

# Burletta

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=67QDd9A8ZM>

## **Burletta**, reviewd by *Don Lewis*

Burletta is an Italian word which means a short, comic opera. This show, which is aimed squarely at young people, is exactly that. It is nearly an hour of attention holding fun.

The Theatre Aubergine (eggplant in English), was created in 1974 by Paul Vachon, its current Artistic Director, Josette Déchène and Lina Vachon. It has since produced over 50 shows for young and family audiences that have toured widely. The company works towards a fusion of music, circus arts, theatre and emotion while promoting the individual strengths of the artists.

I saw the show on one of its stops in Montreal to play to school children. For many of these youngsters, it is their first exposure to sitting in a real theatre for a live show. The show's set is simple, Some canvas draped at the back of the stage, invoking the image of a tent. A pail of flowers provides wonders, because each flower has a handle (not unlike a green club) and the troupe of five actors proceed to juggle them in a shared pattern.

The Actors are: Wanderson Damaceno, Dominique Grenier, Joannie Hébert, Véronique Provencher, and Karina Werneck-Assis. Each has a specific skill, and contributes to the group dynamic as well. They play musical instruments as varied as a miniature accordion to



<http://www.aubergine.qc.ca>

a saw blade played with a bow. The result is surprisingly musical and delights a child's sense of the absurd.

There is a lot of juggling woven throughout the show. Véronique is a skilled juggler. In addition to the group flower club juggling, she also manipulates up to three diabolos with much drama and does some contact juggling. Some kids seemed to think the contact sphere was alive!

Wanderson did a great job with a traditional plate spinning act. He had the kids totally revved up as they warned him about every plate that was about to drop.

I know that the IJA members are interested in the juggling, and it was good, in fact very good for this level of audience. But the rest of the cast was superb as well.

Dominique's persona of a shy clown with a passion for jokes pulled the audience into her universe within seconds. Karina has a totally mischievous approach to physical clowning. And Joannie danced and turned herself into a full sized miniature puppet.

The collective energy level of the show is sustained for the full length of the nearly hour long show. The dialog is French, but you could sit any child down in front of this show and they would have a great time. Perhaps the show will tour near you sometime. If it does, take your inner child to see it.

