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BMO
LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Welcome to the Stratford Festival. It is a great privilege to gather and share stories on this beautiful territory, which has been the site of human activity — and therefore storytelling — for many thousands of years. We wish to honour the ancestral guardians of this land and its waterways: the Anishinaabe, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the Wendat, and the Attiwonderonk. Today many Indigenous peoples continue to call this land home and act as its stewards, and this responsibility extends to all peoples, to share and care for this land for generations to come.
Two young people are in love. They’re next-door neighbours, but their families don’t get on. So they’re not allowed to meet: all they can do is whisper sweet nothings to each other through a small gap in the garden wall between them. Eventually, they plan to run off together – but on the night of their elopement, a terrible accident of fate impels them both to take their own lives.

Sound familiar? It’s the story of Pyramus and Thisbe, as told by the ancient Roman poet Ovid, one of Shakespeare’s favourite authors. Most of us know it from the comical play-within-the-play in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* – but it’s also essentially the same story Shakespeare told in *Romeo and Juliet*.

It certainly resonates with us today. We know what it’s like to be isolated in our homes, separated from our loved ones, reduced to interacting through online equivalents of a hole in the wall. And we know about other barriers, too: walls of prejudice, mistrust and hatred that can be as fatal as any pandemic.

But there’s more to Ovid’s story. The blood of the lovers, seeping into the ground, is absorbed by the roots of a mulberry bush – and turns its berries from white to a deep and vibrant red. And with that metamorphosis comes the families’ realization of the tragedy their enmity has wrought.

That idea of metamorphosis, of awakening and new growth arising from loss, informs our 2021 season. Our artists, like the rest of us, have been living through a time of seismic shock to their psyches – but it has also been a time of transformative regeneration. It’s as if we’ve been in a cocoon, and now it’s time to emerge in a blaze of new colour, with lively, searching work that deals with profound questions and prompts us to think and see in new ways.

While I do intend to program in future seasons all the plays we’d planned to present in 2020, I also know we can’t just pick up where we left off. The world has changed; we have changed. Something huge has happened to us and within us. How do we express that together?

In one significant sense, 2021 sees us return to our roots. Two open-sided canopies, one erected at the Festival Theatre and the other on the grounds of the new Tom Patterson Theatre, shelter appropriately distanced seats. Sharing the same visually gorgeous design, these structures enable audiences to gather in safety and comfort in the open air.

But more than that, they bring an inherently festive quality to the season. Just like our original tent in 1953, these new canopies signal that a very special event is taking place here in Stratford: a new artistic beginning.

Meanwhile, we have also been able to make provision for limited-capacity indoor performances at the Studio Theatre. As always, your safety, and the safety of our artists and staff, is our very first priority, and all three of our 2021 venues will operate in strict accordance with public-health guidelines.

But far from placing limitations on our creativity, the need to work within the parameters required of us – with shorter performances, smaller casts (no more...
than eight actors per show) and physical distancing on stage – has stimulated our artists to new feats of imagination as they devise novel modes of performance. Our 2021 playbill encompasses Shakespeare, music, modern classics and new work, presented in ways you’ve never seen at Stratford before.

And it’s not only the pandemic that has opened us up to new ideas and experiences. The Black Lives Matter protests of last summer brought home to us how far our society still remains from overcoming those other dividing barriers of systemic inequity and oppression. So our playbill celebrates difference as well as universality, widening our definitions both of a classic and of who we are.

To learn more about our work on anti-racism please visit our website.

The pandemic has taken a dreadful toll, both in lives and in lingering psychological effects. We at the Festival may be powerless against the former, but we have a crucial role to play in addressing the latter. If theatre has anything to teach us, it’s about the resilience of the human spirit.

Our new season was born of our determination to emerge from this crisis more inventive, more inclusive and more creative than ever. I hope it will excite you and engage you, bring renewed joy into your life and inspire you as we dream together of a world without walls.

Antoni Cimolino
Artistic Director
The Stratford Shakespearean Festival gratefully acknowledges the generous support of these contributors to our success:
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Our generous donors and Members have recognized that this is a critical time for the Stratford Festival and have stepped up to do their part to help us get back on stage and to ensure that we will continue to produce the excellent theatre they have come to count on from the Festival.

Our deepest gratitude to all our donors who make gifts and pledges to support the Festival in so many ways.

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I AM WILLIAM: DIRECTOR’S NOTES

THE WONDERMENT OF “WHAT IF?”

BY ESTHER JUN

What an honour and privilege to be bringing Rébecca Déraspe’s play not only to English-speaking Canada but also to young audiences. I Am William is a joyous romp through Elizabethan England that turns the myth of Shakespeare on its head. I personally love the Bard and can safely say his plays have changed my life. The deification of him, however, especially in a time where many theatres in the country attempt to decolonize the canon, has left a bitter taste in the mouth of many a student who has been force-fed textbooks about his superiority. I sincerely hope this play can provide a counter to that.

As I do with all the plays I direct, I began to dive deep into many research topics circling this play: Tudor England, the rise of Elizabeth I, the Shakespeare family history and the endless conspiracy theories surrounding authorship. What did I discover? First, that those theories marginalized Shakespeare himself. Most are based on the disbelief that a boy not born of the nobility could possibly have been educated enough to write such incredible stories full of exotic locales, complicated plots and noble pursuits, let alone wax poetic about the contradictions of mankind with such beauty and poignancy. History, Rébecca and myself say “NON!” That is BS. It does not matter where you come from. We are all a part of the human condition and have our own narratives, our own stories. Anyone can and should write them down. Anyone can change the world with their life.

My second discovery was that, in the long run, none of my research really mattered. I Am William is creating an alternate history. Besides the subjugation of women, there is no historical basis to the main plot of this play. Rébecca used her imagination. She inserted herself into the story – because that is what writers do. She wrote this play so that children, especially those who feel unseen, unheard and unable to speak out, can feel empowered to write down their own stories. What if ... a girl wrote all those plays? What if ... I could write all those plays? What if ... I picked up a pen (or, more appropriately for today, started typing) and wrote about my life? What would happen? Maybe nothing. Maybe everything. And that unknown, between those two extremes, is the pure wonderment and hope of youth. That is where imagination, fairies and I Am William live.

“I didn’t write those words for praise or fame. I wrote them in order to exist, to heal myself, to make the world reveal itself to me. Not reveal myself to the world.”

– Margaret Shakespeare
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GREAT HUMANS OF HISTORY

BY RÉBECCA DÉRASPE

When I was in school, I never noticed the inequalities that still remain between men and women. That battle, I thought, had been won a long time ago. I thought that I was free to pursue my dreams: that no one would prevent me from doing whatever I wanted, just because I was a girl. Then came the shock of reality. I hadn’t gotten it completely wrong: it was true that no one was going to stop me from making my own decisions. I realized, however, that hundreds of years of inequities between men and women have affected the basic structures of our world. We still carry baggage that subtly influences our perception of things. The glass ceiling; violence against women; the role of the mother within the home – all of them feed the imbalance between genders.

I wish that, as a child, I had learned about the lives of great women who made history. Because of course there were women authors, scientists, painters, composers, and philosophers well before the middle of the 19th century. Yet “Young Me” had no way of knowing that they had existed; had shaped the world, each in her own way; but had then been forgotten, hidden away, tossed into the garbage can of our past. When it comes to recording significant events, “The Timeline of History” can be an unreliable narrator. Nowadays, more and more books are being written to try to redress this erasure by honouring the achievements of female pioneers. I am proud that I can share them with my nine-year-old daughter, showing her examples of remarkable women blazing new trails.

I truly believe that I Am William is for everyone; however, I wrote this play for young people. For their intense need to find their place in the world. For their dreams. For the great and beautiful strength with which they envision the future. I thought about them. Every day. I thought of their struggles. Their desires. Their battles. I thought of their insatiable need to wrestle meaning out of the ordinary ups and downs of life. I thought of young people because I, for one, still feel very close to these passions, this heartbreak. And I wanted all of us together to tell this story of history, where reality and fiction speak to us of the present. Mine. Theirs. So that we can look at each other as men, women ... humans. Without making any distinction.

I want to salute the exceptional work of director Sylvain Scott on the original version of this show. We created this text together, and you can read him everywhere between these lines. I am excited and deeply proud to see our Margaret and William come to life in Stratford, under the direction of Esther Jun and her amazing team. Theatre is sometimes a series of accidents that creates new meaning. I feel as if my characters themselves have orchestrated everything, without me even realizing it, so that they could be here with you today. And I love them for that: they found their own way to you.

Finally, a huge thank-you to the fabulous Leanna Brodie, who has accompanied me for almost ten years. She translates my pieces the way one silently understands another’s heart. She has, and will long continue to have, my full confidence. She is a magnificent accident, and one of the most beautiful, on my journey as a writer.
Rébecca Déraspe is one of the leading playwrights of her generation in the vibrant French-language theatre culture of the province of Québec (which may be familiar to Stratford audiences through the work of Michel Tremblay, Wajdi Mouawad, Michel Marc Bouchard, Robert Lepage, and Olivier Kemeid — and which also has its own tradition of musical theatre, very different from the Broadway/West End model). This is our fourth collaboration, after You Are Happy (produced in Ottawa, Chicago, and Edmonton, and published by Playwrights Canada Press), Gametes, and The Lessons.

I am fortunate to work with several writers of Rébecca’s cohort, translating their plays from the rich, often earthy expressiveness of Québécois French into my native Ontario English. They are a phenomenal group of artists. I adore the precision and muscularity of their dialogue; their fearless humour; their unbridled theatrical imaginations. I think that what makes Rébecca unique is her humane yet sparkling comic vision, the way her intelligent and playful wit interacts with her fierce feminism and her deep well of authentic emotion. Just like Shakespeare’s characters, those of Déraspe feel things profoundly and passionately — but as in Shakespeare, the intensity of their desires as well as the rhythmic pull of the language ensure that they can’t just lie there wallowing in their feelings. Not while there are songs to be sung and deeds to be done!

What I find particularly compelling about Esther Jun’s vision of I Am William are the ways in which she connects the dots — for example, between exceptional women who get buried by the cultures they live in, and the many kinds of people who have long been denied the chance to make a full contribution to society. Even when someone from a marginalized group does beat the odds and accomplish something extraordinary, it’s startling how often their legacy gets scrubbed out of the mainstream narrative — written in our history books only in invisible ink. I am reminded of the current New York Times series “Overlooked”: when editors realized that their obituaries overwhelmingly celebrated the successes of straight white men, they started going back through their vaults to see whom they had missed. As it turns out, the range of omissions is astonishing! Whenever I read those freshly unearthed stories, I keep thinking of all the people who have long needed to hear them, whether to have their biases challenged or their hope and ambition renewed.

When I was a young aspiring writer, my teachers and peers would sometimes use Shakespeare as a weapon: “If women writers are so great,” they would cry, “how come there are no female Shakespeares?” You will hear Rébecca’s answer to that very problematic question in this play. My answer is, I don’t know — I only know that we’re lucky there is one Rébecca Déraspe.

Thanks to the Stratford Festival; Esther Jun and her wonderful cast; Sylvain Scott and his equally gifted cast (Édith Arvisais, Simon Labelle-Ouimet, and Renaud Paradis); Théâtre Le Clou, which commissioned my translation (supported by CALQ) as well as the original play; Emma Tibaldo
and Playwrights Workshop Montréal for their translation workshop featuring Kym Dominique-Ferguson, Patrick Keeler, and Sarah Segal-Lazar; my Vancouver writing group, The Pod – Carmen Aguirre, Elaine Avila, Lucia Frangione, Meghan Gardiner, Shawn Macdonald, and my beloved spouse Jovanni Sy; and Kong Kie Njo, who went far above and beyond in order to help me render Rébecca, Benoit, and Chloé’s songs in English. To all the Margarets and Williams: hang in there, we need you!

***

“Universal History, the history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at bottom the History of the Great Men who have worked here.”

– Scottish philosopher Thomas Carlyle, known for developing the “Great Man” theory

“For girls, you have to see it to be it. We stand on the shoulders of other women who have come before us.”

– American composer Jeanine Tesori, from her Tony Award acceptance speech: she and Lisa Kron were the first all-female team to win Best Score, for Fun Home.

“So while I can challenge Shakespeare, in truth, he’s really a part of me. I’m part of this culture. It’s part of the foundation of my own mythology, so me challenging Shakespeare is me challenging God, in terms of literature, because it’s something that exists inside of me.”

– Canadian playwright Djanet Sears, author of Harlem Duet (which reimagines Othello from the perspective of Othello’s African American first wife)
PLAYWRIGHT

RÉBECCA DÉRASPE

Rébecca Déraspe graduated from the playwriting program of the National Theatre School of Canada in May 2010. She is the author of several plays which have been translated and produced internationally, including Deux ans de votre vie (English title: You Are Happy); Gamètes (English title: Gametes); Je suis William (English title: I Am William); Faire la leçon (English title: The Lessons); Plus que toi; Peau d’ours; Nino; Le merveilleux voyage de Réal de Montréal; Partout ailleurs; Nos petits doigts; Ceux qui se sont évaporés; and Fanny. She is currently Playwright-in-Residence at Montréal’s Théâtre la Licorne. Her work has been awarded the 2010 Prix BMO (for You Are Happy); the 2017 Montreal theatre critics’ prize for Best New Play (Gametes); the 2018 Montreal theatre critics’ prize for Best New Play for Young Audiences as well as the Prix Louise-Lahaye (I Am William); and most recently, the Prix Michel-Tremblay, for her new play Ceux qui se sont évaporés. She is also the writer and host of the web series Le lexique de la polémique, produced and distributed by Savoir Média.

MUSIC

CHLOÉ LACASSE

Chloé Lacasse, an award-winning singer-songwriter in the Francophone music scene, creates contemporary alternative pop with lush arrangements drawing on pop, folk, classical music, and ambient rock. Winning the 2011 Francouvertes led to the release of her first, self-titled album, followed by LUNES in 2014. In 2015, she received the Dédé Fortin Prize and presented the critically acclaimed show Les Vies possibles. Ongoing collaborations include the English-language alternative group CHANCES (Traveler, 2018, and Connection, 2021) and the Nikamu Mamuitun collective, an artistic encounter between First Nations and settlers. A trained actor, singer, and classical pianist, Chloé Lacasse also works as a performer, accompanist, composer, producer, and sound designer. Her third solo album, Les eaux claires, drops in September 2021.

BENOIT LANDRY

Benoit Landry is a director, singer, musician, and actor. His work balances creation with interpretation in multiple fields: based in theatre and music, it encompasses circus and dance. He has been a performer or musical designer in some thirty productions, in both major Montreal theatres and international tours. Directing credits include: Serge Fiori – Seul ensemble (Cirque Éloize); Chansons pour filles et garçons perdus (Théâtre d’Aujourd’hui); and André Mathieu’s Événement 50e (Francofolies, Maison symphonique). Most recently, he was the art director of the film Sept moments de joie (Cirque Éloize) and the immersive exhibition Sous les glaces with Mario Cyr (Éloize Expo). He also directs for television, notably the variety show En direct de l’univers (Ici Radio-Canada). He is the co-founder and Artistic Director of the multidisciplinary company Nord Nord Est.
LEANNA BRODIE

Leanna Brodie is an award-winning playwright and librettist whose work has been performed from Halifax to Auckland. Schoolhouse just opened the 30th season of Two Planks and a Passion Theatre in Canning, NS; Ulla’s Odyssey, composed by Anthony Young, recently toured the UK with OperaUpClose. Brodie is also a noted translator of Québécois playwrights. Last season alone saw four English-language premières: David Paquet’s The Shoe (The Cherry Artspace, Ithaca, New York) and Wildfire (Upstream Theater, St. Louis, Missouri); Annie Brocoli’s Stella and the Time Machine Journey (Lune Rouge, Arlington, Texas); and Joe Jack et John’s Violette (Espace Libre, Montréal, Québec). Brodie is currently an MFA candidate at the University of Calgary, with multiple translation commissions and a Stratford Festival/Banff Centre commission to co-write Salesman in China with Jovanni Sy. leannabrodie.com.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The book, lyrics, and score of I Am William were developed during the creation of the Théâtre le Clou, (Montréal), production directed by Sylvain Scott. This original production is still touring in both French and English.

The translation of I Am William was supported by Playwrights Workshop Montréal, as well as the Arts Across Canada programme of the Canada Council for the Arts.

I Am William is produced by arrangement with:
Agence artistique Corinne Giguère
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Cello, Trumpet  
Percussion

Njo Kong Kie
Ben Bolt-Martin
Graham Hargrove

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Music Director  
Njo Kong Kie

Choreographer  
Alyssa Martin

Co-Designers  
Michelle Bohn
Samantha McCue

Lighting Designer  
Arun Srinivasan

Sound Designer  
Maddie Bautista

Dramaturge  
Kamana Ntibarikure

Producer  
David Auster

Casting Director  
Beth Russell

Creative Planning Director  
Jason Miller

Assistant Director  
Sadie Epstein-Fine

Assistant Set Designer  
Joshua Quinlan

Assistant Costume Designer  
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Shakura Dickson

Stage Manager  
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Madison Kalbenn

Apprentice Stage Manager  
Scarlett Larry

Production Assistant  
May Nemat Allah

Production Stage Managers  
Meghan Callan
Elizabeth McDermott

Technical Director  
Greg Dougherty

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Njo Kong Kie

Director of Music  
Franklin Brasz

Music Administrator  
Janice Owens
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Head Carpenter
Peter Holland

Head Electrician
Christopher Wylie

Head Property
Rory Feore

Head Sound
Verne Good

Crew
Cameron Jolliffe

Wigs and Makeup Head
Julie Scott

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Associate Director of Production
C.J. Astronomo

Scene Shop Manager
Evan Bonnah-Hawkes

Associate Technical Director
David Campbell

Production Administrator
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– Scenic Construction
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THE COMPANY

BEN BOLT-MARTIN
2021: Cello, Trumpet in I Am William. 20th season. Elsewhere: Cello with Stratford’s INNERchamber String Quartet and Ensemble; cello for Roy Lewis’s Moments With You for Here for Now Festival; arranger, Dayna Manning’s Morning Light.

SHAKURA DICKSON

LANDON DOAK
2021: William in I Am William. Stratford debut. As Actor: Shazam! (New Line Cinema/DC Films), Murdoch Mysteries (CBC), Alice in Wonderland, Peter Pan (Bad Hats Theatre/Soulpepper), A Woman of No Importance, Dance of Death (Shaw Festival), The Drawer Boy (Essential Collective Theatre), Life in a Box (Toronto Fringe). As Composer: Alice in Wonderland, Peter Pan (Bad Hats Theatre/Soulpepper), Life in a Box (Bad Hats Theatre/Toronto Fringe), Romeo and Juliet (Old Flame Brewing Company), The Welland Canal Play (Essential Collective Theatre), Pippi! (Fourth Gorgon Theatre). Awards: Dora Awards for Peter Pan (Outstanding Ensemble, Outstanding Production), Life in a Box (Outstanding New Musical). Other: George Brown Theatre School graduate, Associate Artist of Bad Hats Theatre, RBC Apprentice with Musical Stage Company. Instagram: @landondoak.

GRAHAM HARGROVE

2021 PRODUCTIONS
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ALLAN LOUIS
2021: John, Earl of Leicester in I Am William. Second season. Elsewhere: Dr. Chauvet in Here Are the Fragments (The Theatre Centre); MC in Oh, What A Lovely War!, Sandor in Grand Hotel, Baudricourt in Saint Joan, Willie in “Master Harold”... and the Boys, Dracula in Dracula (Shaw Festival); Leonato in Much Ado About Nothing, Duke Vincentio in Measure for Measure, Caesar in Julius Caesar, Egeon in The Comedy Of Errors (Canadian Stage); Buddy Black in Helen Lawrence (Canadian Stage, Edinburgh International Festival, Brooklyn Academy of Music); Luther Dixon in Baby It’s You (Broadway). Film/TV: Stomp the Yard, Dynasty, NCIS, Castle, Grey’s Anatomy, Chuck, recurring on Person of Interest, series lead in Privileged.

NJO KONG KIE
2021: Music director of and Keyboard in I Am William. Stratford debut. A picnic and ping pong enthusiast, Kong Kie enjoys making music for dance, opera and theatre. His compositions include music for solo violin for the play Infinity (Volcano, Tarragon Theatre); comic operas knotty together, La Señorita Mundo (SummerWorks); concert-theatre Picnic in the Cemetery (Ansan Street Arts Festival, Canadian Stage); song-cycle I swallowed a moon made of iron (Canadian Stage, PuSh Festival); music theatre Mr. Shi and His Lover (Toronto Theatre Critics Award: Best New Musical, Tarragon Theatre, National Arts Centre, Cervantino Festival). Kong Kie was the long-serving music director of La La La Human Steps and his compositions have been used by choreographers in Canada and abroad. In development: new opera creations with Anna Chatterton, Douglas Rodger, John Greyson and Liza Balkan. Et cetera: musicpicnic.com. Patrick Conner Award. For mom.

SHANNON TAYLOR
Birmingham Conservatory, 2014
2021: Mary, Queen Elizabeth I in I Am William. Sixth season. Stratford: Mother’s Daughter (Mary), The Crucible (Elizabeth Proctor), Twelfth Night (Olivia), The School for Scandal (Lady Teazle), Shakespeare in Love (Viola), The Hypochondriac (Angélique), The Diary of Anne Frank (Margot Frank), Oedipus Rex (Priest), She Stoops to Conquer (Rose), The Sound of Music (Liesl), Inherit the Wind. Elsewhere (selected): Room (Grand Theatre/ Mirvish); A Doll’s House (RMTC); King Charles III (Mirvish/Studio 180); The Road to Mecca (Soulpepper); Pride and Prejudice (NAC/Theatre Calgary); The Jones Boy (Surface/Underground); Salt-Water Moon (Thousand Islands Playhouse); A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Little Women: The Musical (Citadel Theatre); The Madonna Painter (Factory Theatre). Film/TV: Private Eyes, MayDay, Eloise. Training: Birmingham Conservatory; Ryerson Theatre School (BFA). Awards: Mary Savidge Award; Dora nomination for Outstanding Performance. Et cetera: Thank you for supporting live theatre.
ARTISTIC COMPANY

MADDIE BAUTISTA
2021: Sound designer of I Am William. Stratford debut. Elsewhere: TOKA (Theatre Passe Muraille); Oil (ARC); bug (Luminato); The Winter’s Tale (Shakespeare in the Ruff); Eraser: A New Normal (Theatre Direct); Private Eyes (lemonTree Creations); Our Fathers, Sons, Lovers and Little Brothers (b current); Through the Bamboo (Toronto Fringe), Original Work: Kersey Komayan Gets Woke (fu-GEN Theatre); 4inXchange (xLO); Love You Wrong Time (Bad Muse Collective). Residencies/Training: NoteWorthy 2021 (The Musical Stage Company & Prime Mover Theatre); Humber College, Theatre Performance. Awards: Dora nomination for Eraser (RISER 2019); nominated for the 2020 Pauline McGibbon Award; recipient of the inaugural Walk the Walk Commission 2018. Online: maddiebautista.com, @bautistamaddie. Et cetera: For Ma, Pa, Anya, Douie, and John.

MICHELLE BOHN
2021: Co-designer of I Am William. Fifth season. Stratford: HMS Pinafore (associate costume designer). Off-Broadway: Costume designer: A Four-Letter Word (Classic Stage Company). Designer: Richard III, King Lear, Macbeth (New York Classical Theatre); Orpheus (Next Wave Festival). Off-Off-Broadway: Costume designer: Displaced Wedding (New Worlds Theatre). Selected Regional: Designer: Could I Have This Dance? (Rebecca Cohn Auditorium). Costume designer: Jukebox Hero (Ed Mirvish Theatre); Measure for Measure (Canadian Stage); Theory (Tarragon); The Nether, Between Riverside & Crazy (Coal Mine); The New Canadian Curling Club (Blyth Festival); Amadeus, The Gamblers (Talk is Free), The Lieutenant of Inishmore, Kimberly Akimbo (Southern Rep); Coriolanus, Henry V (Shakespeare Festival at Tulane). Film/TV: Costume designer: Save Me, For the Record (CBC Gem); NOLA; The Red Thunder (short); Good Sister (short). Training: MFA (University of Missouri – Kansas City); BFA (Concordia University). Online: michellebohndesign.com.

MEGHAN CALLAN
2021: Production stage manager of the Tom Patterson Theatre Canopy. 21st season. Stratford: In Meghan’s 20 seasons she has served as production stage manager at all of the Festival’s stages. Some of her favourite productions have been Paradise Lost, A Midsummer Night’s Dream (2014), The Tempest (2010), A Little Night Music, Jesus Christ Superstar and Tommy. Training: Meghan holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theatre Production from York University. Elsewhere: Meghan has most recently stage-managed The Goat, or Who Is Sylvia and The Virgin Trial at Soulpepper Theatre. She has worked at the National Arts Centre, Citadel Theatre, toured New Brunswick (twice), and stage-managed car and industrial trade shows and concerts. Not since her beginnings as a stage manager at Canada’s Wonderland has she worked in an outdoor theatre under a canopy and she’s grateful to be back.

KAT CHIN
2021: Stage manager of I Am William. Second season. Elsewhere: 21 Black Futures (Obsidian/CBC); TomorrowLove (Sheridan); Something Rich and Strange, Don Giovanni, Idomeneo, Actéon & Pygmalion (including tour to Palace of Versailles), The Return of Ulysses, The Marriage of Figaro, Lucio Silla, Orpheus & Eurydice, The Magic Flute, Der Freischütz, Iphigénie en Tauride (Opera Atelier); August: Osage County, Bed and Breakfast, Cowboy Versus Samurai, Kim’s Convenience (including national tour, Off-Broadway), Death of a Salesman, The Sunshine Boys, The Aleph, Double Bill: (re)Birth: E.E.Cummings in Song + Window on Toronto, Glengarry Glen Ross, Black Comedy & The Real Inspector Hound, Uncle Vanya, The Odd Couple (Soulpepper); The Snow Queen (CCOC); Grease (Irregular Ent.); acha bacha, CRASH (TPM); acquiesce (Factory/fu-GEN). Et cetera: Member of the CAEA SM Committee, and the US SMA International Cohort. Upcoming: New Monuments (Canadian Stage); TOKA (TPM/lemonTree).
ARTISTIC COMPANY

SADIE EPSTEIN-FINE
2021: Assistant director of I Am William. Second season. Elsewhere: As director: Eraser: A New Normal (Theatre Direct); Eraser (Why Not Theatre’s Riser Project); Mammo Mia! (Nightwood Theatre’s Lawyer Show); The Stray Sheep Cabaret (Nightwood Theatre, staged reading); Cleave (Theatre Direct, staged reading); Motherload (Rhubarb! Festival/Buddies in Bad Times); Tire Swing (Filament Incubator/Epigraph Collective). Literature: Spawning Generations: Rants and Reflections on Growing Up with LGBTQ+ Parents (editor/contributor, Demeter Press). Training: York University, playwriting and devised theatre. Awards: nominated for five Dora Awards in the Theatre for Young Audience category: Outstanding Direction, New Play, Production, Ensemble and Design. Spawning Generation: nominated for a Lambda Literary Award (Anthology); two Forward Indie Awards (Anthology and LGBT Non-Fiction). Online: sadieepsteinfine.com. Et cetera: Sadie is the former intern artistic director at Nightwood Theatre.

ESTHER JUN
2021: Director of I Am William. Artistic Associate, Planning, and Director of the Langham Directors’ Workshop for the Stratford Festival. Third season. 2020: Assistant director of Richard III. Stratford: Assistant director of John Gabriel Borkman. Elsewhere: Director: Planet Munsch (George Brown); Pal Joey, The Gamblers, Amadeus (Talk Is Free), The Promised Land (Soulpepper), The Omnibus Bill (Counterpoint Players); Theory, Girls Like That (Tarragon); The Private Life Cabaret (Theatre ARTaud); The Last Wife (The Belfry, GCTC); Rococo (Shaw Festival); Bremen Rock City (Song Trolley Productions); Cowboy Mouth, Trout Stanley (Heart In Hand); Yellow Face (Hart House); Fear and Misery of the Third Reich (DeusXM); First Hand Woman (Fire Up Productions). Actor: Originated the role of Janet in Kim’s Convenience (Soulpepper). Training: BA (Honours) Directing, Drama Centre London. Et cetera: Assistant Artistic Director at Tarragon (2016-2018); Co-Artistic Director of Directors Lab North. Thank you to my friends and family for their never-ending support and love, especially Mike and Lola.

MADISON KALBHENN
2021: Assistant stage manager of I Am William. Fourth season. Stratford: Much Ado About Nothing, To Kill a Mockingbird, production assistant for Avon and Festival theatres. Elsewhere: Julius Caesar (Crow’s Theatre/ Grounding Theatre); Riverboat Coffee House: A Yorkville Scene (Soulpepper); Anne of Green Gables (Thousand Islands Playhouse); The Wedding Party (Crow’s Theatre); Acquiesce (Factory Theatre); Crazy for You (Capitol Theatre). Script supervisor for Ross Petty’s A Christmas Carol and stage management intern for Wicked (Broadway).

SCARLETT LARRY
2021: Apprentice stage manager of I Am William. Third season. Stratford: Assistant lighting designer of Wendy & Peter Pan, production assistant for the Avon Theatre and Langham Directors’ Workshop. Elsewhere: Apprentice stage manager of Julius Caesar (Crow’s/Groundling Theatre); stage manager and associate lighting designer for Kiviuq Returns: An Inuit Epic (Gaggiavuut, National Theatre of Greenland, Tarragon Theatre); writer/director of The Stage Manager’s Guide to Dating Assholes (self-produced at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe and Toronto Fringe Festival). Training: York University, MA in Art History and BFA in Theatre Production. Awards: Outstanding Global Achievement Award from York University, Guthrie Award from Stratford Festival.
ARTISTIC COMPANY

ALYSSA MARTIN
2021: Choreographer of I Am William. Stratford debut. Stratford: peasantz (research process in the Laboratory). Choreography & Direction: Bin Chicken (Toronto Dance Theatre); hollow mountain, fantasieslover, Dolphin, string quartet no. 14 in g major, MANICPIXIEDREAMGIRLS (Rock Bottom Movement); FUTUREDANCE (Rock Bottom Movement/Canadian Stage); STARSEED, that infinite feeling (Canadian Contemporary Dance Theatre). Choreography for Theatre & Musicals: Pal Joey (Talk Is Free Theatre); Girls Like That (Tarragon Theatre); Nashville Stories, Cherry Corsage (David Bernstein). Film: Bin Chicken (Toronto Dance Theatre); sixty seven moo(n)s (Canadian Stage); Love from FARM to SummerWorks (SummerWorks); Stevie (Ante Kovak). Training: X University BFA Honours in Dance.
Awards: Dora Award for Outstanding Production and Ensemble for hollow mountain; Canadian Stage Award for Direction for fantasieslover; Jack McAllister Award for Alumni Achievement. Online: rockbottommovement.com, @rockbottommovement, @itsalyssamartin. Et cetera: Deepest thanks to Esther for bringing me along!

SAMANTHA McCUE
2021: Co-designer of I Am William. Second season. Elsewhere: Costume design: Honour Beat (The Grand Theatre), Aqsarniiit (Confederation Centre for the Arts), Kamloops (Western Canada Theatre, The Cultch), The Monument (Factory Theatre), Thanks for Giving (Arts Club Theatre Company). Costume design assistant: Fool for Love (Soulpepper), Louis Riel (Canadian Opera Company). Training: York University, BFA ’17, Theatrical Production and Design. Online: sammccuedesign.com, @sammccuedesign on Instagram. Et cetera: Samantha is Anishinaabekwe and Ned’u’ten. She is pleased to be returning to Stratford, and would like to thank her family, friends and partner for their support. Chi-miigwetch!

ELIZABETH McDERMOTT
2021: Production stage manager of the Tom Patterson Theatre Canopy. Eighth season. Stratford: Production stage manager, Festival Theatre, 2020. Assistant stage manager: Billy Elliot, Othello, The Music Man, To Kill a Mockingbird, Shakespeare in Love, The Hypochondriac, The Sound of Music, The Taming of the Shrew, Love’s Labour’s Lost, As You Like It, King of Thieves. Elsewhere (selected): King Lear, Twelfth Night (SiHP); A City, Divisadero ( Necessary Angel); Cracked: new light on dementia (UW/Collective Disruption); Comfort (Red Snow Collective), The Road to Paradise, Night (Human Cargo); Miracle on 34th Street (STC); Bella (HGJTC); Anne of Green Gables, Canada Rocks! (Charlottetown); Falling: A Wake (Blyth); The Barber of Seville (Soulpepper); Binti’s Journey, Head à Tete, Old Man and the River (Theatre Direct); Danny, King of the Basement (Roseneath); Othello, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Twelfth Night, All’s Well That Ends Well (SLSF).

NJO KONG KIE
2021: Music director of and Keyboard in I Am William. Stratford debut. A picnic and ping pong enthusiast, Kong Kie enjoys making music for dance, opera and theatre. His compositions include music for solo violin for the play Infinity (Volcano, Tarragon Theatre); comic operas knotty together, La Señorita Mundo (SummerWorks); concert-theatre Picnic in the Cemetery (Ansan Street Arts Festival, Canadian Stage); song-cycle I swallowed a moon made of iron (Canadian Stage, PuSh Festival); music theatre Mr. Shi and His Lover (Toronto Theatre Critics Award: Best New Musical, Tarragon Theatre, National Arts Centre, Cervantino Festival). Kong Kie was the long-serving music director of La La La Human Steps and his compositions have been used by choreographers in Canada and abroad. In development: new opera creations with Anna Chatterton, Douglas Rodger, John Greyson and Liza Balkan. Et cetera: musicpicnic.com. Patrick Conner Award. For mom.
KAMANA NTIBARIKURE
2021: Dramaturge for I Am William and Associate, The Foerster Bernstein New Play Development Program. Stratford debut. Kamana Ntibarikure is an award-winning multidisciplinary artist and content creator with an undying love for musicals. She has headlined the Just for Laughs Festival in the lead role of Sister Mary Clarence from the musical Sister Act. She also curated the eighth edition of the Next Wave Festival, showcasing new musical theatre. Her recent directing credits include Manman La Mer (Théâtre Catapulte), which was chosen to represent Canada in Abidjan for the 11th edition of the MASA (Marché des Arts du Spectacle d'Abidjan), Rendez-Vous with Home (Black Theatre Workshop) and the inaugural French translation of the play Angelique (Black Theatre Workshop and Centre du Théâtre d’Aujourd’hui).

JOYCE PADUA
2021: Assistant costume designer of The Rez Sisters, I Am William and Serving Elizabeth. Stratford debut. Previous theatre credits include: Costume Design: Defined by Bone (CanAsian Dance Festival), The Life and Death of Fred Herko (Rendezvous With Madness Festival), Orlando (Theatre@York), Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat (Crescent School). Assistant Costume Design: Alice in Wonderland (Bad Hats Theatre), Marjorie Prime (Coal Mine Theatre), Much Ado About Nothing (Canadian Stage), Sweat (Canadian Stage). Head of Wardrobe: TOKA (Theatre Passe Muraillle), 21 Black Futures (Obsidian Theatre Company), Acts of Faith (Factory Theatre), Lady Sunrise (Factory Theatre). Upcoming credits: Back in ’59 (Thousand Islands Playhouse). Online: @joycepadua.jpg. Et cetera: Joyce is thankful for the support of her friends and family, and hopes to continue creating art that opens doors and broadens horizons.

JOSHUA QUINLAN

BETH RUSSELL
2021: Casting director for the Stratford Festival. 13th season. Broadway and West End: As Senior Vice President, Casting and Creative Development for Livent, Beth was responsible for productions including Parade, Ragtime, Candide, Show Boat and Kiss of the Spider Woman; as well as productions of Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, Show Boat, Sunset Boulevard, Aspects of Love and The Phantom of the Opera in Canada, the United States, Australia, Singapore and Hong Kong. Elsewhere: Co-Producer of CBC-TV’s Triple Sensation, National Casting Director for CBC Radio Drama and Artistic Associate for Toronto Arts Productions (now Canadian Stage). Also, as an agent, Beth has represented actors, directors, choreographers, writers and composers.
ARUN SRINIVASAN

IMOGEN WILSON
2021: Assistant lighting designer of A Midsummer Night’s Dream, The Rez Sisters, I Am William and Serving Elizabeth. Fourth season. Stratford: Assistant lighting designer of Billy Elliot the Musical, The Merry Wives of Windsor, The Front Page, Long Day’s Journey Into Night, Brontë: The World Without. Elsewhere: Assistant lighting designer of Caroline, or Change (Musical Stage Company), How to Fail as a Popstar, Let’s Run Away, Every Brilliant Thing (Canadian Stage), Bat Out of Hell (Mirvish), A Beautiful View (Festival Players of Prince Edward County). Imogen is also a scenic artist and proud member of IATSE ADC659. Et cetera: Imogen is honoured to be back at the Festival this year and is grateful for every day that we can gather to tell stories.
THE LANGHAM DIRECTORS' WORKSHOP

Overseen by Antoni Cimolino, Artistic Director, and Langham workshop alumnus Esther Jun, Director of the Langham Directors’ Workshop, this program seeks the most promising directing talent and provides them with fertile ground to explore, play, and hone their craft. The Workshop endeavours to help cultivate the directors’ interests, refine their aesthetics, and enable them to create inspired and boundary-pushing work – not only for the Stratford Festival’s stages, but across the globe.

Participants this season: Marie Farsi, Sadie Epstein-Fine, Christine Horne, Sara Jarvie-Clark.
Alumni this season: Jessica Carmichael, Ravi Jain, Esther Jun, Julia Nish-Lapidus, Peter Pasyk, James Wallis.

We extend our thanks to the Department of Canadian Heritage and to the Philip and Berthe Morton Foundation.

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THE BIRMINGHAM CONSERVATORY

Janine Pearson is the Director of the Birmingham Conservatory. In January 2022 she will begin her leadership of the newly reimagined two-year professional training program that nurtures talented young artists for a future career in live theatre. The program includes, among other activities, classes in voice, movement and text with Festival coaches and distinguished guest instructors.

The Birmingham Conservatory is made possible by the support of the Birmingham family, the Stratford Festival Endowment Foundation and the Department of Canadian Heritage. Support for the 2021 in-season work of Conservatory participants is generously provided by the Marilyn & Charles Baillie Fund.

Past Birmingham Conservatory participants include these members of our 2021 company:
Sara Farb 2013
Eva Foote 2019/21
Paul de Jong 2000 (coach)
Andrew Iles 2017/18
Beck Lloyd 2019/21
Kennedy C. MacKinnon 1999 (coach)
Jonathan Mason 2019/21
Lisa Nasson 2019/21
Thomas Olajide 2014 (associate)
André Sills 2005
Shannon Taylor 2014
Sara Topham 2000
Amaka Umeh 2019/21
Micah Woods 2019/21
Mamie Zwettler 2017/18

And contributing to STRATFEST@HOME:
Dan Chameroy 2003
Ijeoma Emesowum 2015/16
Jessica B. Hill 2014/15
Chilina Kennedy 2009
André Morin 2014/15
Emilio Vieira 2015/16
Antoine Yared 2012/13

THE LANGLEY DIRECTORS’ WORKSHOP

Overseen by Antoni Cimolino, Artistic Director, and Langham workshop alumnus Esther Jun, Director of the Langham Directors’ Workshop, this program seeks the most promising directing talent and provides them with fertile ground to explore, play, and hone their craft. The Workshop endeavours to help cultivate the directors’ interests, refine their aesthetics, and enable them to create inspired and boundary-pushing work – not only for the Stratford Festival’s stages, but across the globe.

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THE STRATFORD FESTIVAL LABORATORY

Founded by artistic director Antoni Cimolino in 2013, and overseen by Antoni and Ted Witzel, the Laboratory is the Stratford Festival’s research and development wing: a suite of experiments and investigations that drive our artistic and organizational evolution in an era of exciting cultural change.

Advancing inclusive and innovative practice, the Lab:

- **INCUBATES NEW WORKS** for our stages by supporting long-term and unconventional development processes.
- **CONDUCTS EXPERIMENTS** through our resident Lab Ensemble, to build our capacity to support other forms and cultural protocols, and to create new relationships with artists from across Canada and beyond.
- **BUILDS CONNECTIONS** with the national artistic community by hosting and supporting gatherings of makers to share practices, questions, challenges and strategies.
- **FOSTERS ENSEMBLE** by offering full-company sessions to encourage horizontal learning and build a shared spirit among the huge group of artists who come together at the Festival every season.
- **OPENS DIALOGUE**, internally and externally, by creating spaces to reflect on the Festival’s role as a heritage institution and the growth and change necessary to ensure that it remains a vital asset to Canada’s cultural ecology.

Like any successful R&D wing, the Lab will be agile and flexible in its response to the changing landscape. The scope of its activities will expand and shift as we identify new challenges and opportunities to serve our community of artists and audiences, locally, nationally and beyond.

Support for the Laboratory is generously provided by the Dalio Foundation and by an anonymous donor.

The services of the Metcalf Foundation Dramaturgy Intern were made possible through Theatre Ontario’s Professional Theatre Training Program, funded by the Ontario Arts Council.

Funding for artisan apprenticeships is provided by the William H. Somerville Theatre Artisan Apprenticeship Fund, funded by the J.P. Bickell Foundation and by Robert and Jacqueline Sperandio.

A member of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres, the Stratford Festival engages, under the terms of the Canadian Theatre Agreement, professional artists who are members of Canadian Actors’ Equity Association. Stage crew, scenic carpenters, drivers, wigs and makeup attendants, wardrobe attendants, facilities staff and audience development representatives are members of Local 357 of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE). Scenic artists are members of IATSE Local 828. The musicians, musical directors, conductors, and orchestra contractors engaged by the Stratford Festival are members of the Toronto Musicians’ Association, Local 149 of the American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada.

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The Stratford Festival acknowledges the members of The Friends of the Festival for their continued contributions. This dedicated group of volunteers provides thousands of hours of support annually. They can be found everywhere – welcoming patrons to the theatre, answering questions, working on special projects, assisting at Meighen Forum events and so much more! We are so grateful for all they contribute to making each season possible.
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2021 Vice-President: Barry Becker

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Masks are required at all venues, as per government health guidance. Please respect physical distancing and the direction of Stratford Festival staff and volunteers working to keep everyone safe.

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We welcome your photo memories of your Stratford Festival experience; however, all cameras, audio and video recorders must be turned off during the performance. In addition, please turn off all mobile devices, as their sounds and lights will disturb actors and other guests.

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We offer a selection of snacks and beverages. However, in accordance with COVID-19 protocols, guests must be seated to consume any concessions. While masks can be removed when enjoying food and beverages, they are encouraged to be worn at all other times. Drinks can be enjoyed throughout the performance, but no food may be consumed while actors are on stage.

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