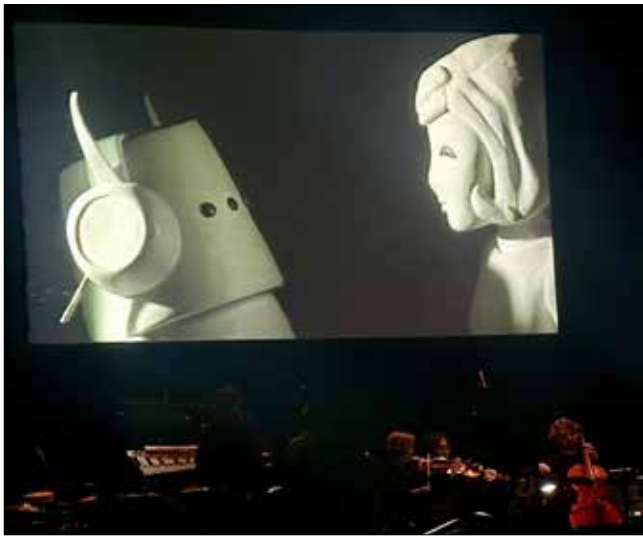


Photo by Danielle Burns

The live cinematic puppet show *Nufonia Must Fall* was filmed as the Afiara String Quartet and DJ Kid Koala provided the soundtrack.

production, *The Storyville Mosquito*, which he enjoyed, but he liked *Nufonia Must Fall* even more. "In the beginning, I was scared, because they didn't stay on one set very long before going elsewhere. I was thinking 'Oh, they're making it difficult.'" But in the end, "the rhythm was perfect," said Lebrasseur. "The mix and balance of all these musicians [a

live string quartet, low bass frequencies and keyboard by Kid Koala and electronic sounds] sounded very rich, evoking a film score by a symphony orchestra, but with a smaller budget."

Penelope Daignault was hoping to dance when she heard Kid Koala's name, which she knew from some of her playlists. Fortunately, she



Photo by Danielle Burns

The crew members of *Nufonia Must Fall* take a bow at Le Diamant on Dec 5, Kid Koala's (centre with hat) birthday.

checked reviews before the show and left her dancing shoes at home. Her feelings about the show were mixed. "I really admired the creative aspects and had never seen such a mix of these different arts before. It's certainly a unique show." However, she said she felt she was too far away from the stage. She presumed "it must have been better to be closer to the stage to see the multiple manipulations of the puppets and the film set

elements that were going on. As for the projected movie, I thought it was way too long and quite boring, frankly, so it pretty much upstaged most of the positive elements of my experience."

Kid Koala, who lives in Montreal, was celebrating his birthday Dec. 5 at Le Diamant and was happy to do this show with his friends. "It never feels like work with this crew; they're amazing artists. It's like a dream for me."

REVIEWS 'It's beginning to sound a lot like Christmas!'

Violons du Roy and Chapelle de Québec present a magnificent *Messiah*

Photo by Shirley Nadeau

Les Violons du Roy and La Chapelle de Québec, with soloists William Thomas, Andrew Haji, Iestyn Davies and Liv Redpath, under the baton of founding director Bernard Labadie, presented an uplifting rendition of George Frideric Handel's beloved and magnificent *Messiah* at the Palais Montcalm on Dec. 12. "Hallelujah" for Handel!

Club Musical de Québec and Tallis Scholars sweetly rejoice *In dulci jubilo*

Photo by Shirley Nadeau

Two nights later, on Dec. 14, the Club Musical de Québec invited the renowned, pitch-perfect British *a capella* vocal ensemble, The Tallis Scholars, directed by Peter Phillips (far right above), to the same stage at the Palais Montcalm. They held the audience spellbound with a program of "sweetly rejoicing" (*In dulci jubilo*) sacred vocal music of the Renaissance with everything from 12th-century plain-chant by Hildegard Von Bingen to 15th- and 16th-century compositions by Hieronymus Praetorius, Jacob Obrecht, Roland De Lassus and Tomas Luis De Victoria, to a very modern *Magnificat* by Estonian composer Arvo Pärt (1935-). The 10 talented singers blend their voices with amazingly supple clarity and tone, but this reviewer felt their stiff stage presence lacked personal contact with the audience.

OSQ celebrates the festive season with *Noël en Choeur*

Photo by Shirley Nadeau

On Dec. 13 and 14, the musicians and choristers of the Orchestre symphonique de Québec and mezzo-soprano Marie-André Mathieu, directed by Quebec conductor Roseline Blain, presented *Noël en Choeur*, an invitation to celebrate the festive season with the grand classics of Christmas, such as Gustave Holst's "On Christmas Day," Karl Jenkins' "Gloria in excelsis Deo," Leroy Anderson's cheery "Christmas Festival," and traditional English carols such as "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing," "Joy to the World," "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas," and of course, the "Hallelujah" chorus from Handel's *Messiah*. Mathieu sang a scintillating rendition of Adolphe Adam's "Minuit, Chrétiens!" to which members of the audience were invited to sing along (words projected above the orchestra). The program ended with another singalong as everyone sang "On vous souhaite un joyeux Noël et une bonne année" ("We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!")