GARGANTUA PROGRAME

30 YEARS OF AWARD-WINNING THEATRE

FΔ11 2023



WATERFALL

ABOUT

Theatre Gargantua

Theatre Gargantua is one of Canada's leading multi-disciplinary theatre companies. Since 1992, the company has been devising original physical theatre under the direction of founder Jacquie P.A. Thomas. Our signature process begins with an inspired concept that we distill into a richly layered work over our distinct two-year creation cycle. Our productions explore compelling subjects and meld daring physicality with striking designs underpinned by live original music.

Theatre Gargantua has garnered dozens of nominations and awards across categories including outstanding new play, production, ensemble, direction, sound design, set design, lighting and projection design. Company milestones include extensive touring in the UK, including residencies at the Royal Exchange - Manchester, and Riverside Studios - London, and the presentation of the company's work by Mirvish Productions at Toronto's renowned Royal Alexandra Theatre. Theatre Gargantua is committed to the production of original Canadian work that is beautiful to look at, listen to, experience, and remember.

FULL COMPANY

The Ensemble

HEATHER MARIE ANNIS

MUHADDISAH

ANDREW SOUTTER

MICHAEL GORDON SPENCE

TRISHA TALREJA

Creative

Written by HEATHER MARIE ANNIS AND MICHAEL SPENCE WITH MUHADDISAH, ANDREW SOUTTER AND TRISHA TALREJA Costume Design by OTTILIE MASON
Lighting & Projection Design LAIRD MACDONALD Sound Design and Music Direction by HEIDI CHAN and TORI MORRISON
Original Music Compositions by HEIDI CHAN,

TORI MORRISON, AND THE ENSEMBLE

Directed by JACQUIE P.A. THOMAS

Set Design by MICHAEL GORDON SPENCE
Stage Manager HEATHER BELLINGHAM
Production Manager CHRIS CLIFFORD
Artistic Intern RAHAF FASHEH
Artistic Intern GRACE LAMARCHE
Painter BILL CORCORAN
House Technician MAKIAH BAUTIS

For Theatre Gargantua

Artistic Director JACQUIE P.A. THOMAS

Associate Artistic Director MICHAEL GORDON SPENCE

General Manager MIKE SCOTT

Associate Producer ALEXANDRA FLORAS-MATIC

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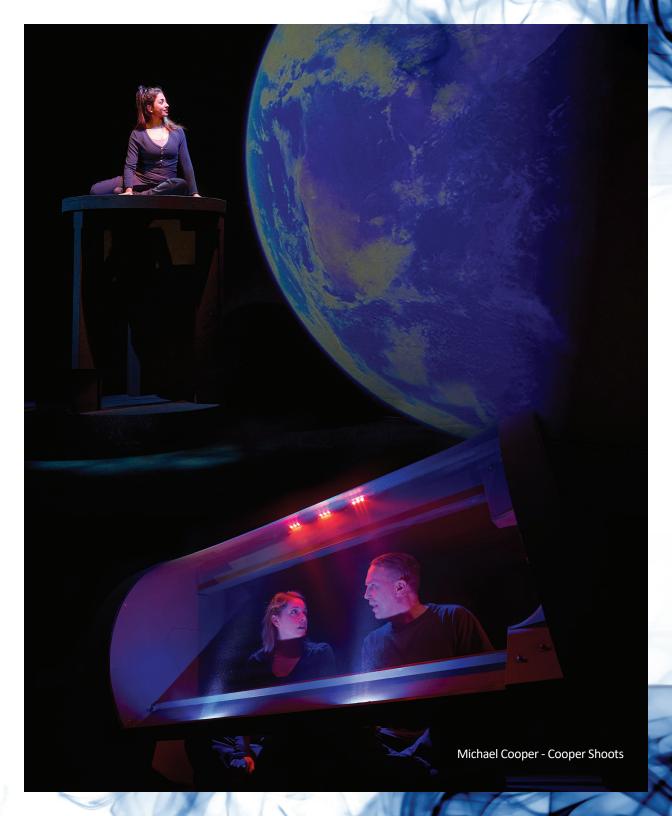
LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Theatre Gargantua and Factory Theatre reside on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnaabe, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples. The territory is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples. We also acknowledge Tkaronto is a part of Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit and has longer been a part of the Dish with One Spoon wampum belt covenant, an agreement between the First Nations surrounding the Great Lakes to live together sharing the resources of the land and water.

We cannot talk about water without acknowledging the history of disproportionate access to clean, usable water in Indigenous communities across Canada. Indigenous peoples' access to water has been impacted by government policies, legislation, development, and contamination. In Ontario alone, 25% of First Nation communities are affected by a drinking water advisory and Ontario contains some of the worst affected communities including Shoal Lake, Grassy Narrows, and Neskantaga First Nation.

We know that a land acknowledgement alone will not make up for the past, but is a promise to listen and connect with the people who continue to care for this land and be a starting point for further steps toward reconciliation. As a first, more actionable step, Theatre Gargantua has made a donation to Water First and has shared resources we found valuable whilst crafting WaterFall via the QR code below. The first of these links is to Water First's page and we encourage you to learn more about the important work they are doing and, if you able, to make a donation to support their efforts.





WATERFALL

A MESSAGE FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Welcome to the premiere of WaterFall.

This is our 31st season creating and presenting new work in Toronto. WaterFall is the culmination of two years of development and collaborative exploration.

We knew at the outset of this project we wanted to explore our connection with water; this ubiquitous substance that covers most of our planet, that determines where and how life happens, and that will undoubtedly be the defining factor in the future of humanity. As a company we dove into our subject, churning up stories, mysteries, mythologies and some truly unsettling facts. We reflected on our own experiences and shaped them into a new mythology, a warning from the deep.

In our first installment of this work, last fall, we came across the story of the Triest, the first submersible to carry humans to Challenger Deep – the deepest place in all of Earth's oceans. Our story takes inspiration from that first mission to discover what lies below. Of course, since that time the world has been captivated by the tragic implosion of the OceanGate submersible in June of this year, which cannot help but put a poignant context to a tale of deep-sea exploration.

We want to express our profound gratitude to the creators and facilitators of this work. From the ensemble and design team to production and producing teams, whose passion and dedication are what makes this process possible.

We hope you enjoy WaterFall.

Meet the COMPANY



JACQUIE THOMAS

DIRECTOR

For Theatre Gargantua: A Tonic for Desperate Times, The Wager, Reflector, Avaricious, The Sacrifice Zone and e-DENTITY, among others. Other selected credits: Ossetynski Actors Lab in Los Angeles, Roy Hart Theatre in France, The National Theatre of Greece and the Gardzienice Theatre Association of Poland. In addition to her role as founder and Artistic Director, Jacquie has served Gargantua as an actor, director, producer, composer, choreographer, dramaturge and writer, earning 12 Dora nominations for her artistic contributions to the company. Jacquie was awarded a Harold Award for contributions to Toronto's independent theatre community and the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for contributions to Canadian Culture and Community. In 2019, Jacquie was honoured with the George Luscombe Award for Mentorship in Professional Theatre.

MICHAEL GORDON SPENCE

ASSOCIATE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR,

SET DESIGN, PERFORMER

For Theatre Gargantua: A Tonic for Desperate Times, The Wager, Reflector, Avaricious, The Sacrifice Zone and Imprints, among others. Designs for Théàtre francais de Toronto, theatrefront, CollabArts, and CCOC. Michael is an award-winning, long-standing member of Theatre Gargantua's creative team. He has been involved in one way or another in all of TG's productions, appearing in all major Cycles, writing or designing for many of the company's noted works, as well as directing the company's first SideStream Cycle. He has won a total of six Dora Mavor Moore Awards, including three for design, two for music and one for performance(ensemble). Michael is also a recipient of a Harold Award — a distinguished honour for members of the Toronto independent theatre community. He is an avid sailor as well as an accomplished musician and singer-songwriter.



HEATHER MARIE ANNIS

PERFORMER

For Theatre Gargantua: A Tonic For Desperate Times, artistic intern for e-DENTITY. Other selected credits: Orphan Song (Tarragon Theatre), Post Alice (Here for Now Theatre), Christmas Carol (SoupCan Theatre), Remembering The Winnipeg General (Dora Nominated for Best Ensemble, Zeitpunk Theatre), Let's Go (DMT Productions), The Money Tree (Dora Nominated for Best Ensemble, Roseneath), Bright Lights (Theatre Bruhaha), Emily's Piano (YPT), By A Thread (Sterling Studio Theatre), and the Morro and Jasp series including: Morro and Jasp: 9-5 (Factory Theatre), Morro and Jasp: Go Bake Yourself (Dora Winner).

Heather is an actor, director, playwright, educator, theatrical and therapeutic clown, co-artistic director of U.N.I.T. Productions, and "Morro" of the Dora and Canadian Comedy Award winning clown duo, Morro and Jasp. You can currently see her in the web series, *The Supers, The Stoners and The Big Bad.*

Heather sends a heartfelt thank you to the Gargantua team for having her aboard this fantastic project, the whole cast and crew for their love, spirit and creativity; and the ever supportive Alastair and Valkyrie. Follow @corginfluencer for cute puppy pics. heathermarieannis.com





MUHADDISAH

PERFORMER

Muhaddisah is a Dora nominated actor/writer/director with a focus on contemporizations of the canon. She is currently developing a screen adaptation of Euripides' *Medea*. In January she is playing Lois Lane/Bianca in a newly realized workshop of *Kiss Me Kate* (Real Canaan Theatre). This month, the series on which she served as the on-set acting coach premieres on Netflix (*I Woke Up A Vampire*).

Muhaddisah has worked with Buddies in Bad Times Theatre, Guild Festival Theatre, Thousand Islands Playhouse, St. Lawrence Shakespeare Festival, Davis Shakespeare Festival, Shakespeare in Action, Theatre on the Ridge, Tottering Biped Theatre, Dark Day Monday, Assembly Theatre, Theatre Erindale, Theatre Oculus, and Theatre Gargantua.

Muhaddisah would like to dedicate her performance to her late friend Professor Roger Beck. His visit to Factory for last year's version of the show was the second last show he ever saw. She has immense love and gratitude for Janet Beck who continues to champion Muhaddisah's every endeavour. And Damian — I won't ever manage to fully thank the beaches for bringing me to you.

ANDREW SOUTTER

PERFORMER

Originally from Kingston Ontario, Andrew is a multidisciplinary performing artist and graduate of Sheridan College and the University of Toronto Mississauga's joint Theatre and Drama Studies acting program. Past Toronto credits include Bert - Mary Poppins, Mushnik - Little Shop, Princeton/Rod - Avenue Q, Moritz - Spring Awakening, Lord Farquaad - SHREK, Angel - RENT, Patsy - Spamalot (The LOT); Nick Piazza - Fame, Professor Bhaer - Little Women (Firstact); as well as Bobby Strong - Urinetown (Stageworks). Credits from Kingston and the surrounding area include Enjolras - Les Miserables, Kurt Von Trapp - Sound of Music, Baby John - West Side Story (Grand Theatre); and Oliver - Oliver! (Thousand Islands Playhouse). Other regional credits include Buddy Holly - We Will Rock You, Tunny - American Idiot and Barfée - Spelling Bee(Stephenville Theatre Festival). Andrew wishes to thank Jacquie and Michael for this incredible opportunity as well as the fearless ensemble for their relentless creativity. Big Hugs to friends and family for their continued love and support.





TRISHA TALREJA

PERFORMER

Theatre Gargantua debut. Selected theatre credits: The Secret Garden (Theatre Calgary), Seeking Refuge (Thick and Thin Theatre), Wizard of Oz (LOT), A Glass Hive, Secrets of Area 51, A Chorus Line, Anne of Green Gables, Urinetown. Trisha is a musical theatre performer and classical vocalist. Throughout her youth, she trained extensively in voice, piano, and various dance styles and was the lead singer for the Etobicoke Jazz band. She later attended Etobicoke School of the Arts' musical theatre program, where she was the recipient of the Etobicoke Musical Productions Scholarship. In 2022, she was selected as a Quarterfinalist in the American Traditions Vocal Competition. She is a graduate of Randolph College for the Performing Arts' Triple Threat training program. Trisha would like to express her gratitude to Theatre Gargantua for this amazing opportunity! She would also like to thank her family, friends, and mentors for their love and encouragement! www.trishatalreja.com

HEATHER BELLINGHAM

STAGE MANAGER

Heather has worked in stage management on 90+ shows throughout Canada and internationally, ranging from small-scale Fringe productions, to pieces in festivals such as World Pride and Panamania, to large scale shows at the Stratford Festival and for Mirvish. She has even stage managed a private performance for royalty. She won a Harold Award in 2021. Additionally, Heather is an apprentice producer at New Harlem Productions. See credits at heatherbellingham.wordpress.com Follow @blue84HB





LAIRD MACDONALD

LIGHTING AND PROJECTION DESIGN

For Theatre Gargantua: A Tonic for Desperate Times, The Wager, Reflector, Avaricious, The Sacrifice Zone, Imprints. Laird is a bilingual Montreal-born, lighting and set designer, technical director and production manager with more than 25 years of experience in the profession. His work spans design for theatre, dance, fine and performance art, installations, film & video, music, events and opera. Laird began his career in sculpture and photography, and then trained in film and video at the Emily Carr College of Art & Design, in Vancouver. He has been nominated several times for Dora Mavor Moore Awards in Toronto for his lighting design, including Theatre Gargantua's The Sacrifice Zone and won a Dora Award for his work on A Tonic for Desperate Times". He has been a designer, or technical director, on many Dora-winning and nominated productions, and continues to enjoy working on productions in both French and English.

OTTILIE MASON

COSTUME DESIGN

Ottilie is happy to return to work with Theatre Gargantua's amazing team. Past work with the company includes *The Trials* and *Raging Dreams* which garnered her 4 Dora nominations for set and lighing design. She is a multi-disciplinary artist, designer, and performer whose work includes painting, drawing, murals, scenic painting, sculpture, assemblage, site-specific installation, performance, tableaux vivants, cabaret, set design, set-pieces, prop-designing/building/styling, costume design for theatre, film and video, wearable art, print design, interiors and teaching. Recent endeavours are starting a prop rental business, and exhibitions: Elemental (April 2017, TO), *Plastic is Beautiful*, Eclectic Electrics Festival (August 2016, Meaford), and *Obvious-Oblivious* (February 2015, Miami). **Featured works available at www.penumbra.ink**

"I have been swimming in the water of northern Ontario all my life. It feels like crystal velvet. It is healing and sublime".

HEIDI CHAN

SOUND DESIGN & MUSIC DIRECTION

Heidi Chan composes/performs music and designs sound for theatre and dance. Heidi plays bamboo flutes, percussion (including Japanese taiko drums), modular synthesizers, and teaches audio production and East Asian music at Toronto Metropolitan University. They are a member of Japanese folk music ensemble tenten, multi-traditional music collective Massyr Ensemble, and perform at various electronic music and experimental/improv series across Toronto.

Select theatre credits: *Titus Andronicus 2.0, Macbeth* (Tang Shu-Wing Studio—Hong Kong); *Midsummer Night's Dream* (Shakespeare's Globe—UK); *Iphigenia and the Furies* (On Taurian Land) (Sagacollectif/Architect Theatre/ Passe Muraille); *Wing Night at the Boot, Team on the Hill, Café Daughter* (Blyth Festival), *The Washing Machine* (Red Beti Theatre), *The Tempest* (Company of Fools), *Trojan Girls and the Outhouse of Atreus, No Save Points* (Outside the March), *Anahita's Republic* (Bustle & Beast), *A Number* (That Arts Group). https://linktr.ee/heidiwychan





TORI MORRISON

SOUND DESIGN

Tori is an award-winning composer, video designer, production manager and producer originally from Amiskwaciwâskahikan (Edmonton, AB). She is the production manager for *Outside the March*, she is 1/2 of the producing team for *Tiny Bear Jaws* (an independent theatre company with teeth) and she makes work with writer David Gagnon Walker as Strange Victory Performance. She has toured work around Canada and internationally bringing shows to France, Finland, the United States and Australia. She is an alumnus of the Slaight Family Music Lab. Find out more about her work at **torigmorrison.com**.

MIKE SCOTT GENERAL MANAGER

Mike brings decades of experience managing people and projects in both the for-profit and not-for-profit sectors. He has been a producer, a performer, and a designer as well as working in software development when not in a theatre. Mike first joined the Theatre Gargantua team as Producer in 2022 before being promoted to General Manager.



ALEXANDRA FLORAS-MATIC

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER

Alexandra Floras-Matic is a multidisciplinary artist and educator based in Toronto. She earned her BFA'21 from York University and has since dedicated herself to honing her craft both on screen and stage. She has taught at multiple education facilities including; Durham District School Board, Toronto District School Board, The Nelvin Drama Academy, Stagecoach Performing Arts, Workman Arts and Soldiers in the Arts where she holds devised theatre workshops for Canadian Armed Forces veterans. Some of her TV/Film credits include; Anne with an E (Netflix), Danger Next Door (Lifetime), I Woke Up a Vampire (Netflix), Mrs. America (FX), and her most recent self-produced short film The News Room will be screening both live/online at the Rendezvous with Madness Festival in Oct.-Nov. 2023. Alex has appeared on stage in various Toronto productions including; Mirror (Paprika Festival'21), Clover (Paprika Festival'22), Passport to Madville (Workman Arts), Callimachus (Shadowpath Theatre Company), The Stranger Things Experience (Netflix/Fever), Tunnel at the End of the Light (Solders in the Arts) among others. She was welcomed into the Theatre Gargantua community as a Winter 2023 TD Emerging Artists Roundtable participant. This pivotal experience paved the way for her to join the team as an Administrative Assistant in the summer of 2023. Now, as an Associate Producer with the company, Alexandra eagerly anticipates the exciting artistic and educational opportunities that lie ahead her career.





CHRIS CLIFFORD

PRODUCTION MANAGER

For Theatre Gargantua: *Nod and E-Dentity*. Chris Clifford is living a career in theatre and performance arts (starting with painting the backdrops for local and school plays, hanging the six lights etc.). Highlights include VideoCabaret an early (1970) integration of media with theatre, R. Murray Schafer's Patria series of operatic masterpieces in wilderness locations. He has done countless designs, constructions and production managements for every genre of mostly independent theatre, awarding him two Dora Awards. He has been the Production Manager for the Bathurst St Theatre and the Technical Coordinator of the theatre school of the University of Guelph for over two decades. Most recently he designed sets and lights for CIT's productions of *Sixty Below* at Tarragon Theatre, and media for *The Bridge*. Chris would like to thank all involved in this magnificent watery work.

GRACE LAMARCHE

ARTISTIC INTERN

Grace Lamarche (She/Her) is a mixed Cree/Metis multidisciplinary artist and recent George Brown Theatre School graduate based in Toronto. She is beyond excited to be apart of Theatre Gargantua's *WaterFall* this year and is so grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with all the incredible artists involved. Previous directing; *Joyce and Florence* (New Ideas Festival), *BIRTH* (Gears Theatre Company), *DADA* [as part of The Storyboard is Dead] (George Brown Theatre School). Previous acting; *thatismyface* (Unspecial Production House), *SKYSCRAPER* (Paprika Festival), *Blood Wedding*, *Cymbeline*, *Per Gynt and Engaged* (George Brown Theatre School). Along with her theatre credits, Grace is in early stages of founding a creative house called Unspecial, her latest project is a web series called *J Names* that is set to be released beginning in mid November. For more information visit unspecial.ca





RAHAF FASHEH

ARTISTIC INTERN

Rahaf Fasheh (She/Her) is a passionate stage director, educator, and producer, who places integrity, community, and the play at the core of her work. She is dedicated to amplifying under-represented marginalized communities, focusing on Arab and new-comer experiences. Rahaf holds a BSA from UofT specializing in Theatre. Her training includes Soulpepper Theatres City Youth Academy (2015), Paprika Directors Lab (2021), Nightwood Theatre Innovators Program (2022), and Factory Theatre's Training Enhancement Program for Directing (2023). Her directional debut saw a sold-out two-week independent run at Theatre Passe Murraille (2019), and she since has continued to direct a couple staged readings with Pleiades Theatre, as well as a kids show with Shakespeare in Action (2022). As an educator, Rahaf teaches improvisation, ensemble work, and devised theatre to kids ages 6-16 weekly at Young Peoples Theatre and Stagecoach. Currently, she remotely manages a play adaptation into a short animation film overseeing an international team of artists under Hakawatieh Productions based in Australia. She is honoured to be able to continue her artistic growth and development through this in-depth internship with *Theatre Gargantua*.



Theatre Gargantua would like to thank

Supporters & Special Thanks:

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Peter & Lois Turk

Aria Umezawa

Caroline Watling

Gail Baker in honour of Carol

Strom, Kelly Diamond

Claire Nesbitt-Hawed in honour of Dali Robert Sahukar

Jennifer Prosser in honour of Eliza Griffin



Opportunities for

Theatre Gargantua offers training programs and mentorship for professional and emerging artists throughout the year.

ARTISTS

OAC RECOMMENDERS GRANTS FOR THEATRE CREATORS

Theatre Gargantua is proud to participate in the Ontario Arts Council recommender Grants for Theatre Creators Program. This program allows us to assist artists working on multidisciplinary performance projects. We recommend projects focused on devised, original contemporary works of multi-disciplinary theatre, physical theatre and/or new processes of theatre creation.

EMERGING ARTISTS ROUNDTABLE

Recent theatre graduates and final year students are invited to join a forum exploring creating and sustaining a career in theatre. Participants engage with peers, guest artists and our core staff over the course of the series and are provided with tickets for shows and workshop discounts.

ARTISTIC AND PRODUCING MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Each season we provide opportunities for emerging artists with meaningful, career-building work opportunities on the creation and production of our works, with mentorship from our core team.

DYNAMIC CREATION WORKSHOPS AND MASTER CLASS

These annual programs are designed to empower artists with techniques for developing original performance. Artists explore text, movement and music in an ensemble-like environment based on our acclaimed method of creating multi-disciplinary theatre.

EDUCATION AND YOUTH

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT MATINEE SERIES

Our student matinee program includes talk-backs with the artists after each performance, a comprehensive study guide, and opportunities for workshops at the theatre or in the classroom.

DYNAMIC CREATION WORKSHOPS FOR YOUTH AND RISK YOUTH

PROGRAM

In-school workshops that provide physical training, vocal training and text exploration to youth and encourage them to explore new modes of performance to express their creativity. The Resources Skills Innovation & Knowledge Youth Program combines our in-school workshops with technology in a unique way, engaging students from across the GTA in underserved neighbourhoods.

HELP SUPPORT

Dynamic, Original Theatre

Theatre Gargantua has been at the forefront of multi-disciplinary theatre in Toronto for over 30 years. Our signature work has garnered over 30 Dora Awards and nominations, toured nationally and internationally, and every year inspires new generations of artists and audiences to engage with contemporary theatre through our outreach programs and performances. Your contribution helps create and develop this original work and continue to bring unique programs to your community.



DONATE NOW AT THEATREGARGANTUA.CA

Please consider making a one time or monthly donation. Every donation of \$20 or more receives a charitable tax receipt. Thank you for supporting us.

Share your experience #TGWaterFall

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