

PLAYING CARDS: SPADES



Text

**Sylvio Arriola, Carole Faisant, Nuria Garcia, Tony Guilfoyle,
Martin Haberstroh, Robert Lepage, Sophie Martin, Roberto Mori**

Direction

Robert Lepage

Playing Cards

Regular deck: 52 cards. 4 colours. 4 royal families. 2 jokers.

Tarot deck: 78 cards. 4 symbols. 4 royal families. 21 arcana or trump cards. 1 joker.

Card games consist of a series of rules, symbols, signs, mathematical or numerological structures, mythologies, and, above all, characters. By combining and ordering them, you can create as many stories as there are possible arrangements. At least that's the intuition guiding Robert Lepage and his collaborators on the project called ***Playing Cards***. With such a range of possibilities, the creators imposed the structure of a deck of cards on the project. It will consist of four parts: ***SPADES***, ***HEARTS***, ***DIAMONDS***, and ***CLUBS***, each exploring a universe inspired by the asset the suit represents.

Research into the origin of cards invariably leads back to the Arab world. The tetralogy's four parts, each independent and yet interrelated with the others, will make up a cosmos dealing with our past, present and future relationships, our exchanges, and sometimes too, our culture shocks when encountering the Arab way of life.

Playing Cards: SPADES

The first part, ***SPADES***, explores the theme of war. The action juxtaposes two desert cities, at the moment in history when the United States invades Iraq. On one side is Las Vegas, a caricature of the Western World's values, and on the other, Bagdad, bombed by President Bush in the name of promoting democracy.

This Tower of Babel, the gambling capital, brings together characters of different origins and affinities. During a weekend on the Strip, they will reveal the city's multifaceted identity: the kingdom of showbiz and bling, a lieu of passage, a multicultural crossroads, a place where anything goes, a meeting point between wealth (sometimes extreme) and poverty.

Beyond luck, chance and excess, Las Vegas is also unveiled as an empire of illusions, escape and vertigo. These characters – like the gambling city that chooses to keep on playing even though the country is at war – will fight private battles with their demons here, in hopes of resolving their own contradictions.

How will the game turn out: decay or redemption? All bets are on.



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Actors

SYLVIO ARRIOLA

Sylvio Arriola has played in over thirty theatrical productions in Quebec City and in Montreal. His specialty is contemporary theatrical creations. He has collaborated with many stage directors and authors, such as Wajdi Mouawad, Frédéric Dubois, Daniel Danis, Hanna Abdel Nour and Christian Lapointe, with whom he created the play CHS, presented within the 2009 Festival d'Avignon's official programming.

NURIA GARCIA

Nuria graduated from the Escuela Superior de Arte Dramático de Valencia (1998). She also trained with artists from the Moscow Art Theatre School (MXAT), the Odin Teatret and the Roy Hart Theatre, among others. She has worked with numerous Valencian theatre companies and appeared in local TV series. This is her third collaboration with Robert Lepage after *La Celestina* and *Lipsynch*.

TONY GUILFOYLE

Tony Guilfoyle trained at Drama Centre, London. For the Royal Shakespeare Company, he played the lead character in *Outskirts* by Hanif Kureishi, who won the George Devine Award for this play. Recent theatre work includes *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *Re-Orientations* and *The Living Unknown Soldier*. *Playing Cards 1: SPADES* is Guilfoyle's fourth collaboration with Robert Lepage after *The Geometry of Miracles*, *The Dragon's Trilogy* and *Kindertotenlieder*. Other work includes the award winning TV comedy series *Father Ted* and the leading role in *The Return* for Film on Four. In 2010, he directed *Ingerland* for the Royal Opera House.

MARTIN HABERSTROH

Born 1977 in Saarbrücken, Germany, he was strongly influenced by his experience abroad while on exchange in Spain in 1994. His interest for intercultural phenomena was initiated there. Afterwards he studied intercultural communication, Spanish philology and contemporary German literature, as well as Catalan language and culture. In 2002 he co-founded the Spanish-speaking theatre group *Los Mutantes*, which he directed until 2008, the same year he started his own company *arteatro*, aiming to produce and create intercultural theatre projects.

SOPHIE MARTIN

A graduate of the Conservatory of Dramatic Arts of Quebec, Sophie Martin is a versatile artist. In addition to her many experiences as a theater actress (directed by Robert Lepage, Martin Genest, Frédéric Dubois and Aramburo Digo, among others), she also lends her voice to many projects. She participates in television series as well as film productions. Born in Colombia, where she lived for 13 years with her Swiss-Roman parents, her fluency in Spanish and French enables her to play in both languages as well as do translation for the theatre, television and poetry.

ROBERTO MORI

Roberto Mori was born in the Asturias, Spain, where he studied at the Conservatory of Dramatic Art. It is in Madrid that he developed his stage career at the Teatro de La Abadía, the Centro Dramático Nacional and several other theater companies. He combines his theatrical career with television series. After *La Celestina*, *Playing Cards 1: SPADES* is his second collaboration with Robert Lepage.

The Designers

PHILIPPE BACHMAN

Composer

Philippe Bachman is a musician and artistic director. He studied music at the Conservatoire national supérieur de musique de Paris and musicology at the Sorbonne. For the stage and the theater, he notably worked with Yamina Achemi and Anouch Paré before composing for Canadian director Robert Lepage. In 2004, he became the director of La Comète – Scène nationale de Châlons-en-Champagne. In 2008, he created the 360° Network, uniting 15 circular venues for the performing arts in 10 European countries and Canada. He is also in charge of the prefiguration of the future Scène nationale de Corse.

PEDER BJURMAN

Dramaturg

Peder Bjurman (born 1966), director and scriptwriter, works in the field of visual theatre with his company The Missing Link based in Stockholm, Sweden. His first collaboration with Robert Lepage was in 1994 during *A Dreamplay* at the Royal Dramatic Theatre in Stockholm. Bjurman also provided the original idea for *The Far Side of the Moon*, co-wrote *The Andersen Project*, and currently works as dramaturg for *the Playing Cards* project.

JEAN-SÉBASTIEN CÔTÉ

Sound Designer

Musician and sound designer Jean-Sébastien Côté wrote musical scores for several Québec City theatre and dance productions before joining Ex Machina on *The Far Side of the Moon*, in 1999. Since then, he has worked regularly on the company's projects, including *The Andersen Project*, *La Celestina*, *The Dragons' Trilogy*, *1984*, *The Blue Dragon* and *Eonnagata*. In between projects with Ex Machina, he has worked with various renowned Canadian directors such as Daniel Brooks, Wajdi Mouawad and François Girard.

SÉBASTIEN DIONNE

Costume Designer

Straight out of the Conservatoire d'art dramatique de Québec in 2007, Sébastien Dionne was asked to create several different costume designs for major projects and for several different Québec City and Montréal theaters. In 2011, he received the Award for Excellence in Arts and Culture for his design of *La Locandiera* by Goldoni at the Théâtre de la Bordée. *Playing Cards: SPADES* is his first formal collaboration with Robert Lepage.

LOUIS-XAVIER GAGNON LEBRUN

Lighting Designer

Lighting designer for architectural and art projects, Louis-Xavier has worked on several theater productions in Quebec and Europe. Since 2005 he has collaborated many times with Robert Lepage, notably on *The Andersen Project*, *Eonnagata*, *The Blue Dragon* and *The Tempest*. Co-founder of Atomic3, he is developing new projects for interactive installations that integrate light, video and new media.

JEAN HAZEL

Set Designer

A 1985 graduate of Conservatoire d'art dramatique de Québec in set design, Jean Hazel contributed to designing sets and lighting for close to one hundred productions. Nominated five times for the Gala des Masques of Académie québécoise du théâtre, he won the award twice. He was also honoured three times with the Prix d'excellence des arts et de la culture de Québec. In addition to collaborating with Robert Lepage on *Lipsynch*, he recently worked with Franco Dragone and Gill Champagne.

DAVID LECLERC

Video Designer

David Leclerc is a freelance graphic designer working in Web design and video production. His aptitudes in visual communication, creativity and problem solving have brought him to work on different theatrical productions at Ex Machina, including *The Busker's Opera*, *The Andersen Project*, *Lipsynch*, *The Blue Dragon*, *La Tempête* (in Wendake), *Playing Cards: SPADES* and the opera *The Tempest*. His works and photos have been used in a multitude of theatrical and corporate productions.

VIRGINIE LECLERC

Props Designer

After obtaining a BA in theater and film at Laval University in 2001, Virginie Leclerc continued her studies in set design at the Conservatory of Dramatic Art of Quebec (2004). Her costume design of *Cyrano de Bergerac* (2008) is greeted by a nomination for the award Fonds du Théâtre du Vieux-Québec. Eventually it is for her costume design of *L'asile de la pureté* (2009), that the Conseil de la culture awards her this prize. For Ex Machina, she worked on *La Celestina* (2004) as costumes and props manager and designed the props for *Lipsynch* and *La Tempête* (in Wendake).



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Robert Lepage Co-author and Director



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Versatile in every form of theatre craft, Robert Lepage is equally talented as a director, playwright, actor and film director. His creative and original approach to theatre has won him international acclaim and shaken the dogma of classical stage direction to its foundations, especially through his use of new technologies.

He graduated from the Conservatoire d'art dramatique de Québec and studied in Paris in 1978. In 1984, his play *Circulations* toured Canada. Followed *The Dragons' Trilogy* (1985), *Vinci* (1986), *Polygraph* (1987) and *Tectonic Plates* (1988).

From 1989 to 1993 he was Artistic Director of the Théâtre français at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa. Meanwhile pursuing his own creative projects, he directed *Needles and Opium* (1991), *Coriolanus*, *Macbeth*, and *The Tempest* (1992). With *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 1992 he became the first North American to direct a Shakespeare play at the Royal National Theatre in London.

In 1994, he founded Ex Machina, then wrote and directed his first feature film, *Le Confessionnal*. Followed *Polygraph* (1996), *Nô* (1997), *Possible Worlds* (2000), and *The Far Side of the Moon* (2003). In 2013, he codirects *Triptych* with Pedro Pires, an adaptation of the play *Lipsynch*.

With Ex Machina, he creates for the stage *The Seven Streams of the River Ota* (1994), *Geometry of Miracles* (1998), *The Far Side of The Moon* (2000), a new version of *The Dragons' Trilogy* (2003), *The Andersen Project* (2005), *Lipsynch* (2007), *The Blue Dragon* (2008) and *Eonnagata* (2009).

Current productions include *Playing Cards* (2012) (*SPADES, HEARTS, DIAMONDS*, and *CLUBS*, each exploring a universe inspired by the asset the suit represents), a new staging of *Needles and Opium* (2013), and *887*, a solo performance by Robert Lepage (2015).

Robert Lepage directed Peter Gabriel's *Secret World Tour* (1993) and *Growing Up Tour* (2002), designed and directed Cirque du Soleil shows: *KÀ* (2005) and *TOTEM* (2010). For Quebec City's 400th anniversary in 2008, Robert Lepage and Ex Machina created the largest architectural projection ever achieved: *The Image Mill*.

As part of the festivities surrounding the Grand Bibliothèque's 10th anniversary, Ex Machina has created, based on an original idea by Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, an exhibition inspired by Alberto Manguel's *The Library at Night*. Multifaceted, *The Library at Night* (2015) embarks visitors on a journey through 10 libraries across the world, real or imagined, by means of virtual reality.

Robert Lepage made a grand entrance in the opera world with *Bluebeard's Castle* and *Erwartung* (1993). His continued with *La Damnation de Faust* (1999). Followed *1984* (2005) based on the novel by George Orwell, with Maestro Lorin Maazel providing the musical direction, *The Rake's Progress* (2007) and *The Nightingale and Other short Fables* (2009).

Das Rheingold, Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* prelude, premiered September 2010 at The Metropolitan Opera with the cycle being presented during the 2010-11 and 2011-12 seasons. His latest staging include *The Tempest* (2012), by Thomas Adès, libretto by Meredith Oakes, based on William Shakespeare's eponymous play, and *L'Amour de loin* (2015), with music by Kaija Saariaho and a libretto by Amin Maalouf.

Robert Lepage's work has been recognized by many awards. Among the most important: the Légion d'honneur (2002); the Denise Pelletier Prize (2003); the Hans Christian Andersen Prize (2004) for his outstanding artistic contribution to honouring Hans Christian Andersen worldwide; the Stanislavski Award (2005) for his contribution to international theatre; the Festival de l'Union des Théâtres de l'Europe honoured him with the distinguished Prix Europe (2007), previously awarded to Ariane Mnouchkine and Bob Wilson among others; the Médaille de la ville de Québec (2011); and the Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts at MIT (2012). In 2013, he became the recipient of the Tenth Glenn Gould Prize awarded by the Glenn Gould Foundation.



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Playing Cards 1: SPADES

Text	Sylvio Arriola Carole Faisant Nuria Garcia Tony Guilfoyle Martin Haberstroh Robert Lepage Sophie Martin Roberto Mori
Director	Robert Lepage
Dramaturg	Peder Bjurman
Director Assistant	Félix Dagenais
Performed by	Sylvio Arriola Nuria Garcia Tony Guilfoyle Martin Haberstroh Sophie Martin Roberto Mori
Original music composed and performed by	Philippe Bachman
Set Designer	Jean Hazel
Lighting Designer	Louis-Xavier Gagnon-Lebrun
Sound Designer	Jean-Sébastien Côté
Costume Designer	Sébastien Dionne
Assisted by	Stéphanie Cléroux
Props Designer	Virginie Leclerc
Images Designer	David Leclerc
Wind Artist	Daniel Wurtzel
Wigs	Rachel Tremblay
Production Manager	Marie-Pierre Gagné
Tour Manager	Marie Rondot
Technical Director	Paul Bourque
Technical Director - touring	Patrick Durnin
Stage Manager	Katia Talbot
Lighting Manager	Renaud Pettigrew
Sound Manager	Olivier Marcil
Video Manager	Nicolas Dostie
Costume Manager	Sylvie Courbron
Props Manager	Virginie Leclerc
Head Stagehand	Anne Marie Bureau
Stagehands	Eric Pierre Blanchard Nicolas Boudreau
Technical Consultants	Catherine Guay Tobie Horswill

Additional musics

Here in Vegas composed and performed by Rick Miller,
produced and arranged by Creighton Doane

Deck of Cards written by Texas Tyler,
published by Universal Songs of Polygram International Inc. and
by Cambell Connelly and Co. LTD, performed by Winston Conrad Martindale,
used with permission of Universal Music Canada

La Notte È Piccola by Bruno Canfora, Franco Castellano and Giuseppe Moccia
used with permission of Spirit music group, inc.

Additional images

Apuesta por un amor
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Set building

Astuce Décors

Costume maker

Par Apparat conception créative

Director's Agent

Lynda Beaulieu

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Teatro Circo Price – Madrid °

Ruhrtriennale

La Comète – Scène nationale de Châlons-en-Champagne °

Célestins, Théâtre de Lyon

Cirque Jules Verne & Maison de la Culture – Scène nationale d'Amiens °

Roundhouse – Londres °

Odéon-Théâtre de l'Europe

Wiener Festwochen – Wien

Chekhov International Theatre Festival – Moscow

Østre Gasværk Teater – Copenhague °

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Associate Production - Europe, Japan: Epidemic (Richard Castelli, assisted by Chara Skiadelli, Florence Berthaud and Claire Dugot)

Associate Production - The Americas, Asia (except Japan), Australia, NZ: Menno Plukker Theatre Agent (Menno Plukker, assisted by Sarah Rogers and Dominique Sarrazin)

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