

22-23 Annual Report



CanadianStage

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Chair Boy, David Andrew Reid, Kwaku Okyere, Andrew Broderick, Clarence 'CJ' Jura, and Savion Roach. Photo by Dahlia Katz



Forging ahead

Canadian Stage takes pride in celebrating the remarkable achievements of our 22.23 season, our first full season since the onset of the pandemic. Within these pages, our annual report captures the heart of our journey—a voyage guided by unwavering excellence and passion.

Presenting in front of packed houses, our stages flourished with performances that transcended boundaries, illuminating the undeniable strength of the arts within our communities and at the heart of the organization.

The 22.23 season showcased our organizational prowess and artistic aspirations within the ever-evolving live-performance landscape. This was made possible by the generous support of our donors and funders and the loyalty of our subscribers and patrons. Thank you.

We're delighted to have you back with us.



The cast of *Fall On Your Knees*. Photo: Dahlia Katz



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Chair's Report



The 22.23 season marked Artistic Director Brendan Healy's first full season of programming and it's one of which we are incredibly proud. Emerging from the pandemic, we saw audiences coming back to the theatre to witness all too familiar family dynamics in Olivier Choinière's *Public Enemy*, share in the soulful beauty and vulnerability of Tarell Alvin McCraney's *Choir Boy*, and engage and learn in the discomfort of Jackie Sibblies Drury's *Fairview*.

In keeping with Canadian Stage's mandate, it was a season that brought new Canadian work to our stages, including Ann-Marie MacDonald's epic novel *Fall On Your Knees*, which was the culmination of a 10-year investment of time, energy, and passion by a remarkable group of female theatre artists and their many supporters.

As we closed the 22.23 season with our annual gala, we were honoured to award Diamond Schmitt with Canadian Stage's Creative City Builder's Award for their longstanding commitment to strengthening the vibrancy and vitality of our communities through creative physical design and infrastructure.

We also began to lay the groundwork for a strategic review in conjunction with our multi-stakeholder diversity, equity and inclusion advisory committee. As such, we will be working together in the 23.24 season to refine, and to ensure our values are infused throughout the organization's mandate, strategy, and plans.

The success of this season can only be attributed to the tremendous leadership, talent and determination of the organization's executive team: Artistic Director, Brendan Healy, and Executive Director, Monica Esteves - and the remarkable capacity of the Canadian Stage team to rise to every challenge and to seize opportunities as they emerge.

We are grateful to our family of supporters – government, donors, audiences and partners – for sharing in our belief in Canadian Stage's vision and for actively contributing to its realization.

It has been a great privilege to work with such engaged and committed directors to steward Canadian Stage. Thank you in particular to outgoing directors Marc Mayer, Penny Partridge, Margaritta Topielski and Rajesh Uttamchandani for their contribution to advancing our mission.

As I step down as chair, I would like to thank the many people who have supported me in my role, including the late Peter Herrndorf, who, as a former Chair of Canadian Stage (among many other things) provided invaluable advice, encouragement, and friendship. I also would like to express my gratitude to Monica and Brendan. It has been a joy to collaborate with a leadership team that brings humanity, foresight, and passion to work every day. I look forward to supporting Canadian Stage as it continues to evolve under Hugh Clark's accomplished leadership.

See you in the theatre for a 23.24 season of engaging and inspiring art!

With warmth and thanks,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Baillie".

Alexandra Baillie
Board Chair

Artistic Director's Report

Dear friends,

As I reflect on the 22.23 season, I am filled with memories. There is the effervescence and mischievousness of Deborah Hay's Frances in *Fall On Your Knees*. There is the sound of David Andrew Reid's soaring voice as he sang "I Couldn't Hear Nobody Pray" in *Choir Boy*. I can remember the pain on Tawiah M'Carthy's face at his father's funeral in *Maanooma, My Brother* and the defiant look in Sophia Walker's eyes as she stared into the audience in *Fairview*. There is a very funny (and salty) quip from Ronnie Burkett that I won't repeat on this page. Those are just a few.

It was a season of big emotions, big ideas, and big talent. And it was a season that saw our audience enthusiastically return to our theatres in big numbers. It could not have been more exciting for our artists to perform once again for you.

We began the season with Anand Rajaram's spirited production of *As You Like It* in High Park – our first Shakespeare in the park in three years. Our season at the Bluma kicked off with *Choir Boy*, by Tarell Alvin McCraney, the Academy Award-winning screenwriter of *Moonlight*. A Broadway hit, we were thrilled to see Toronto audiences connecting so deeply with this production. We followed this with the epic theatrical adaption of Ann-Marie MacDonald's *Fall On Your Knees*, a production that we were proud to play a leading role in shepherding to the stage. We wrapped up our season at the Bluma with our first international presentation since the pandemic: *Are we not drawn onward to new era* by the internationally acclaimed Belgian company Ontroerend Goed.

At the Berkeley, we were proud to premiere the English language translation of Olivier Choinière's *Public Enemy*. We welcomed Ronnie Burkett back to Canadian Stage with his hilarious holiday hit *Little Dickens*. Red Sky Performance finally were able to premiere *Miigis: Underwater Panther* after two pandemic-related cancellations. We partnered with Obsidian Theatre Company on Jackie Sibblies Drury's Pulitzer Prize-winning play *Fairview*. And we closed out our season with the world premiere of *Maanooma, My Brother*, a stunning production with local theatre company Blue Bird Theatre Collective. As part of the Platform Series, we brought new performances to the stage by two cutting-edge artists: Mélanie Demers and Cassils. Over the past season, we continued to advance a number of key Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives. We were supported by our DEI Advisory Committee which is made up of board members, staff, and artists from our community. I would like to thank the committee co-Chairs Vanessa Pfaff and Jordan Laffrenier whose steadfast guidance and



dedication are ensuring that Canadian Stage moves towards becoming a true and compassionate reflection of our great city.

I am deeply grateful to everyone who made this ambitious season a success. 11 partner organizations from Vancouver to Halifax worked with us to make these productions possible. An extraordinary team of artists and technicians put their hearts and souls into every aspect of our shows. Our board expertly guided and supported us through our first full season post-pandemic. The tireless devotion of our staff and volunteers ensured that we were able to welcome our audience back. And, of course, your generosity enabled us to bring live theatre back to our city. From the bottom of my heart, thank you for your belief in us. You make the impossible possible.

I would like to offer a special heartfelt thank you to Alexandra Baillie who will be stepping down from her role as Board Chair. Over the course of her tenure, Alexandra has played a critical role in guiding Canadian Stage towards a bright and resilient future. It has been one of my great professional privileges to work with such a thoughtful and committed collaborator. Thank you for everything, Alexandra.

As you go through these pages, I hope that you too are filled with memories from last season.

Thank you for being a part of Canadian Stage.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'B. Healy'.

Brendan Healy
Artistic Director

Executive Director's Report



We have shared a 'once-in-a-century' experience.

COVID-19 was not the first pandemic to shutter theatres over the long arc of time. It was also not the first occasion when theatres have reopened and, in time, flourished once again. It is a pleasure to share the results of Canadian Stage's 22.23 season, a year that has again evidenced the enduring value and relevance of the art form.

During the pandemic, our team spent much time looking ahead to 22.23 as the probable first full season of operations post-pandemic. Many of the challenges were predictable, though most decision-making faced unknowns, requiring a combination of strategy, risk mitigations, and some well-placed faith.

Our strategies can be summarized in three categories: accelerating our financial recovery within the first 12 months of reopening through strategic investments; prioritizing employment and impact initiatives within our local GTA communities; and providing a compelling value proposition that did not scale back on artistic offerings for audiences.

Indeed, the biggest existential question for our sector was: 'Will audiences come back?'

They did.

They came back in healthy numbers and with heart-warming enthusiasm. Our theatres were full of people, energy, and camaraderie.

With epic productions like Ann-Marie MacDonald's *Fall On Your Knees*, we sought to showcase attention-grabbing ambition that could exercise those theatre-going muscles that had atrophied for many people during the pandemic. I am pleased to report that Canadian Stage has returned to our pre-pandemic subscription levels, a critical stabilization lifeline for larger not-for-profit theatres. And while the return of old friends was a salvation, we are equally delighted that the 22.23 season attracted a record-breaking proportion of new attendees. Last season, 40 to 55% of each production's audience were brand-new audience members to Canadian Stage.

Amidst our achievements, we must confront ongoing challenges. The performing arts, one of the hardest-hit sectors, faces 40-year high inflation and external socio-economic crises.

Like most industries, Canadian Stage continues to contend with significant labour challenges and compounding budgetary pressures. During the pandemic, the cultural sector experienced a historical loss of skilled personnel as artists and artsworkers left the industry and/or the cities. From the cost of set materials, to the cost of digital advertising, practically every expense line mushroomed by 30 to 35% between 2020 and 2022.

Canadian Stage was able to ride out these additional pressures through the inspiring support from supporters across all giving levels and programs. Every dollar made a difference. We thank all the individual donors, families, corporate sponsors, members of our City Builders program, foundations, and Theatre Ball attendees.

We are particularly indebted to the extraordinary contributions of two families: the Slight Family Foundation's support of our recovery efforts and the Marilyn and Charles Baillie Foundation for an investment in Canadian Stage's education and community engagement programs.

Our organizational resilience was buoyed by special recovery funds from the Province of Ontario, Canadian Heritage, and the Toronto Arts Council. Canadian Stage is fortunate to weather these times with government bodies who value the essential role of culture and art.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Canadian Stage's Board of Directors, who provided steadfast support, effort, and care. My heartfelt gratitude to our outgoing Board Chair, Alexandra Baillie, who has provided astute and thoughtful

leadership in challenging times and been a true force for good. We thank and welcome the wonderful Hugh Clark who will step into the Chair role.

And, above all, I thank the people who contribute their passions and skills to the art form and Canadian Stage daily: the employees, artists, and artisans who are the centre of what we do and why we do it.

Together, Canadian Stage can continue to provide this irreplaceable art of live theatre that brightens our days, expands our minds, and makes meaningful contributions to communities in Toronto and beyond.



Monica Esteves,
Executive Director

Board of Directors

Canadian Stage applauds this incredible group of volunteers who help art and artists thrive in this great city.



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22.23 Season

Canadian Stage debuted its first full season of live in-person theatre since the global pandemic crisis. Our 22.23 programming was a daring season of performance, presenting large-scale, unapologetically theatrical art alongside personal, revealing stories of genuine humanity, reflecting the company's continued growth and innovation.



Fall On Your Knees, Deborah Hay. Photo: Dahlia Katz

Public Enemy

A Canadian Stage Production

By Olivier Choinière

Translated and Adapted by Bobby Theodore

Directed by Brendan Healy

With Rosemary Dunsmore, Matthew Edison, Jonathan Goad, Michelle Monteith, Amy Rutherford, Finley Burke and Maja Vujicic

Public Enemy was generously underwritten by John and Nancy Embry and by Sandra Simpson in recognition of her generous gift to the Transformation Campaign

September 20 – October 2, 2022

Marilyn and Charles Baillie Theatre



A stunning, jaw-dropping and jolting slice-of-life production that blows the roof off the Baillie Theatre. Flawless in performance delivery coupled with marvellous storytelling. Get to Canadian Stage to see this exceptional *Public Enemy*. – *Our Theatre Voice*

Choir Boy

A Canadian Stage and Arts Club Theatre Company (Vancouver) Production

By Tarell Alvin McCraney

Directed by Mike Payette

With Scott Bellis, Andrew Broderick, Daren A. Hebert, Clarence 'CJ' Jura, Kwaku Okyere, David Andrew Reid, and Savion Roach.

Choir Boy was generously underwritten by David W. Binet

November 8 – 19, 2022

Bluma Appel Theatre



The crisp, pitch-perfect harmonies are pleasing, and the actors sing with such feeling that it allows the audience to experience something spiritual and divine. It is like being inside a house of worship. – *Globe & Mail*

Dora Winner

Outstanding Sound Design/Composition

Sound Design: Kate DeLorme; Composer: Floyd Ricketts



Little Dickens

Canadian Stage presents a production of Ronnie Burkett
Theatre of Marionettes

Created and performed by Ronnie Burkett

Ronnie Burkett's appearance was generously supported by the
Remembering Otto & Marie Pick Charitable Foundation

November 23 – December 18, 2022
Marilyn and Charles Baillie Theatre



With potty-mouthed, clothes stripping marionettes...,
master puppeteer Ronnie Burkett's *Little Dickens* is a
naughty and riotously hilarious twist on the classic
Yuletide tale. – *Toronto Star*

Dora Winner

Outstanding Costume Design
Ronnie Burkett

Fall On Your Knees

Part One: Family Tree

Part Two: The Diary

A National Arts Centre, Vita Brevis Arts, Canadian Stage,
Neptune Theatre, Grand Theatre production

Co-created and Written by Hannah Moscovitch

Co-created and Directed by Alisa Palmer

Production Dramaturgy by Mel Hague

Based on the Novel by Ann-Marie MacDonald

With Tim Campbell, Janelle Cooper, Diane Flacks,
Eva Foote, Deborah Hay, Samantha Hill, Drew Moore,
Tony Ofori, Cara Rebecca, Maryem Tollar, Amaka Umeh,
Dakota Jamal Wellman, Jenny L Wright and Antoine Yared

Fall On Your Knees was generously supported by:

Lead Production Underwriter The William & Nona
Heaslip Foundation

Supporting Underwriters Gail & Mark Appel, Alexandra Baillie,
Katy Graham Debost, Kiki Delaney, Catherine Graham, and
Michelle Koerner

Performance Underwriters Julie Sutherland and Sara Angel

January 20 – February 5, 2023

Bluma Appel Theatre



Moscovitch and Palmer's adaptation of this rich, resonant
material – with many co-producers to which it tours next
in Halifax, Ottawa and London – is of a size and scale
rarely feasible financially in English-Canadian theatre.
– *Globe & Mail*

Dora Nominations

Outstanding Sound Design/Composition Sound Design
Brian Kenny (Sound Design);
Sean Mayes (Composer) (*Part Two: The Diary*)

Outstanding Performance in a Leading Role
Deborah Hay (*Part Two: The Diary*)

Outstanding Direction
Alisa Palmer (*Part Two: The Diary*)



Are we not drawn onward to new erA. Photo: Mirjam Devriendt

Miigis: Underwater Panther

Red Sky Performance

By Sanda Laronde in collaboration with performers

With Daniela Carmona, Kristin DeAmorim, Eddie Elliott, Moira Human-Blaise, Jason Martin, and Mio Sakamoto

Miigis: Underwater Panther was generously underwritten by: Elaine Kierans & Shawn McReynolds, Trina McQueen and Melanie Shishler

January 21 – 29, 2023
Marilyn and Charles Baillie Theatre



Miigis: Underwater Panther is a riveting proposal for dance as a means of Indigenous storytelling... And like most prophecies, this performance will stay in your mind long past the hour it takes to watch it. – *Intermission*

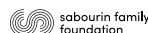
Dora Winner

Outstanding Original Sound Composition
Rick Sacks with Julian Cote, Pura Fé, Marie Gaudet, Marc Merilainen, and Pierre Mongeon

Are we not drawn onward to new erA

Canadian Stage presents the Ontroerent Goed production

Are we not drawn onward to new erA was generously underwritten by The Sabourin Family Foundation



February 9 – 11, 2022
Bluma Appel Theatre



...a zippy, worthwhile watch, rife with memorable images and more than a few charming “aha!” moments. Certainly one of the more unique pieces of performance to hit Toronto in a while — both forwards and backwards. – *Intermission*

Dora Nominations

Outstanding Touring Production
Ontroerend Goed presented by Canadian Stage



Fairview, Ordena Stephens-Thompson, Sophia Walker, and Chelsea Russell. Photo: John Lauener

Fairview

A Canadian Stage and Obsidian Theatre Co-Production

By Jackie Sibblies Drury

Directed By Tawiah M'Carthy

With Peter N. Bailey, Sascha Cole, Colin A. Doyle, Jennifer Dzialoszynski, Jeff Lillico, Chelsea Russell, Ordena Stephens-Thompson, and Sophia Walker

March 4 – 26, 2023

Marilyn and Charles Baillie Theatre



Fairview demands a lot from its audience and rightly so. The script pierces, cuts and digs deep into how we confront theatre and race. And that's what good theatre should do. Go see it. – *Our Theatre Voice*

Dora Nominations

Outstanding Performance in a Featured Role
Sophia Walker

Outstanding Costume Design
Rachel Forbes

Maanooma, My Brother

A Co-Production between Blue Bird Theatre Collective and Canadian Stage

Created by Tawiah M'Carthy and Brad Cook, with Anne-Marie Donovan

With Brad Cook and Tawiah M'Carthy

Maanooma, My Brother was generously underwritten by Huw Evans & Kathryn Bird

April 11 – 30, 2023

Berkeley Street Theatre



Bursting with charm, wit, and emotional intelligence, the Canadian Stage/Blue Bird Theatre Collective two-hander grabs its audience by the throat, never letting go as it thrusts them into memories of Ghana past and reflections on Ghana now. – *Intermission*

Dora Nominations

Outstanding Production
A Co-Production between Blue Bird Theatre Collective and Canadian Stage

Outstanding New Play
Tawiah M'Carthy and Brad Cook

Outstanding Direction
Phillip Akin

CS Platform

Human Measure

By Cassils

October 27 – 29, 2022 | Marilyn and Charles Baillie Theatre



...this piece is a unique performance as audiences are made to feel a part of an immersive experience through the creation of the cyanotype before their eyes. *Human Measure* is Cassils' first venture into performance art through dance (with previous work in film, sound, photography and sculpture), and I very much hope it will not be their last. – *The Dance Debrief*

Cabaret Noir

A MAYDAY Production Co-Presented by dance Immersion and Canadian Stage

Created by Melanie Demers, Mayday Danse Productions

February 9 – 11, 2023 | Marilyn and Charles Baillie Theatre



...an excellent exploration, celebration, and even at times criticism of what defines 'blackness'. It is an analysis of culturally significant moments, media, and people that shape and cultivate aspects of black identity – *The Extra Mile*

Special Guest Series



New, Fuad Ahmed, Mirabella Sundar Singh. Photo: Dahlia Katz

Un. Deux. Trois.

An Orange Noyée and le Théâtre français du CNA production presented in association with Théâtre français de Toronto and Canadian Stage

By Mani Soleymanlou in collaboration with the performers

October 27 – 29, 2022
Marilyn and Charles Baillie Theatre



...the show is a bold exploration of questions of belonging that pervade Canadian culture. – *Stir*

New

Necessary Angel Theatre Company in Association with Canadian Stage and the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre

By Pamela Mala Sinha
Directed by Alan Dilworth

April 25 – May 14, 2023
Marilyn and Charles Baillie Theatre



New, Pamela Mala Sinha's portrait of a friend-group of Bengali intellectuals in 1970s Winnipeg, is a strikingly fresh take on stage and screen portraits of first-generation immigrants. – *Toronto Star*

Dora Nominations

Outstanding Costume Design
Michelle Bohn

Kelly v. Kelly

A Musical Stage Company Production In association with Canadian Stage

Book by Sara Farb
Music and Lyrics by Britta Johnson

May 26 – June 18
Marilyn and Charles Baillie Theatre



Kelly v. Kelly is utterly gorgeous on a moment-to-moment level. It's so dense with emotion that it will undoubtedly reward repeat viewings, revealing more and more layers over time. – *Intermission*

An Interview with Acclaimed Author, Ann-Marie MacDonald

The theatrical adaptation of *Fall On Your Knees* was a massive undertaking which took over a decade to complete and involved five companies from across the country: the National Arts Centre, Vita Brevis Arts, Canadian Stage, Neptune Theatre, and the Grand Theatre. Canadian Stage came on board as a leading co-producer back in 2018. It was the first project that Brendan Healy, then the incoming-Artistic Director at Canadian Stage, committed the company to after a meeting with the NAC's English Theatre, then-Artistic Director, Jillian Killely. For Brendan, it was an easy decision: it was exactly the kind of ambitious project that fit his vision for Canadian Stage.

MacDonald has credited her wife and the play's director, Alisa Palmer, with being the driving force behind the adaptation. When presented with the chance to put this story into a play, MacDonald decided to hand the reins over to Palmer and to playwright Hannah Moscovitch to co-lead the adaptation. The result was an unforgettable two nights of theatre.

We asked MacDonald a few questions about her experience.

Canadian Stage: You began your career as a playwright

(and continue to write plays) but the story of *Fall On Your Knees* came out as a novel. How do you know that a story will be best served as a novel rather than as a play?

Ann-Marie MacDonald: When I started writing what would become *Fall On Your Knees*, the novel, I thought it was my third play. No more than a few weeks in, I realized the stage directions were out of control. There were way too many of them. They were way too long. They were in full descriptive sentences. They were... uh-oh... prose. I did the math. I realized I was writing prose fiction, otherwise known as a novel. This moment of revelation was equal parts daunting and reassuring. Reassuring because it meant I wasn't writing a terrible play after all; daunting because I had no idea how to write a novel.

Yes, the story told me how it wanted to be born into the world – into what kind of body if you like. And as I wrote the novel, I always bore in mind: would this scene work on stage? Would this dialogue work on stage? In other words, the immediacy and the three-dimensional experience of the theatre were always present throughout my writing. When Alisa Palmer proposed the idea of a stage adaptation of *Fall On Your Knees* to me, I knew the beautiful evolution of play-to-novel-to-stage was entering its third great movement.



Photo: Dahlia Katz

About the Author

Ann-Marie MacDonald (centre) is one of Canada's most widely respected artists. She has forged an unparalleled career as a playwright, author, actress, and broadcast host. MacDonald won the Commonwealth Writers Prize for her first novel, *Fall On Your Knees* (1996), which was selected for Oprah Winfrey's Book Club in January 2002. MacDonald has also received the Governor General's Award for Drama, the Chalmers Canadian Play Award, and the Canadian Authors Association Drama Award for her play, *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)*. She has appeared in several films and has performed on stages across the country. MacDonald has subsequently released three other novels: *The Way the Crow Flies* (2003), *Adult Onset* (2014), and *Fayne* (2022).

CS: Hannah Moscovitch wrote the adaption and Alisa Palmer led the process. How involved were you in the adaptation process?

AMM: Hannah and Alisa are both at the top of their extraordinary powers and I am incredibly lucky that they adapted my book. Over the years that it took to develop this project, I was on tap in a variety of ways – basically I was an on-call consultant. I gave script notes on the various drafts whenever I was asked, and throughout the series of workshops I was present and, again, gave script and performance notes on demand. And most recently, during the rehearsal process, I was able to act as a resource when it came to research questions regarding period and culture that arose from actors, designers, musicians, directors and stage management team.

CS: Was there anything that you learned about the novel from watching the theatrical adaption?

AMM: I don't know if I learned anything about my novel, but I certainly learned what it takes to transform a novel into a live stage experience. The adaptation is functional but does not capture the alchemy of what happens when that transformation truly takes place. A work of art needs to die in one medium in order to be reborn, glistening, into another. I am incredibly lucky to have witnessed that process with my novel.

CS: Was there anything that surprised you in the show?

AMM: What surprised me was how moved I was each and every time I saw the show. It was as if I was new to it every time. I laughed and cried in all the same places. Now that's a gift to the audience!

Dream in High Park



Photo: Dahlia Katz

In the summer of 1983, Toronto's highest-attended and beloved annual cultural attraction first took flight with raucous production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. And so launched four decades of magic under the stars.

Canadian Stage (then called Toronto Free Theatre) envisioned a distinctly Toronto approach to Shakespeare outdoors, characterized by irreverence and accessibility. They roamed through the city's parks until, one day, they stumbled upon a hidden gem in the heart of High Park. Amidst the greenery, they found two colossal black oaks that, if you squinted at it just right, resembled a proscenium arch.

They had found their stage.

Fast forward nearly four decades, and almost two million people have basked under the stars at Canadian Stage's *Dream in High Park*. Each summer, a remarkable 30,000 to 35,000 people come to the park to experience the transformative power of theatre, making it one of the city's most vibrant cultural events.

Dream in High Park stands out as Canadian Stage's most diverse and intergenerational audience. It serves as a gateway to theatre, introducing countless individuals to the wonders of live performance and nurturing a deep appreciation for the arts. On any given night, over 15% of the audience are children.

To mark the momentous occasion of our 40th anniversary, Canadian Stage revisited the roots of *Dream's* journey by returning to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. For this endeavor, we welcomed back **Jamie Robinson**, a three-time performer on the High Park Amphitheatre stage, to take the directorial reins.



Photo: Shannon Tigert



Photo: Dahlia Katz



The cast of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Photo: Dahlia Katz



Ryan G. Hinds, Steven Hao. Photo: Dahlia Katz

Jamie, who also teaches at York University and is deeply involved with young talents, brought a fresh and youthful perspective to the project.

Through the years, *Dream in High Park* has served as the springboard for some of Canada's most cherished actors and innovative directors. Beyond the remarkable talent on the stage, audiences have been captivated by the enchanting backdrop of High Park.

Canadian Stage is dedicated to preserving *Dream in High Park* for future generations. It is a perpetual gift to the city of Toronto, a gift of theatre, community, and unity. The responsibility falls on Canadian Stage, and all of us, to nurture this dream, ensuring it thrives for another remarkable 40 years.



Aaron Willis. Photo: Dahlia Katz

Canadian Stage is grateful to TD Bank through the TD Ready Commitment and to the Azrieli Foundation for supporting the 2023 *Dream in High Park*.



Thanks also to our Pay-What-You-Wish Access Partner BMO



New Work Development

New work development and investments provide artists with the support needed to create work for audiences in Toronto and across the globe. Over the decades, Canadian Stage has developed and premiered over 300+ new works and contributions to the Canadian theatre canon.

In recent years, Canadian Stage has tripled its annual investment in new work development. The fruits of these investments have been enjoyed in the 22.23 season and many works, still in progress, will premiere in future seasons.

Notable new work successes in 22.23:

- Commissions of new works: Red Sky Performance premiered its fourth Canadian Stage commission, *Miigis: Underwater Panther*, to sold out audiences during its run. Canadian Stage was also proud to co-commission a new creation by Crystal Pite's company, Kidd Pivot, called *Assembly Hall* which will premiere as part of Canadian Stage's 23.24 season.
- Workshops of new works: The department supported extended technical workshops for new works set to premiere in our 23.24 season: *Universal Child Care* by Quote Unquote Collective, *Searching for Eastman* by wind in the leaves collective and *NOMADA* by Diana Lopez.
- New play development: The department commissioned six new plays by some of the country's best playwrights, including Marcus Youssef, Kat Sandler and Nicole Brooks.
- Other activities: To ignite creativity and further support artists, the department launched a new stream of development funding that provides seed funding to launch an initial exploration of a new idea. As well, Canadian Stage provided free masterclasses for local artists led by leading national and international theatre-makers.



AF. Photo: Dahlia Katz

Education and Community Engagement Program

Canadian Stage believes that every person needs opportunities to develop their full potential to experience a life of happiness and fulfillment.

As an anchor theatre in Toronto and Canada, Canadian Stage provides important tools for people to reach their full potential by encouraging greater self-awareness, empathy for others, and social engagement.

As Canadian Stage re-emerges out of the COVID-19 pandemic recovery period, the organization is launching a revitalization of its education and community engagement programs.

Our mission: to connect with Toronto's vibrant communities, remove barriers to participation, and introducing thousands of youths and other audiences to the power of theatre as a tool for empathy and growth.

Here's a glimpse of our ongoing initiatives and projects since May 2023:



Jungle Book reimagined Education Event. Photo: Manuel Chaves

Thank you to Marilyn Baillie, C.M. and Charles Baillie, O.C. for providing foundational funding to bolster our Education and Community Engagement initiatives.

Connecting people and places

To bring this vision to life, we've ramped up our community engagement efforts, partnering with various communities and organizations. This strategic approach has a multiplier effect on our effectiveness and impact, while sharing resources with like-minded organizations across the city.

Youth and schools

Throughout the 22.23 season, Canadian Stage connected thousands of young people with contemporary and powerful theatre by offering thousands of discounted tickets to schools and youth across the city, particularly with the beautiful production of *Choir Boy*. Our aim is to not only provide an entertaining theatrical experience but also to enrich young minds through creative and educational engagement.

Pathways to learning

Canadian stage produced a range of unique events and experiences that provided opportunities for audiences and communities to deepen their engagement with the work or to learn new things. The activities are designed to range in style and location, matching with the wide range of interests and communities we serve. Last season, these included workshops, talkbacks, backstage tours, park tours, and more!



Jamii Wajo, photo: Dahlia Katz

In our neighbourhood

Jamii is a non-profit arts organization rooted in the vibrant Esplanade community. Through an array of events, they aspire to activate community and public spaces, with the intent of creating shared memories. This includes:

- *Unlocked*, A poignant short film chronicling the personal journeys of eleven women during the pandemic.
- *Wind stories*, an art project aimed at nurturing connections with Indigenous communities in Ontario through art and community engagement.

- *I am me (Girl, I got you)*, a photography exhibition created by a group of talented young women
- Community parties and gatherings
- Dance and music performances, including the spellbinding *Flamenco on the Esplanade!*
- Live events and workshops offering an array of engaging experience.

Theatre Ball

On May 30th, 2023, distinguished leaders from the corporate, philanthropic and artistic industries gathered at the charming Evergreen Brick Works to raise funds for Canadian Stage at our annual Theatre Ball.



This annual gala raises essential funds to support the development of new works by Canadian artists and bolsters the production of captivating performances on our stages.

The remarkable evening unfolded with a pre-cocktail reception and an exquisite three-course dinner, graciously hosted for over 200 distinguished VIP guests. Amidst the enchanting atmosphere, attendees were treated to world-class musical and theatrical performances, creating an atmosphere of artistic and cultural celebration.

It also presented a unique opportunity to mingle with Toronto's philanthropic champions, ardent theatre lovers, and leaders in the city building community.

Our 2023 Theatre Ball boasted an array of extraordinary artists and musicians. Serving as the Master of Ceremonies was **Diane Flacks**, an Emmy, Gemini, and Dora-nominated writer and performer, celebrated for her razor-sharp wit and unapologetic voice. Fresh from her sold-out run in *Fall On Your Knees*, her presence added a touch of brilliance to the evening.



Pictured: Ben Carlson



Pictured: Floyd Ricketts (left) and David-Andrew Reid

The stage came alive with remarkable performances, including **David Andrew Reid**, known for his role as David Heard in Canadian Stage's production of *Choir Boy* as part of our 22.23 season. **Ben Carlson**, one of Canada's most renowned and gifted actors, celebrated for captivating audiences at the Stratford and Shaw Festivals, also graced us with his artistry.

And finally, **Clerel**, a natural-born vocalist, soul singer, and songwriter from Douala, Cameroon, who has graced the stage of *La Voix (The Voice Canada)*, made a lasting impression with his entrancing performance.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all our donors, sponsors, and attendees. Your belief in the transformative power of the arts, shared values, and passion for creativity and city-building are inspiring!

All Photos: Tom Sandler



Pictured: Donald Schmitt, Monica Esteves



Pictured: Clerel



Pictured: Brendan Healy



Pictured: Hugh Clark, Donald Schmitt, Alexandra Baillie, Brendan Healy

And the award goes to... **diamond schmitt**

A decade ago, we launched the City Builders program at Canadian Stage, aiming to foster a dialogue between our industry and the development sector. This initiative set out to explore the role of the arts in cultivating safe and thriving communities.

Within this program, we established the Canadian Stage Creative City Builders Award, which serves as a tribute to Toronto's leaders who actively create spaces, experiences, and opportunities for art within our communities and the city at large.

This year, we proudly recognized **Diamond Schmitt**, an architectural firm whose influence extends far beyond Toronto. Their transformative designs have not only enriched the lives of Torontonians but have also left a mark on cities across the globe.

Our family of supporters



Fall On Your Knees ensemble with Janelle Cooper at centre. Photo: Dahlia Katz

Canadian Stage takes pride in presenting the compelling narratives that grace our stages. Art is born from a collective effort, nurtured and propelled by a diverse community of dedicated supporters who understand its profound capacity for transformation. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the generous donors who have played a pivotal role in fueling our mission.

Artistic Director's Circle

\$100,000+

BMO Financial Group
The Slight Family Foundation

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Marilyn Baillie, C.M. & Charles Baillie, O.C.
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Anonymous



We have been strong supporters of Canadian Stage for over 15 years. While many theatre companies have a mission simply to entertain, Canadian Stage's productions are also thought provoking and out of the norm. Canadian Stage is an important vehicle for conversations about contemporary and sometimes difficult subject matters.

Paul Maranger and Robert Brown
Underwriters, *The Inheritance*

\$2,000 - \$4,999

Paul Butler & Christopher Black
Lynn Curry
Lynn Eakin
Dr. Roy Eappen
Monica Esteves & Chris Bretz
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City Builders

Principals

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Theatre Ball 2023 Supporters

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Deloitte Canada
Diamond Schmitt

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Colin Hennigar and Justine Turner
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SvN Architects + Planners
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Anonymous (2)

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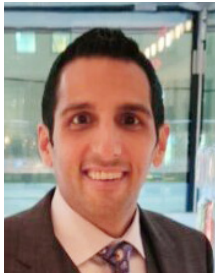
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Dr. Helen M Ostovich
Vivek Shraya
Ross Slater & Wayne Smith
Nalini Stewart
Michael Trent
Dr. Paul Truelove



The Azrieli Foundation's mission is to provide access to meaningful arts experiences.

One way we do this is by supporting professional theatre organizations like Canadian Stage that bring artistic excellence to our local communities. In 2021, I was able to attend their inaugural Dream in High Park – one of the many unique initiatives we are so pleased to support.

Naomi Azrieli, O.C., DPhil
Chair and CEO



Having been a longtime patron and season subscriber of Canadian Stage, I was eager to bolster my commitment this year. Last year's line-up was absolutely fantastic, and it was wonderful to finally be back to consistent, in-person performances. Nothing beats the energy and emotion of experiencing live theatre.

Personally, I am drawn to the theatre for rich stories that showcase the intricacies of humanity. Understanding someone else's journey is an incredibly rewarding experience. I love Canadian Stage as it is unrivalled in this country in its of scope of programming, international exposure, and local community involvement.

Given the challenges that the arts scene currently faces, it is incumbent upon those of us who can to help, no matter the size of assistance. I am very excited to experience what the upcoming season has to offer!

Vafa Mirzaagha

Producer's Club member

Kaley Walker
Mary Watson
Anonymous (3)

\$250-\$499

Michael Beaton
Katherine Bishop
John & Jane Cawthorne
Carlyle Coutinho
Chris Davis
Frank Delling & Elisabeth Bihl
Kelly Dobbin
Debbie M Dumaresq
Curtis Eisenberg
Cynthia Eldridge & Phil Frei
Margaret Fisher
Anne Fleming
George Anthony Ganetakos
Mark Garber
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Kamala-Jean Gopie
Zeljko Grujic
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Kenny Pearl
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Jack & Bettie Powers
Genevieve Proulx



As one of the country's leading performing arts institutions, Canadian Stage provides a significant showcase for the power of human imagination and creativity. Continuing our long-time commitment to raising the profile of arts and culture in Canada, KPMB is pleased to support Canadian Stage's international platform for the country's performers and artists, contributing to our collective health and well-being, and supporting flourishing communities.

Marianne McKenna
Founding Partner, KPMB Architects

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Robert Sandolowich
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Bram & Bluma Appel
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BMO Financial Group
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Sandra Simpson

\$500,000 - \$999,999

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Arlene & Michael Willis
Julie, Peter & James in Memory
of John David Wood
Anonymous (2)

Legacy Giving

We are grateful to the following individuals who have very thoughtfully and generously remembered Canadian Stage in their estates.

The Estate of Bluma Appel
The Estate of Kenneth C. Dawe
The Estate of John Gordon Hunter
Larry Lubin
The Estate of Stanley Shaw
The Estate of Helen Joan Kates

These listings include donations received between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023. We have made every effort to ensure proper recognition. If, however, your name has been accidentally omitted, listed incorrectly, or misspelled, we apologize. Please notify us at donate@canadianstage.com with any corrections.

Financial Information

Condensed Statement of Operations

for the year ending June 30, 2023

	2023	2022
Revenue		
Earned revenue	\$ 2,220,453	\$ 454,119
Development revenue	1,511,476	1,921,439
Government grants	2,460,190	2,713,446
TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE	6,192,119	5,089,004
Expenses		
Artistic & Production	3,932,523	2,897,689
Marketing & patron services	1,697,911	1,336,670
Administration	1,053,448	881,853
Development	747,155	630,649
Facilities	254,652	198,262
TOTAL EXPENSES	7,685,689	5,945,123
Excess of Expenses over Revenues from Operations	(1,493,570)	(856,119)
Other Revenues		
Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy	0	827,395
COVID-19 Relief Grants	866,774	210,000
Internally Restricted for Production	630,000	350,000
Net Operating Income (Deficit)	3,204	531,276
Accumulated Surplus (Deficit) Beginning	(287,594)	(818,870)
Accumulated Surplus (Deficit) Ending	(284,390)	(287,594)



Public Enemy, Photo: Dahlia Katz

Condensed Balance Sheet

as of June 30, 2023

	2023	2022
Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 1,616,038	\$ 2,586,998
Accounts receivable	1,115,622	314,169
Prepaid expenses	68,048	44,834
Preproduction assets	160,035	140,762
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	2,959,743	3,086,763
Capital assets, net	532,376	415,936
TOTAL ASSETS	3,492,119	3,502,699
Liabilities		
Accounts payable & accrued liabilities	433,615	461,189
Deferred Revenues - Grants	986,486	1,662,524
Deferred Revenues - Development and other	1,543,000	498,000
Deferred Revenues - Subscriptions	739,653	433,544
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	3,702,754	3,055,257
Deferred Capital Contributions	73,755	105,036
TOTAL LIABILITIES	3,776,509	3,160,293
TOTAL NET ASSETS (DEFICIT)		
<i>Ontario Arts Foundation Endowment Fund market value \$1,907,329 at June 30, 2023</i>		
Internally Restricted for Production	0	630,000
Unrestricted	(284,390)	(287,594)
	(284,390)	342,406
TOTAL LIABILITES & NET ASSETS	3,492,119	3,502,699

Artists and Creative Team

Canadian Stage is honoured to recognize the invaluable contributions of these artists and creators, whose hard work and boundless creativity are responsible for making our 22.23 season an outstanding success. Thank you.



Miigis. Photo: John Lauener

Adria Kain
ahdri zhina mandiola
Akosua Amo-Adem
Aldrin Bundoc
Alexander Devriendt
Alice Norton
Alisa Palmer
Alucard Mendoza Mchaney
Amaka Umeh
Amy Rutherford
Anand Rajaram
Andre du Toit
Andrew Broderick
Anglesh Major
Anita Nittoly
Anna Atkinson
Anna R Kaltenbach
Anne Barber
Anne-Marie Donovan
Anne-Marie Jourdenais
Ann-Marie MacDonald
Antoine Yared

Anton May
Astrid Atherly
B Gosse
Babette Poncelet
Barzin
Bastiaan Vandendriessche
Beau Dixon
Belinda Corpuz
Bobby Theodore
Bonny Taylor
Brad Cook
Brad Harley
Bren Eastcott
Brendan Healy
Brian Kenny
Camellia Koo
Canyon Carballosa
Cara Rebecca
Carly Street
Caroline Toal
Cassils
Charlotte Goethals

Chelsea Russell
Cherissa Richards
Christopher Kuhl
Christopher-Elizabeth
Ciaran Brenneman
Clarence 'CJ' Jura
Colin A. Doyle
Colleen Murphy
Craig Francis
Crystal Salverda
Daan Verzele
Dakota Jamal Wellman
Dan Mangan
Daniela Carmona
Daren A. Herbert
David Andrew Reid
Dawn Pemberton
Deanna Petcoff
Deborah Hay
Des'ree Gray
Diana Wyenn
Diane Flacks

Douglas Price
Drew Moore
Dylan Roberts
Eddie Elliott
Eric Woolfe
Eva Foote
Fabrice Yvanoff Sénat
Febby Tan
Ferre Marnef
Finley Burke
Florence Blain Mbaye
Floyd Ricketts
Gina Young
Guillermo Verdecchia
Hannah Moscovitch
Hau
Hawksley Workman
Helen Taylor
Helin Gungoren
Herbie Barnes
Hollywood Jade
Hrant Alianak

Ian De Souza	Kiran Ahluwalia	Miquelon Rodriguez	Sarah Dodd
Jackie Sibblies Drury	Kirsten Catriona Hawson	Mirjam Devriendt	Sarah Feyen
Jamie Robinson	Kobena Aquaa-Harrison	Moira Humana-Blaise	Sarah Miller
Jane Gooderham	Kristien De Proost	Morgan Eglin	Sascha Cole
Janelle Cooper	Kristin DeAmorim	Mya Singh	Savion Roach
Jans Martens	KUNÉ	Nadeem Philip	Scott Bellis
Jas Lin	Kwaku Okyere	Naomi Ngebulana	Sean Mayes
Jasmine Albuquerque	Kyra Harper	Natasha Mumba	Sébastien Heins
Jason Martin	Lacey Hill	Natasha Powell	Seppe Brouckaert
Jawon Kang	Lani Martel	Natercia Napoleao	Serena Ryder
Jeff Lilloo	Lara Arabian	Olivier Choinière	Shannon Taylor
Jelmer Delbecque	Laura Baxter	Ora Barlow-Tukaki	Shawn DeSouza-Coelho
Jenna Geen	Leigh Ann Vardy	Ordena Stephens-Thompson	Sheila McCarthy
Jennifer Dzialoszynski	Leigh Cameron	Pamela Mala Sinha	So Long Seven
Jennifer Newnham	Leonore Spee	Paolo Santalucia	Sochi Fried
Jenny L Wright	Lesley Hampton	Paul Chambers	Sophi Murias
Jeroen Wuyts	Logan Raju Cracknell	Peter Jotkus	Sophia Walker
Jesse Frans	Madison Walsh	Peter N. Bailey	Sophie El Assaad
Joanna Yu	Maev Beaty	Philip Aguirre	Sophie Tang
Joey Arrigo	Mairi Babb	Philip Akin	Spectra Ensemble
John Alcorn	Maja Ardal	Pierre Mongeon	Spencer Murray
Jonathan Goad	Maja Vujicic	Pip Bradford	Stacey Désilier
Joris Blanckaert	Marc Merilianen	Pulga Muchochoma	Tarell Alvin McCraney
Joyce Padua	Marcus Youssef	Pura Fé	Tawiah M'Carthy
Judith Bowden	Marie Gaudet	Rachel Cairns	Tereka Tyler-Davis
Julia Tribe	Marie-Josée Chartier	Rachel Forbes	Terra Lightfoot
Julian Cote	Martha Wainwright	Radwan Ghazi	Tim Campbell
Julie Fox	Marty Adams	Radwan Moumne	Tim De Paepe
Jully Black	Maryem Tollar	Richard Feren	Todd Lumley
K.P Dennis	Matt Eckensweiler	Rick Miller	Tony Ofori
Kadet Kuhne	Matthew Edison	Rick Roberts	Troy Taylor
Kai-Yueh Chen	Matthew MacInnis	Rick Sacks	Valerie Le Roy
Karen Van Ginderachter	Meghan Swaby	Ron Sexsmith	Victoria Wang
Karl Ang	Mel Hague	Ronnie Burkett	Vincent Dunoyer
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Kat Sandler	Michael Hart	Rosemary Dunsmore	Vlad Alexis
Kate DeLorme	Michael Musi	Ryan Cunningham	William Basinski
Kaydence Del Mar	Michelle Monteith	Sabrina Weinstein	Wole Oguntokun
Ken Hall	Mike Payette	Sam Khalilieh	Yusef Kadoura
Khadijah Roberts Abdullah	Mike Shara	Samantha Hill	Zorana Sadiq
Kimberly Purtell	Ming Wong	Samidha Joglekar	
Kira Chisholm	Mio Sakamoto	Sandra Laronde	

Community Partnerships

Canadian Stage believes in the power of community. By working together, we can share resources and triple our impact. We thank our many 22.23 partners for their collaboration and trust.

- Arts Club (Vancouver)
- Blue Bird Theatre Collective
- dance Immersion
- The Grand Theatre
- Jamii
- Mayday Danse
- Musical Stage Company
- National Arts Centre
- National Creation Fund
- Necessary Angel Theatre Company
- Neptune Theatre
- Obsidian Theatre Company
- Ontroerend Goed
- PUSH Festival
- Red Sky Performance
- Ronnie Burkett Theatre of Marionettes
- Théâtre français de Toronto
- Toronto International Festival of Authors
- University of Toronto, Centre for Drama, Theatre & Performances Studies
- Vita Brevis Arts
- wind in the leaves collective

Our Team

Management

Artistic Director
Brendan Healy

Executive Director
Monica Esteves

Director of Finance and Administration
Beth Toombs

Director of Development and Campaigns
Heather McMartin

Director of Production and Facilities
Elissa Horscroft

Director of Marketing and Communications
Tanya Doroslovac

Artistic

Producer
Lynanne Sparrow

Associate Artistic Director
Jordan Laffrenier

Company Manager
Laurie Merredew

Senior Manager of Education and Community Engagement
Qwyn Charter MacLachlan

Development

Senior Manager, Government Relations and Foundations
Chris Faulkner

Senior Manager of Corporate Development
Derolyn Kinkead

Manager of Special Events
Gillian Hoff

Senior Manager, Individual Giving
Luisa Kurtz

Development Coordinator
Shaneill Floyd-Wlazlak

Finance & Administration

Manager, Payroll Administration and HR Support
Sunitha Rai

Intermediate Accountant
Kari Seppen

Senior Manager, IT Services
Brian Parsons

Executive and Administration Assistant
Ruth-Anne Yiu

Data Entry Clerk, Accounts Payable
Phillip Pike

Marketing and Communications

Senior Marketing Manager, Loyalty & Growth
Shannon Tigert

Assistant Manager, Marketing & Digital
Juliana Feng

Marketing Manager, New Audiences
Madison Zinger

Graphic and Digital Manager
Derek Ma

Senior Sales Specialist
Michael Crumpton

Production

Technical Director
Daniel Bennett

Assistant Production Manager
Meg Woods

Production Coordinator
Ian Kowalski

Assistant Technical Director
Jillian Wardell

Assistant Technical Director
Marshall Kidd

Head of Properties
Mary Spyraakis

Building Operations Manager
George Nadrous

Head Technician
Josh Vlodych

House Technician
Ben Junor

Head Technician
Finn Browne

Audience Services

Ticketing & Audience Services Manager
Andrea Healy

Assistant Manager, Audience Services
Faisal Butt

Gunes Agduk
Kathleen L Croome
Bruno A Da Costa
Peter M Genoway
Colette Mbariko
Sydnie Phillips
Sarah Christina Rowe
Sienna Janet Singh

Alexander M Jackson

Abdijabar M A (Zaki) Farow
Lindsay Mullan

Front of House

Rebecca Chua
Mima Higashi
Siobhan Murphy

Evelyn Barber
Amanda Clarke
Esther F Fisher
Henrique Luiz Santos Pereira

Selinah Gara

Thank You for Your Support!

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