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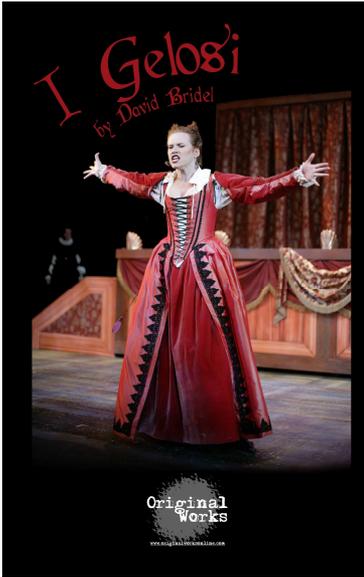
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*Lunatics and Actors*  
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*Also Available By  
David Bridel*



### I GELOSI

**Synopsis:** *I Gelosi* (The Zealous Ones) lovingly recreates the world of the commedia dell'arte and tells the story of Italy's first great traveling theatre troupe. In the late 16th Century the Gelosi company takes the provinces by storm, thanks to the beauty, wit and charm of Isabella Andreini, one of the very first women ever to play on the stage. Invited to perform at the Court of King Charles IX of France, the Gelosi become the toast of Europe - until they risk the wrath of the Pope with a virulent theatrical satire. Hounded from the French Court, the company's fortunes sink, despite the increasing brilliance of Isabella's talents. Jealousy, madness, and selfishness tear the company apart. Finally, the Gelosi return to the poverty from whence they came.

**Cast Size:** 6 Males, 4 Females

# **LUNATICS AND ACTORS**

**by David Bridel**

LUNATICS AND ACTORS was first presented in a workshop version by FOUR CLOWNS at the Lyric Hyperion in Los Angeles in 2012.

DUCHENNE	Jon Monastero
KEVIN KLEIN	Kevin Klein
BON-BON	Zach Steel
FIFI	Alexis Rose Jones
PEPE	Raymond Lee

Co-Directors      Jeremy Aluma and David Bridel

The world premiere of LUNATICS AND ACTORS was presented by FOUR CLOWNS at the Shakespeare Center in Los Angeles in 2016.

DUCHENNE	Thaddeus Shafer
KEVIN KLEIN	Kevin Klein
BON-BON	Tyler Bremer
FIFI	Alexis Rose Jones
PEPE	Andrew Eldredge

Director	Jeremy Aluma
Set Design	Fred Kinney
Lighting	Azra King-Abadi
Costumes	Elena Flores
Sound	Kate Fechtig

Some notes on LUNATICS AND ACTORS  
from the author

LUNATICS AND ACTORS is inspired by the experiments of Duchenne de Boulogne, but does not purport to represent the work of this eccentric scientist with historical accuracy.

LUNATICS AND ACTORS contains a vital conceit. Near the beginning of the performance, DUCHENNE asks for three volunteers from the audience to join him on stage. Two of these volunteers should be real, and one should be a plant. In the original production(s) of the play, the plant was played by Kevin Klein; thus, his name is utilized in this text. In future productions, the actual name of the actor playing this role should be used throughout.

The producers should make every conceivable effort to fool the audience into believing that this planted actor is in fact just a regular guy (if an actor can ever be regular) who has volunteered for some fun and winds up in a nightmare, and to sustain this conceit for as long as possible.

To this end, the dialogue for the actor in this role can be adapted, within reason, to suit his personality.

Lastly, it can be noted that the actor playing Duchenne might improvise some text while interviewing his three volunteers. In this case, he should be mindful to maintain the illusion that he comes from another time.

## PART ONE: WHITE

*(DUCHENNE turns on a light. A bare white hall. Three chairs. DUCHENNE is a neatly dressed doctor from 1860.)*

DUCHENNE

Mesdames, monsieurs, ladies and gentlemen, my name is Doctor Guillaume Benjamin Amand Duchenne de Boulogne, and I welcome you to my demonstration of the anatomical and electro-physiological analysis of the mechanism of human emotion.

*(He observes the audience.)*

After many years of research and painstaking experimentation, I have discovered the laws that govern the generation and the expression of feelings.

*(He observes the audience some more.)*

In consequence, I can guarantee any subject of mine immediate and authentic access to any of their emotions. Mesdames, messieurs, ladies and gentlemen, I can make anyone feel anything!

*(He observes the audience again.)*

My methods will have a great impact on several fields of human endeavor, especially in medicine and the arts. Tonight I am here to prove my research to you with a demonstration so incredible you will not believe your eyes.

*(He is pleased.)*

But first a question. Are there any actors in the audience tonight?

*(Some hands go up.)*

Bien. For my demonstration, I need some actors to volunteer to help me, please.

*(He awaits volunteers.)*

Please, come forward, un, deux, trois. Thank you. Everybody, please thank our volunteers for their generosity. Please to sit.

*(Three volunteers come forward, DUCHENNE sits them in chairs.)*

For my demonstration, I will only need one volunteer, but it is important for me to select the best candidate. Therefore I will ask these volunteers a series of questions, and after, make an evaluation. Thank you.

First, Identity.

*(He asks the Volunteers in turn this series of questions:)*

Volunteer #1 (etc), please to tell me about your name?

What is your age?

What is your height?

What is your weight?  
What is your physical health?  
What is your mental health?  
And you have experience as an actor?  
Thank you.

Second, Professional Qualifications.

*(He asks the Volunteers in turn this series of questions:)*

Volunteer #1 (name, etc), please to tell me if you possess a doctorate?  
A masters degree?  
A diploma or normal degree?  
A license?  
A certificate?  
Any awards?  
Please describe your most important Professional Accomplishment.

*(When KEVIN answers this question, he mentions Shakespeare.)*

Thank you. And finally, Technique of Acting.

*(He asks the Volunteers in turn this question:)*

Volunteer #1 (name, etc), please to tell me about your Technique of Acting?

*(When KEVIN answers this question, he should describe an affinity with a 'serious' strain or method of naturalistic study, eg Method Acting.)*

Thank you.

*(He considers.)*

I have made an analysis of your responses. For my demonstration I am seeking an actor of mental stability with professional qualifications and technique. I have selected Kevin Klein to fulfill this role. Please, our appreciation for volunteers (*name*) and (*name*). Thank you.

*(Two volunteers return to their seats in the audience. KEVIN remains. DUCHENNE congratulates him and moves him stage right where he stands. To the audience:)*

Now, with the assistance of Kevin Klein, I will prove that I, Doctor Guillaume Benjamin Amand Duchenne de Boulogne, have gained supreme mastery over the mechanism of human emotion and the laws that govern the expression of human feeling.

But first I will introduce my subjects: three of my patients from the hospital at Salpêtrieres in Paris. Mesdames, messieurs, ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Bon-Bon, Fifi, and Pepe.

*(Enter PEPE, FIFI and BON-BON. They are lunatics from 1860. They stare at the audience.)*

*(Throughout the play, DUCHENNE will feed BON-BON little bon-bons from time to time.)*

Ah, Bon-Bon, Fifi, Pepe, say hello to the friendly people.

BON-BON

Bon-Bon.

FIFI

Fifi.

PEPE

Pepe!

DUCHENNE

*(To audience:)* It is their first time in front of an audience. *(To lunatics:)* Bon-Bon, Fifi, Pepe, let me introduce you to a friend who is going to help us this evening. This is Kevin Klein: he is an actor.

*(The lunatics greet KEVIN: PEPE embraces him, BON-BON is fascinated and wants to rub his arm, FIFI is scared. PEPE then greets KEVIN again.)*

DUCHENNE

Thank you, Pepe. Sit down, please, all of you. *(The lunatics sit. To audience:)* You can see that my subjects are naive. But by this evening's conclusion, you will see that they are capable of accessing and experiencing a greater range and authenticity of feeling than a certified dramatic artist.

Kevin Klein, please prepare while I organize my demonstration.

*(DUCHENNE leaves. KEVIN is nonplussed. The lunatics stare at KEVIN, get up. DUCHENNE returns wheeling a trolley featuring his apparatus, a large electro-magnetic conductive device with plenty of lights that will flash, buzzers that will buzz, etc. The lunatics sit down again.)*

Mesdames, messieurs, we are ready. Tonight's demonstration begins with a scientific examination of the authenticity of expression in nine basic emotions. Kevin Klein will provide a measuring point for comparison with the performance of my subjects. Are you ready, Kevin Klein?

KEVIN  
*(unsure)*

I guess so...

DUCHENNE  
Emotion Numero Un.

LUNATICS  
Un!

DUCHENNE  
Kevin Klein, using your techniques as an actor, would you please demonstrate the emotion of Attention.

KEVIN  
Demonstrate... attention?

DUCHENNE  
Attention.

KEVIN

You mean, like - paying attention?

DUCHENNE

The emotion of Attention.

KEVIN

You want me to demonstrate attention?

DUCHENNE

You are an actor, yes?

KEVIN

Okay.

*(He demonstrates Attention.)*

DUCHENNE

This is Attention?

KEVIN

Yeah.

DUCHENNE

Bon-Bon, please.

*(BON-BON comes forward while DUCHENNE prepares his apparatus.)*

The emotion of Attention.

*(DUCHENNE produces an electronic probe and electrocutes BON-BON. BON-BON reacts strongly, then assumes the emotion of Attention.)*

DUCHENNE  
(to BON-BON)

Thank you!

(BON-BON resumes his normal state, very rapidly.)

KEVIN

Hey...

DUCHENNE

Voila.

KEVIN

What did you just do? - what's that supposed to -?

DUCHENNE

I induced the emotion of Attention.

(Beat.)

Thank you, Bon-Bon.

(BON-BON sits down.)

Emotion Numero Deux.

LUNATICS

Deux!

DUCHENNE

Kevin Klein, using your techniques as an actor, would you please demonstrate the emotion of Reflection.

KEVIN

Reflection?

DUCHENNE

Reflection.

KEVIN

Okay.

*(He does so, then stops.)*

Reflection.

*(BON-BON disapproves.)*

DUCHENNE

Fifi, please.

*(FIFI comes forward. DUCHENNE electrocutes her. She assumes the emotion of Reflection.)*

DUCHENNE

*(to FIFI)*

Thank you!

*(FIFI resumes her normal state, very rapidly.)*

KEVIN

That thing's not real.

DUCHENNE

This is a conductive device.

KEVIN

Oh yeah? Does it hurt?

DUCHENNE

Fifi, does the instrument bother you?

*(FIFI shakes her head.)*

KEVIN

*(to audience)*

This is some crazy shit...

DUCHENNE

Thank you, Fifi.

*(FIFI goes to sit down.)*

DUCHENNE

Emotion Numero Trois.

LUNATICS

Trois!

DUCHENNE

Kevin Klein, using your techniques as an actor, will you please demonstrate the emotion of Surprise.

KEVIN

Surprise?

DUCHENNE

Surprise.

KEVIN

I don't think some of these are emotions.

DUCHENNE

Are you a doctor, Kevin Klein?

KEVIN

No, but I am an actor, and -

DUCHENNE

Then you will allow me to give the definitions, s'il vous plait.

*(BON-BON agrees with DUCHENNE.)*

KEVIN

Okay. Surprise, huh?

DUCHENNE

Oui.

*(KEVIN delivers Surprise.)*

DUCHENNE

Pepe, please.

*(PEPE comes forward. DUCHENNE electrocutes him. He is very surprised - more so than KEVIN was.)*

DUCHENNE

*(to PEPE)*

Thank you!

*(PEPE resumes his normal state, very rapidly.)*

Voila. A very real example of Surprise, no?

KEVIN

Yeah, but you're using that thing to pretend to shock them...

PEPE

To pretend to shock them...

*(Beat.)*

DUCHENNE

Thank you, Pepe.

*(PEPE goes to sit down.)*

Emotion Numero Quatre.

LUNATICS

Quatre!

DUCHENNE

Kevin Klein, using your techniques as an actor...

KEVIN

You don't have to say that every time.

DUCHENNE

... will you please demonstrate the emotion of Whimpering.

KEVIN

Whimpering?

DUCHENNE

Whimpering.

KEVIN

The emotion of whimpering?

DUCHENNE

Whimpering.

KEVIN

Do you mean sadness?

DUCHENNE

Whimpering.

KEVIN

Okay. All right. Whimpering.

*(He does.)*

DUCHENNE

Bon-Bon, please.

*(BON-BON comes forward. DUCHENNE electrocutes him. BON-BON reacts strongly, and then whimpers erratically.)*

DUCHENNE  
*(to BON-BON)*

Thank you!

*(BON-BON resumes his normal state, very rapidly.)*

KEVIN

Are you sure that was all whimpering?

*(BON-BON reacts violently. The other lunatics get up. KEVIN steps back.)*

DUCHENNE

Thank you!

*(The lunatics stop.)*

Sit down, please.

*(The lunatics sit down, except PEPE.)*

KEVIN

Look - I don't know what you're pretending to do-

PEPE

Pretending to do-

KEVIN

But I don't think you can compare what I'm doing-

PEPE

But I don't think you can compare what I'm doing-

KEVIN

Can you - ask him - to stop?

PEPE

Can you - ask him - to stop?

KEVIN

It's embarrassing -

PEPE

You're embarrassing. You're embarrassing yourself.

*(Beat. PEPE sits down.)*

DUCHENNE

Emotion Numero Cinq.

LUNATICS

Cinq!

DUCHENNE

Kevin Klein, using your techniques -

KEVIN

- as an actor, I get it -

DUCHENNE

Please demonstrate the emotion of Sadness.

KEVIN

You mean whimpering?

DUCHENNE

Sadness.

*(BON-BON agrees with DUCHENNE.)*

KEVIN

Sadness.

*(He performs Sadness.)*

DUCHENNE

Fifi, please.

*(He electrocutes FIFI, who embodies Sadness.)*

DUCHENNE

*(to FIFI)*

Thank you!

*(FIFI resumes her normal state, very rapidly.)*

Thank you, Fifi.

KEVIN

Wow. She's actually really good.

DUCHENNE

My work opens the gateway to the soul of man.  
Numero Six.

LUNATICS

Six.

DUCHENNE

Kevin Klein, using your techniques as an actor,  
will you please demonstrate the emotion of Terror.

KEVIN

Terror?

DUCHENNE

Terror.

*(KEVIN launches into Terror. DUCHENNE brings PEPE forward and as soon as KEVIN finishes, electrocutes him. PEPE feels Terror.)*

DUCHENNE  
*(to PEPE)*

Thank you!

*(PEPE resumes his normal state, very rapidly. He sits.)*

DUCHENNE  
Sept.

LUNATICS  
Sept!

DUCHENNE  
Kevin Klein, using your techniques as an actor, will you please demonstrate the emotion of Joy.

*(KEVIN does Joy, while BON-BON comes forward. Before KEVIN can finish, DUCHENNE electrocutes BON-BON, whose Joy takes him into the audience. KEVIN is disgruntled.)*

DUCHENNE  
*(to BON-BON)*

Thank you!

*(BON-BON resumes his normal state, very rapidly.)*

DUCHENNE

Huit!

LUNATICS

Huit!

DUCHENNE

Kevin Klein, using your techniques as an actor, will you please demonstrate the emotion of Pain.

*(KEVIN gives his Pain. FIFI comes forward and DUCHENNE electrocutes her. She is in Pain.)*

DUCHENNE

*(to FIFI)*

Thank you!

*(FIFI resumes her normal state, very rapidly.)*

DUCHENNE

Neuf!

LUNATICS

Neuf!

DUCHENNE

Kevin Klein, using your techniques as an actor, will you please demonstrate the emotion of Fury.

*(KEVIN is Furious. DUCHENNE brings PEPE forward, electrocutes him, and PEPE is Furious. He and KEVIN compete, and then PEPE advances on KEVIN and hits him. Short chase. KEVIN runs back towards the auditorium.)*

KEVIN

Hey - What the -?

DUCHENNE

*(stopping PEPE)*

Pepe. Thank you. Thank you!

*(PEPE resumes his normal state, reluctantly. He retreats.)*

KEVIN

He hit me!

*(DUCHENNE turns to the audience.)*

DUCHENNE

This ends the first part of my demonstration. Responding to electrical excitation which I apply to specific muscles in order to arouse the spirit, as predicted, my subjects have shown a greater authenticity of emotion than a certified dramatic artist. Bien. Please, join me in thanking Kevin Klein for his assistance.

*(Encourages the audience to applaud KEVIN.)*

*(The following section of text can be roughly delivered. It should appear entirely impromptu.)*

KEVIN

Hey! That's not f- you're just pretending to electrocute them and then they go crazy...

DUCHENNE

Pardon?

KEVIN

Nothing, man.

DUCHENNE

The proof is in the demonstration.

KEVIN

*(going to his seat, grumbling)*

Yeah, well you didn't even see me act.

DUCHENNE

Pardon?

KEVIN

Whatever. I thought you got me up there to act, but I didn't do any acting.

DUCHENNE

We have seen your basic emotions.

KEVIN

That's not acting - you can't just tell an actor to feel something and they feel it - we're not machines -

DUCHENNE

Ah! You are - artists?

KEVIN

Look - I feel emotions when I'm playing a character - in a certain situation - with words, and a story.

That's when real feelings happen. Not when you just click your fingers.

*(He sits down, with finality. Beat.)*

DUCHENNE

You would like to show this? This acting to which you refer?

*(Beat.)*

KEVIN

No way man. I'm done. Not going up there to look like an ass again.

DUCHENNE

You may have the stage now. You know a speech?

KEVIN

Yeah - I know a speech - but I'm not -

*(DUCHENNE turns to audience.)*

DUCHENNE

We would like to give Kevin Klein the stage now, no?

*(Maybe the audience agrees.)*

You may lead the experiment now, Kevin Klein.

KEVIN

What the..?

DUCHENNE

Bien.

*(He moves to the side. The stage awaits. The LUNATICS stare at KEVIN.)*

KEVIN

They're staring at me.

*(DUCHENNE clicks his fingers. The LUNATICS look down.)*

DUCHENNE

Bien.

KEVIN

This is cr-... Like, what kind of monologue?

DUCHENNE

You mentioned Shakespeare, you have Shakespeare?

KEVIN

Shakespeare?

DUCHENNE

Oui.

KEVIN

No. Well. Sort of. All right. I know one from Hamlet.

DUCHENNE

You have played Hamlet?

KEVIN

I understudied it.

DUCHENNE

Bien. I saw Edwin Booth play Hamlet. At the Winter Garden.

KEVIN

Okay...

DUCHENNE

Very good. Hamlet. With authentic emotion.

KEVIN

Seriously? Whatever.

*(KEVIN comes back to the stage. He prepares, a small warm-up. Maybe some extemporizing. Then:)*

“Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue: but if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently; for in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, the whirlwind of passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumbshows and noise: I would have such a fellow whipped. Be not too tame neither, but let

your own discretion be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special o'erstep not the modesty of nature: for anything so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature."

*(Applause from the lunatics.)*

DUCHENNE

Character, words, situation, story.

KEVIN

Yeah.

DUCHENNE

And then - authentic emotion.

KEVIN

Yeah. I dropped out for a moment - but... Yeah. Basically. Yeah.

DUCHENNE

More authentic than my subjects?

KEVIN

More real? Yeah. Because I'm coming from within. So that's more - real.

*(Beat.)*

DUCHENNE

Kevin Klein, please prepare while I organize the next part of the demonstration.

KEVIN

..?

*(DUCHENNE exits.)*

PEPE

Character, words, situation, story.

*(The lunatics stare at KEVIN. DUCHENNE re-enters. He has with him a trolley bearing many props.)*

DUCHENNE

Mesdames, messieurs, tonight's demonstration continues with a scientific examination of the authenticity of expression in the arts. Kevin Klein will provide a measuring point for comparison with the performance of my subjects. Are you ready, Kevin Klein?

KEVIN

Is there going to be another volunteer..?

*(DUCHENNE changes the lighting.)*