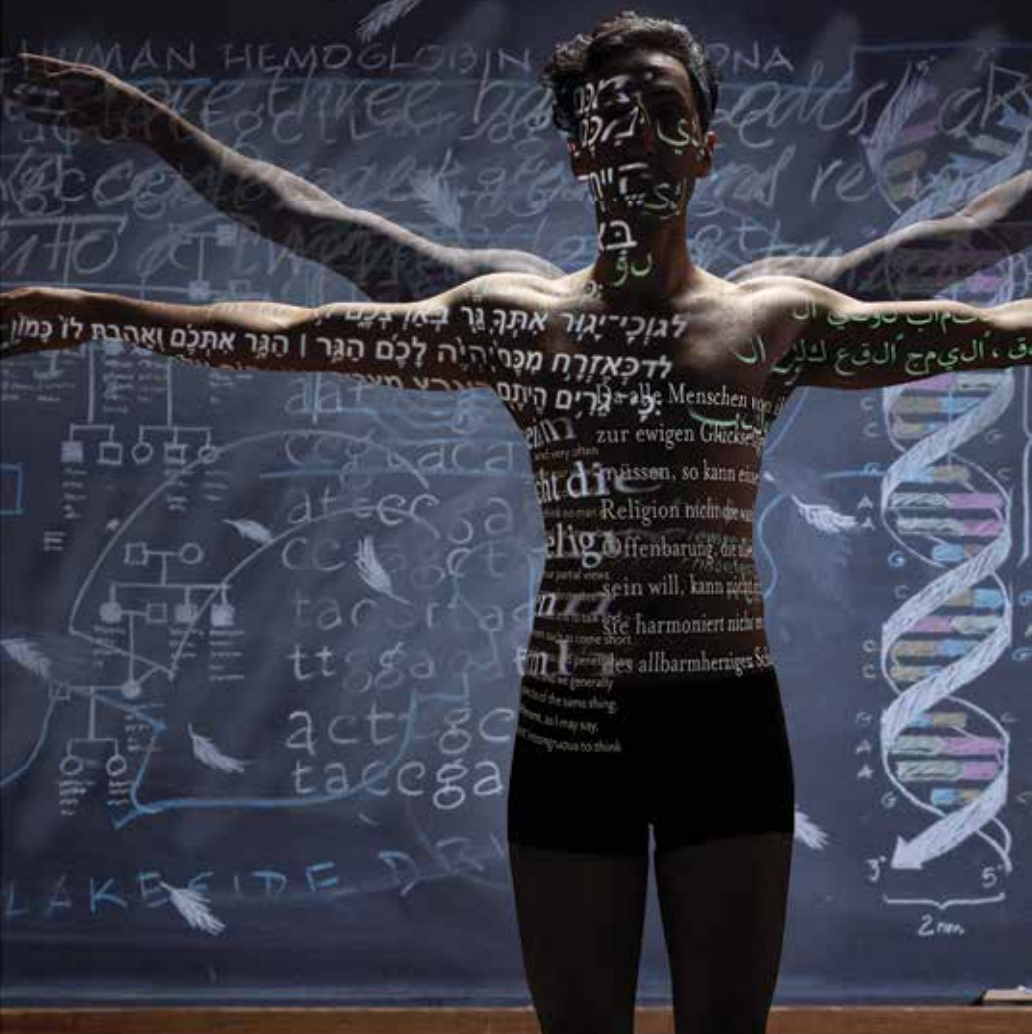


BIRDS OF A KIND



SUPPORT FOR THE 2019 SEASON OF THE STUDIO THEATRE IS GENEROUSLY PROVIDED BY SANDRA & JIM PITBLADO

PRODUCTION SUPPORT IS GENEROUSLY PROVIDED BY BARBARA & JOHN SCHUBERT, BY SYLVIA SOYKA AND BY CATHERINE & DAVID WILKES

SUPPORT FOR THE CREATION OF *BIRDS OF A KIND* WAS GENEROUSLY PROVIDED BY THE FOERSTER BERNSTEIN NEW PLAY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Stratford
FESTIVAL

AN INTERCULTURAL ODYSSEY

BY ANTONI CIMOLINO

This production of *Birds of a Kind* is the culmination of a long and winding journey.

In 2006 I received a galley proof of a new book written by one of the world's greatest living historians: *Trickster Travels* by Natalie Zemon Davis. It came to me from a friend, Gene Garthwaite, a historian and Persian specialist at Dartmouth College. He thought it might make a good play.

Perhaps the idea came to him because previous work by Natalie had provided the source material for the film *The Return of Martin Guerre*. Or perhaps he thought that a Shakespeare company would be interested in the book's subject, Leo Africanus – a historical figure who many believe served as inspiration for the character of Othello.

A Moroccan diplomat who was born in Granada, Leo Africanus – or al-Hasan ibn Muhammad al-Wazzan, as he was named at birth – was captured by pirates in the Mediterranean in 1518 on his way back from Mecca. Realizing they had no ordinary man in hand, the pirates made a gift of him to Pope Leo X. The Pope, a Medici prince, took a great liking to Wazzan and offered him liberty in exchange for his conversion to Christianity. Wazzan then wrote a series of brilliant books, including an introduction to Africa, a continent as yet largely unknown to Europeans. He is thought to have died in Tunis in 1554.

His is a story of crossing cultural borders. It inspired the central theme for this 2019 Stratford Festival season: *Breaking Boundaries*. His story raises many questions: how do we stay true to ourselves as we make new lives in a



new society? As the play asks: "What is a life lived between two worlds? What is a migrant? A refugee? A mutant?"

In 2007 I brought *Trickster Travels* to the then newly appointed Artistic Director of the French Theatre of the National Arts Centre, Wajdi Mouawad. Wajdi is also a writer, and at that time his play *Scorched* had become an international sensation. It had a powerful sense of cultural awareness. Wajdi's experience as the child of a family fleeing the war in Lebanon suggested a possible empathy for Wazzan's story.

He loved the book, and when he met Natalie they became instant friends.

I offered Wajdi a commission to adapt it for the stage, but he told me that, as the NAC's new Artistic Director, he couldn't take on outside work. Nevertheless, he assured me that his interest in the book was very strong and that someday he would like to create an adaptation.

The years went by. Wajdi left the NAC when his term ended, moved to France and freelanced as a writer and director. He called me in 2011 to ask if his adaptation of *Trickster Travels* could be a Stratford collaboration with Berlin's Schaubühne Theatre. He had agreed to write a play for them and felt the urge to move forward on Natalie's book. As his life had taken him on a migration to Europe, it seemed most promising to work with a continental company to create the play. So I agreed. And the play began to take shape in a month-long workshop in 2012. Still, it was not completed.

And then again life took both Wajdi and me in different directions. I became Artistic Director at Stratford, and a few years later Wajdi won the remarkable distinction of being appointed Artistic Director of one of France's five national theatres, Le Théâtre de la Colline in Paris.

It was then that he decided to make this play his first at the Colline. The resulting work, *Tous des oiseaux*, won the Grand Prix from the critics as the most outstanding piece of theatre in the 2017/18 Paris theatre season.

The title comes from a story told by Wazzan/Leo Africanus about an amphibious bird. In order to avoid paying taxes to the Bird King, the bird dives into the water and lives among the fish. He does so until the Fish King asks that he pay taxes. The bird then returns to the air – for a time.

It's telling that Wazzan is intrigued by the bird's ability to defy the conventional demands of identity. Birds are not bound by walls or borders. If you could ask a bird, "Where are you from?" it would likely answer, "From all over!" Birds' migratory routes inform their sense of identity, but no single place defines them.

Wajdi writes often in this play of an individual's mother tongue. Perhaps for all creatures this is the single strongest source of identity: the call of our mother. A mother penguin can land on a shore, facing thousands of other penguins, and call out. Her child will recognize her distinct voice.

Respecting the vital importance of the mother tongue, this Stratford Festival production – like the original in Paris – is performed in multiple languages: German, Hebrew, Arabic and English. The English surtitles we're using are from the beautiful translation by Linda Gaboriau, who was part of the original *Tous des oiseaux* team.

The selection of languages has been determined during our rehearsal period, based upon the speaker, situation and dramatic intent.

The play was developed with the contribution of artists from all over the world, especially Palestinians and Israelis. Its many languages, each unique, bring nuance and richness of texture to the piece. Yet – paradoxically, perhaps – this diversity also brings clarity. So too does the historical perspective provided by Natalie in her story of the Trickster who lives happily among different cultures, religions and worlds.

I asked Wajdi what he thought of the complex migratory journey that led to his completion of this extraordinary work. He replied that *Birds of a Kind* taught him how much time it truly requires for him to write a play.

I'm proud to have started him on the voyage. To all the Birds of a Kind, I say, "Welcome Home."

LIVING IN TWO WORLDS

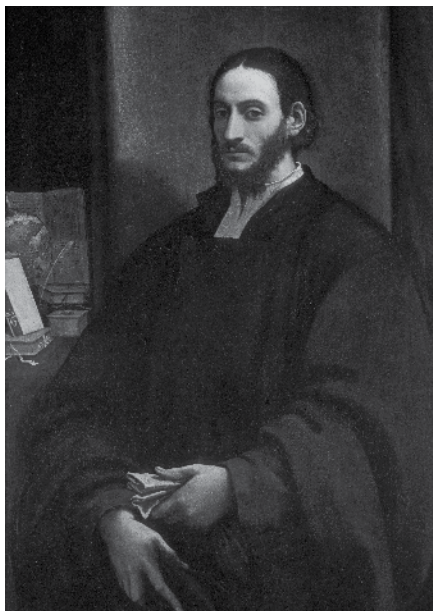
BY SARA R. HOROWITZ

What if birds could grow gills and swim with sea creatures, alternating between sea and sky at will? They could revel in the beauty or escape predators of either realm. With such shape-shifting powers, they could break free from the confines of their birth, redefining themselves by traversing boundaries. And what if we humans could do something comparable – alter ourselves to blend into the cultures we visit and inhabit? Would we choose to be at home anywhere – but perhaps not altogether as the selves we once were?

This shape-shifting metaphor underlies Wajdi Mouawad's play *Birds of a Kind*. The play explores provocative and difficult questions about identity, belonging, and the possibilities of shaping one's own destiny, following one's heart, and feeling the pull of where and whom one comes from. The play draws on classical themes – star-crossed lovers like Romeo and Juliet, relentless secret-seekers such as Oedipus Rex – and weaves them into a contemporary tapestry. The star-crossed lovers, Eitan and Wahida, meet as graduate students at the library of Columbia University in New York City. Removed from their families of origin – he, the German-born Jewish son of an Israeli man and a German Jewish woman, and she, the American-born daughter of Arab parents no longer alive – imagine a love unimpeded by the enmities between their respective communities. Although the romance develops far from the conflict, it is not clear whether they can keep their love in a protective bubble. Simultaneously, Eitan seeks to unravel long-buried family secrets that promise to further complicate

the pulls of the past, and will either liberate or explode relationships.

Three sets of national conflict tug at Wahida and Eitan as they struggle to maintain their relationship. The first – the Reconquista, or the centuries-long wars between Christian and Islamic forces vying for control of the Iberian peninsula – speaks to them indirectly, through Wahida's doctoral research. The second, the Nazi genocide of European Jews in the middle of the twentieth century, influences the way Eitan's grandfather and parents each see the world and define their Jewishness. The third, the Arab-Israeli conflict, intrudes upon Wahida's



AL-HASAN IBN MUHAMMAD AL-WAZZAN AL-FASI (LEO AFRICANUS) IS THOUGHT TO BE THE SUBJECT OF THIS PAINTING, "PORTRAIT OF A HUMANIST," BY SEBASTIANO DEL PIOMBO, C. 1520.

and Eitan's relationship, demanding that they define their alliances. Taken together, these conflicts – which have nothing and everything to do with the young couple – pose fraught questions about the nature of identity and memory, the individual and the collective, love and repudiation.

Wahida's doctoral thesis focuses on al-Hasan ibn Muhammad al-Wazzan al-Fasi, a sixteenth-century diplomat and scholar also known by the name Leo Africanus. The bird metaphor is drawn from his writings. The play was inspired by *Trickster Travels*, a speculative biography of al-Wazzan by social historian Natalie Zemon Davis. Al-Wazzan was born in Granada in the 1480s; his family fled to Morocco a decade later, when the kingdom of Granada – the last Iberian Muslim holdout – fell to Christian forces. Under the rule of Catholic Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand, Muslims and Jews were forced to convert or to go elsewhere. Al-Wazzan's family settled in Fez, where they had influential family members. Young al-Wazzan's intellect and eloquence impressed the sultan, who sent him on diplomatic missions. Captured by corsairs – Spanish Christian pirates – who realized his value, al-Wazzan was presented to the Pope. Given access to a rich library, he agreed to be baptized and renamed, and lived in Rome as a Christian scholar. Answering Europe's thirst to know about places considered exotic, he published a historical geography based, at least in part, on his travels as a diplomat.

Al-Wazzan's life and writing hover beneath the surface of the play, offering one example of deeply rooted enmities giving way to peaceable and productive relations. While a far cry from contemporary ideas about cultural diversity – al-Wazzan must, after all, convert – his life and intellectual accomplishments in Rome come about because both he and Pope Leo X look past Christian-Muslim warfare. Zemon Davis imagines him holding on to his heritage internally even as he lives outwardly as a Christian, refusing to portray Islam in negative terms. He interacts comfortably with Christians, Jews, and Muslims. Some

research suggests that al-Wazzan's mother was born Jewish, converting to Islam before marriage. After a decade of publishing on a wide range of topics, al-Wazzan disappears from the public record. Researchers conjecture that he lived out his years quietly as a convert to Christianity in Italy, or that he returned to Morocco or ended up in Tunisia, reclaiming his faith as a Muslim.

Eitan grows up with not only historical but familial memory of the Holocaust. His grandfathers were German Jews who survived Nazi atrocity, but responded differently. Eitan grapples with whether descendants of survivors are obligated to remember, and just what that legacy entails. Eitan and his family argue about the lessons of history. Their debates resonate with contemporary discussions about the legacy of the Holocaust, with implications for Eitan's relationship with Wahida. At the Passover seder – the ritual marking the biblical story of the Exodus and liberation from slavery – the play links survival with the biblical injunction to remember being an oppressed stranger and to nurture compassion. Eitan's father argues that after surviving genocide, Jewish people must not give Hitler a "posthumous victory" (to use Canadian philosopher Emil Fackenheim's term) by intermarrying.

Most immediately, the two lovers face the ramifications of the Arab-Israeli conflict. When Wahida and Eitan meet – the present moment of the play – Israel has been a Jewish sovereign state for seventy years and has attained peace treaties with several Arab countries. Over the course of the play, time shifts backwards, so that several wars punctuate the lives of the characters. In 1967, Eitan's grandfather is a soldier in Israel's fight for survival against Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. Israel captures Jordanian-held territory on the western side of the Jordan River, whose population is largely Palestinian. The region remains in Israel's control, with some measure of autonomy eventually accorded to its Palestinian residents.

By 1982, the Palestine Liberation Organization had built up a military base

in southern Lebanon. Aided by Syria, it attacked northern Israeli towns. In June of that year, Israel invaded Lebanon, aiming to create a buffer zone. Lebanon's Phalange Party, composed of Lebanese Maronite Christians, allied with Israel. When the newly elected Phalangist president of Lebanon was assassinated by a Syrian agent, Israel allowed Phalangist forces to enter Palestinian refugee camps, where they massacred many of the inhabitants. As the play suggests, for many Israelis this episode provoked a moral crisis. An Israeli inquiry found the Israeli army indirectly responsible for civilian killings and forced the minister of defence to resign.

In 2000, to stem a series of violent incursions and suicide bombers during the second Intifada, or Palestinian uprising, Israel began constructing a barrier and series of checkpoints that would control passage to and from the West Bank. The barrier, part wall, part fence, had its desired effect – a sharp reduction in violence. But it came at a cost to Palestinians on both sides of the barrier, separating families and making commuting to jobs and schools cumbersome and humiliating.

In an era marked by an unprecedented movement of people and peoples, as immigrants, refugees, and exiles, Mouawad's play extends beyond the circumstances of Arab-Israeli tensions to probe the conflicting pulls of cultural freedom and inherited memory. Familial and national legacies enrich our lives, shaping our sense of who we are and deepening our values. Do they also doom us to endless cycles of hatred? Abandoning difficult legacies might help us break out of inherited animosities, freeing us to shape our own lives and loves. But that can leave us rootless, adrift from our past and ourselves. Mouawad's play brings shape-shifting birds and a sixteenth-century boundary-crossing Muslim-Christian to bear on our own vexed millennium.

Sara R. Horowitz is a professor of humanities at York University, where she teaches comparative literature and Israeli cinema and literature. She is the author of Voicing the Void: Muteness and Memory in Holocaust Fiction and co-editor of the forthcoming Shadows on the City of Lights.

A VESSEL FOR CO-EXISTENCE

BY FILIZ ÇAKIR PHILLIP

The place we visit in *Birds of a Kind* – the Mediterranean Basin – is a tangled web of interwoven stories and identities. While the play's setting is modern day, the character of its geography is ancient. All seas both separate and connect peoples, and that has been particularly true of the Mediterranean. It has long been home to diverse cultures, nations, traditions, and beliefs, producing a cultural exchange that has persisted through war and peace. In times of reflection, it has allowed us to learn from each other and build bridges to a better mutual understanding. The

Mediterranean is not only a sea but also a magnificent vessel for co-existence.

In *Birds of a Kind*, this idea is embodied in the subject that Wahida, the Moroccan graduate student, is researching: the Muslim historian al-Hasan ibn Muhammad al-Wazzan. Born in Spain at the end of the 15th century, al-Wazzan was living in Morocco when he was captured by a Christian pirate and presented to Pope Leo X in Rome as a prize. What did Pope Leo X do with al-Wazzan? Converse with this stranger to feed a curiosity about an unknown geography and culture? While

“WHAT ECONOMIC, POLITICAL, AND CULTURAL RELATIONSHIPS ALLOWED MUSLIM CIVILIZATIONS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE TRANSFORMATIONS IN ART, SCIENCE, AND MUSIC THAT TOOK PLACE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN WORLD?”

the answers can only be conjecture, the questions hint at a broader inquiry that addresses the history of the Mediterranean Basin: how did people of different nations and cultures engage with each other? What economic, political, and cultural relationships allowed Muslim civilizations to contribute to the transformations in art, science, and music that took place in the Mediterranean world?

One response relates to the 1799 play that, in a complementary pairing with *Birds of a Kind*, is also being presented in this 2019 Stratford Festival season. In *Nathan the Wise*, the daughter of a Jew is saved by a Knight Templar, who is in the midst of the Third Crusade yet is invited to stay at the palace of Saladin, the sultan. This is a far more nuanced vision of the medieval age than the current idea that it was an era dominated by hatred amongst Jews, Christians, and Muslims. The play's humanist vision of medieval times is echoed in the origins of a game that gained popularity in that era: chess. Invented in Southeast Asia thousands of years ago to educate the next generation of rulers, chess was, according to the *Shahnameh* (Iran's epic Book of Kings) introduced to the Iranian grand vizier in the sixth century. The conquest of Iran in the seventh century made the game of kings known to the Arabic peninsula, from where it spread during the ninth century to the Mediterranean nations of Spain and South Italy.

By al-Wazzan's time, the Mediterranean Basin was awash with cultural exchange. The invitations issued to Florentine artists such as Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo to take part in visual art and architectural projects in the East, such as the 1502 proposal for the Golden Horn bridge in Constantinople, demonstrate the era's readiness for interaction between East and West. However, there was already more to the story. These interactions can be understood either as an evolution of the Byzantine Empire or as a new type of relationship, one built on fear of an identified enemy, tempered with intellectual curiosity and artistic creation.

As we see in *Birds of a Kind*, those tensions have come down to our own time, along with the challenges they present. How can we encourage cross-cultural tolerance? How can we support co-existence? How can we express unity and love instead of cultivating hatred and fear? As we leave the theatre, we would do well to take those questions with us.

Dr. Filiz Çakır Phillip is Curator at the Aga Khan Museum in Toronto. In partnership with Gallerie degli Uffizi, Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut, and the Medici Archive Project, she is currently working on an exhibition with the working title “Florence & the East” that explores reciprocal intercultural exchanges and relationships.

THE PARTICULAR GIFT

BY DARREN MARKS

The seder scene in *Birds of a Kind* is a family conversation, heated and poignant, that frames many of the questions raised by this play – questions about fate/destiny, freedom of choice or nature, and responsibility within communities, whether religious, secular or scientific. Those same questions are asked by Jewish religious leaders, politicians and families, both in Israel and in the diaspora (Galut), as the moral centres of recent Jewish experience pass on. These are the Holocaust (or Shoah) survivors whose very survival guaranteed a Jewish future and whose post-Shoah lives have framed Jewish life and reality. Their feeling of guilt, the guilt of the survivor, is, as expressed by David in the play, “a particular gift.” The question of what it means to Jewish people to live in the shadow of Holocaust and in the reality of Israel is welcomed as a gift by most Jews today as both a memorial to those who guaranteed the survival of the Jewish people by dying in the camps and an honouring of those who escaped death to seed our future. This paradoxical gift is, and will remain, a privilege for the generations who came after.

For those outside the seder family experience, the question can be a confounding one, making it seem that Judaism is fated to be locked into a conversation with a horrific genocide, with no freedom but to live in the shadow of death. But as other cultures that have experienced genocides know, the “particular gift” of survival requires much intention, an exercise of will, on the part of both the oppressed and the oppressor. For Jews post-Shoah, this intention revolves around two themes: the centrality of Jewish life and the nation state of Israel.

The seder Haggadah (religious text), a retelling of the Exodus story of Passover, is about divine intervention in the history of the Jewish people. A reminder that Israel – as a people rather than a place – is never alone but is guided by the hand of its G-d. Of course, for many, the Holocaust is a direct challenge to this idea. The unimaginable destruction of six million souls, the now-understood impact of trauma on those who escaped and the various forms of inaction with which the world responded to the Holocaust are omnipresent in Jewish and Christian post-Shoah theologies (and histories). For many, the answer is a recommitment to strident Jewish religious life; others embrace a Jewish cultural experience that contains within it varying levels of religion – or none. But remaining Jewish – itself a question for every family to grapple with – is the goal.

The perpetuation of Jewishness requires, at least, Jewish self-awareness and certainly Jewish children. If children are present at the seder dinner, then the four Haggadah questions are asked both informally and structurally. To ask the questions is to struggle with G-d; to struggle with G-d is to be Israel as a people. The centrality of Jewish life is a gift, particularly in a world that still harbours anti-Semitism, as observed in recent North-American attacks, or that refuses to acknowledge its anti-Semitic past – something that is evident in Canada’s own near history. (Less than an hour away from this theatre, in Grand Bend’s elite cottage neighbourhoods, Jews were unwelcome as recently as 1962.) Having Jewish children is an antidote to that hate. And so Jewish culture is worn proudly and taught to be strong, and to remain Jewish is a new commandment.

The seder dinner conversation is also about Israel as a place. What was once a theological idea or dream – to be in our homeland established by the Messiah – is post-1948 a political and cultural reality. There is indeed the real possibility of “next year in Jerusalem” – the words with which the seder ceremony traditionally concludes. And so Israel as a nation state and the biblical land (Eretz Israel) are another “particular gift” for Jewish people. And, given the history of Judaism and the *realpolitik* of the last seventy years, that state’s survival is not ironclad. That is a fact this Jewish thinker wishes others to grasp most firmly, whether through inter-faith dialogue or through conversation with your Jewish neighbour. Israel as a political reality is central to Jewish thought post-Holocaust, and questions of BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) movements, even within Jewish circles, cut very close to the bone.

The intersection of material and spiritual themes in Jewish life and Israel is complex. Unlike some Christian traditions, Judaism offers no single central authority to tell Jews how to be Jewish. As in other religious traditions, to be Jewish is to engage in a textual conversation with Judaism’s holy books and its history, and to ask questions of the present through the lens of the history of this people and their G-d. For most Jewish theologians of the last forty years, the creation of Israel as a nation state is an uneasy answer to the problem of the hidden face of G-d during the Holocaust. For Israelis, the politics of such an answer pose an ongoing riddle. What exactly does a Jewish state look like? Is it merely a buffer against anti-Semitism? Is it merely organized around a Jewish calendar and culture – and if so, which culture? How does it relate to the bricolage of Jewish cultures from early secular Zionists to post-Shoah highly religious European Jews to those whose faith dissipated in the former U.S.S.R.? Israel’s intellectual history or master story involves the Holocaust and the burden of this “particular gift.”

Both Jewish life (and its continuation in Jewish children and families) and the idea of Israel come from the thinking and feeling prompted in Jews by the Holocaust. That thinking, that feeling, informs the seder dinner of *Birds of a Kind*. It is white-hot, urgent and imperative.

But – and importantly – while this is a particular gift, I do not think it is a particular burden: the burden of guilt as understood in popular psychology. It is the burden of belief and hope. It is knowing that this generation of Jewish people, both in the Galut and in Israel, has been given the role of prophets to ask how they will live in the belief that they are not alone but as part of a long history of a people guided by Hashem’s (G-d’s) hand. In a very secular society, this may seem to be a kind of madness, and perhaps it is. But for Jews and Israelis, living that way is a present task and one that provides the context for our seder family dinner. It is often hot in temper, but heat separates the dross from the desired product in a forge. And the gift of survival, first won by those who died, escaped and forged existence in Israel and in arid lands around the world, is one that remains unopened or unfound, like the *afikomen*, until the prophesied redemption in Israel (the land) for Israel (the religious people) becomes a reality. Or at least until we can take for granted a world in which being Jewish is not a problem.

Dr. Darren Marks teaches Jewish studies at Huron College, Western University.

Editor’s note: Some Jews customarily spell God as “G-d,” in deference to a Biblical prohibition against writing the name of God in case it should later be erased or destroyed.

WAJDI MOUAWAD

Born in 1968, author, actor and director Wajdi Mouawad spent his early childhood in Lebanon, his adolescence in France and his young adult years in Quebec before settling in France, where he now lives.

He studied at Montreal's École nationale de théâtre du Canada, receiving a diploma in performance in 1991. Upon graduation he began co-directing his first company, Théâtre Ô Parleur, with actor Isabelle Leblanc. In 2000, he assumed the role of artistic director for the Théâtre de Quat'Sous in Montreal, a position he held for four seasons. He served as artistic director for the Théâtre français du Centre national des Arts d'Ottawa from 2007 to 2012. He is now director of La Colline, théâtre national in Paris.

Translated into more than twenty languages, his plays have been produced in countries around the world. They include *Littoral* (1997), which he also adapted and directed for film in 2005; *Rêves* (2000); *Incendies* (2003), which he staged, in Russian, for Theatre Et Cetera in Moscow; and *Forêts* (2006). In 2008, he wrote, staged and performed the one-man show

Seuls. In 2009, as artist in residence of the sixty-third edition of the Festival d'Avignon, he was entirely dedicated to putting together the tetralogy *Le Sang des Promesses*, comprising a new version of *Littoral* together with *Incendies*, *Forêts* and a new work, *Ciels*. He has also written plays for young people: *Alphonse* (1996), *Pacamambo* (2000) and *Assoiffés* (2007). *Birds of a Kind*, his most recent work, was first presented as *Tous des oiseaux* at La Colline in 2017.

Mouawad is also the author of the novels *Visage retrouvé* (2002) and *Anima* (2012), which won the Grand Prix Thyde Monnier from the Société des Gens de Lettres, the award Phénix de Littérature au Liban and the Prix Littéraire du 2ième roman de Laval, amongst others.

Among his many other awards are the Governor General's Literary Award and the Prix de la dramaturgie francophone de la Société des auteurs et compositeurs dramatiques. He is a Chevalier de l'Ordre National des Arts et des Lettres de France, an Officer of the Order of Canada, and a Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Québec.

TRANSLATOR

LINDA GABORIAU

Linda Gaboriau has translated more than 125 plays and novels from the French, including the works of Québec's most prominent playwrights. Her translations of plays by Michel Marc Bouchard, Normand Chaurette, Daniel Danis, Wajdi Mouawad and Michel Tremblay have been published and widely produced in Canada and abroad. Her long collaboration with Michel Marc Bouchard has included the film adaptations of *Lilies* (1996 Genie

Award, Best Motion Picture), *The Tale of Teeka* and *The Girl King*, directed by Mika Kaurismäki. Her theatre translations have garnered many awards across Canada. She has been a finalist for the Governor General's Award for Translation six times, winning the award in 1996 for *Stone and Ashes* (Daniel Danis) and in 2010 for *Forests* (Wajdi Mouawad). She was named a Member of the Order of Canada in 2015.

THE MEIGHEN FORUM

SUPPORTED THROUGH AN ENDOWED GIFT FROM KELLY & MICHAEL MEIGHEN
AND THE T.R. MEIGHEN FAMILY FOUNDATION



NATALIE ZEMON DAVIS
AUGUST 14



FILIZ ÇAKIR PHILLIP
AUGUST 25



PAUL YACHNIN
SEPTEMBER 25

ADAPTATION AND INSPIRATION

Chalmers Lounge, Avon Theatre, Wednesday, August 14, 10:45 a.m.–noon. From \$20

When historian Natalie Zemon Davis won the Holberg Prize for *Trickster Travels*, her groundbreaking work on “decentering history,” she didn’t imagine it would inspire a play. Join Dr. Zemon Davis, translator Linda Gaboriau and Antoni Cimolino, Artistic Director of the Festival and director of the play, in a discussion of the evolution of *Birds of a Kind*, conceived when playwright Wajdi Mouawad was asked to adapt the book for the stage.

TAFATHALO: NEAR-EASTERN DINNER & TALK

Paul D. Fleck Marquee, Festival Theatre, Sunday, August 25, 5:30–7:30 p.m. From \$53

Dr. Filiz Çakır Phillip, Curator of the celebrated Aga Khan Museum in Toronto, leads guests on a visual journey through the history, art and customs of the medieval Near-Eastern world. Enjoy an authentic and delectable Levantine meal prepared in partnership with the acclaimed chefs of Diwan, Mark McEwan’s award-winning restaurant at the Aga Khan Museum.

RECONCILING RELIGION

Chalmers Lounge, Avon Theatre, Wednesday, September 25, 10:45 a.m.–noon. From \$20

From the English Reformation to the Enlightenment to now, religion has been challenged by developments in science and philosophy. David Seljak, Chair of the Department of Religious Studies, University of Waterloo, and Paul Yachnin, Tomlinson Professor of Shakespeare Studies, McGill University, discuss the continued importance of faith in an increasingly secular world.

Funding in part by the Government of Ontario



STRATFORDFESTIVAL.CA/FORUM

ENGLISH LANGUAGE PREMIÈRE

BIRDS OF A KIND

BIRDS OF A KIND
BY **WAJDI MOUAWAD**
ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY **LINDA GABORIAU**

SUPPORT FOR THE CREATION OF *BIRDS OF A KIND* WAS GENEROUSLY PROVIDED BY
THE FOERSTER BERNSTEIN NEW PLAY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM.

For professional or amateur production rights, please contact
Simard Agence Artistique: info@agencesimard.com. 514.578.5264

THE CAST

in order of appearance

Wazzan

Aladeen Tawfeek

Library Patron, Waiter

Danny Ghantous

Library Patron, Nurse

Oksana Sirju

Library Patron, Orderly

Shelly Antony

Library Patron, Rabbi

Ron Kennell

Wahida

Baraka Rahmani

Eitan

Jakob Ehman

Eden

Hannah Miller

Leah

Deb Filler

Etgar

Harry Nelken

David

Alon Nashman

Norah

Sarah Orenstein

Doctor

Miranda Calderon

UNDERSTUDIES

Shelly Antony Wazzan, Waiter
Miranda Calderon Norah, Eden
Diane Flacks Leah, Nurse, Doctor
Danny Ghantous Eitan, Rabbi
Ron Kennell David
Stephen Russell Etgar
Oksana Sirju Wahida

THERE WILL BE ONE

20-MINUTE

INTERVAL

AUDIENCE ALERT

This production contains partial nudity
and profanity. It uses startling sounds,
fog, haze and e-cigarettes.

ARTISTIC CREDITS

Director **Antoni Cimolino**

Designer **Francesca Callow**

Lighting Designer **Michael Walton**

Projection Designer **Jamie Nesbitt**

Composer **Levon Ichkhanian**

Sound Designer **Adam Harendorf**

Dramaturge **Bob White**

Intimacy Coach **Anita Nittoly**

Language Coaches **Jewels Krauss, Hannah Miller, Aladeen Tawfeek**

Arabic Translation **Jalal Altawil**

Hebrew Translation **Eli Bijaoui**

German Translation **Uli Menke**

Historical Consultant **Natalie Zemon Davis**

Producer **David Auster**

Casting Director **Beth Russell**

Creative Planning Director **Jason Miller**

Assistant Director

Peter Pasyk

Assistant Lighting Designer

Alia Stephen

Script Coordinators

Marie Fewer-Muncic

Emma Slunt

Maxwell T. Wilson

Stage Manager

Alison Peddie

Assistant Stage Managers

Alice Ferreyra

Ann Stuart

Production Assistant

Emma Slunt

Production Stage Managers

Marie Fewer-Muncic

Kim Lott

Maxwell T. Wilson

Technical Director

Sean Hirtle

MUSIC

ORIGINAL MUSIC RECORDED BY

Guitars/Oud/Bouzoukis/

Banjitar

Levon Ichkhanian

Director of Music

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Marilyn Dallman

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Antoni Cimolino
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Danny Ghantous

Ron Kennell
Hannah Miller
Alon Nashman
Sarah Orenstein

Ann Stuart
Bahareh Yaraghi

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BY KATE HENNIG
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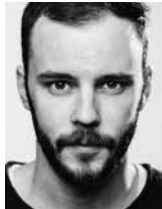
ACTING COMPANY



SHELLY ANTONY



MIRANDA CALDERON



JAKOB EHMAN



DEB FILLER



DIANE FLACKS

SHELLY ANTONY

BIRMINGHAM CONSERVATORY, 2018

2019: Surveyor, Griffith, Dr. Butts in *Henry VIII*, Al-Hafi in *Nathan the Wise* and *Orderly* in *Birds of a Kind*. Stratford debut. **Elsewhere:** Tariq in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (The Grand Theatre); Mubeen in *Acha Bacha* (Theatre Passe Muraille); Cassio in *Othello* (Driftwood Theatre); Iyar in *Little Pretty and the Exceptional* (Factory Theatre); Amir in *Disgraced* (Magnus Theatre); Craig/Craven in *Scarberia* (YPT); Henry Clerval in *Frankenstein Live!* (Arts Engine); Damon in *Perceptions of Love in the Pursuit of Happiness* (Toronto Fringe). **Film/TV:** Ronnie in *JETT* (HBO/Cinemax); Nick in *Reach* (Valence Films); Aathi in *A Gun & A Ring* (EyeCatch Multimedia). **Training:** MFA – The New School for Drama; Birmingham Conservatory. **Awards:** Dora nomination for Best Individual Performance for *Scarberia*. **Et cetera:** Thank you to my family and friends.

MIRANDA CALDERON

2019: Sittah in *Nathan the Wise* and Doctor in *Birds of a Kind*. Stratford debut. **Elsewhere:** Elena in *Butcher* (Off-Mirvish/Why Not Theatre); *Flashing Lights* and *Italian Mime Suicide/Three Red Days* (Theatre Centre/Bad New Days); Donna in *Taking Care of Baby* (Storefront Theatre); *Prima Donna* (Luminato/Elgin Theatre and New York City Opera/BAM); Salome in *Salome* (Aurora Theatre Company). **Film/TV:** Ruth Paine in Hulu's miniseries *11.22.63*; BBC America's *Copper*. **Training:** London International School of Performing Arts, U.K.; Columbia University, N.Y. **Et cetera:** Miranda has written, produced and acted in two short films (*Body Parts* and *Alegra & Jim*) with her company, Midnight Snack, and is currently developing her first feature.

JAKOB EHMAN

2019: Templar in *Nathan the Wise* and Eitan in *Birds of a Kind*. Stratford debut. **Elsewhere:** *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Canadian Stage); *Idomeneus* (Soulpepper); *The Circle* (Tarragon); *Caught* (Theatre Passe Muraille); *Offline* (director), *The Libertine*, *Gotcha* (Talk Is Free); *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* (director), *House of Yes* (Storefront Theatre); *The Philanderess* (Toronto Fringe); *Cockfight* (Theatre Brouhaha/Red One); *Much Ado About Nothing* (Single Thread); *Blue Planet*, *Minotaur* (Young People's Theatre); *Nature of the Beast*, *Donors*, *Turtleneck* (safeword). **Film/TV:** Jakob stars as Miles in the award-winning film adaptation of *The Drawer Boy*. **Awards:** Jakob has been nominated for four Dora Awards for his work as an actor. **Online:** Instagram @yessilikepinacoladas, Twitter @jakeehman.

DEB FILLER

2019: Leah in *Birds of a Kind* and appears in *Nathan the Wise*. Stratford debut. **Elsewhere:** Celia, *Talking Heads* (Campbell House); Woman, *Death of a Salesman* (Toronto Centre for the Arts). **Elsewhere:** Lookingglass Theatre Company, N.Y. Theatre Workshop, Drill Hall, Auckland Theatre Company, Belvoir Street, Centaur Theatre, Buddies in Bad Times, The Factory, etc. **Writer/Performer:** *I Did It My Way in Yiddish (in English)*, *I Lost It in Kiev*, *Filler Up!*, *Punch Me in the Stomach* (off-Broadway, N.Y. Theatre Workshop, 36 characters). **Film/TV:** *The Handmaid's Tale*, *Shark Lords* (debuting FX), *My Perfect Valentine*, *Mr. Bernstein*, *Odd Squad*, *The Path to 9/11*, *The Last Laugh*, *Angst*, *Punch Me in the Stomach*. **Other:** Teacher, Brown University, Humber College, Toi Whaakari (N.Z.), etc. Studied with Stella Adler, Uta Hagen, Herbert Berghoff, Deborah Hedwall. **Voice:** Peg Bundy doll; Mummy, *Bob and Margaret*. **Et cetera:** Character artist, singer, guitarist, comic. fillerup.ca @debfiller.

DIANE FLACKS

2019: Nathan in *Nathan the Wise* and understudy in *Birds of a Kind*. Stratford debut. **Stratford:** 2018 Playwrights Retreat. **Elsewhere:** Favourites: *SIBS*, *Care* – co-written with Richard Greenblatt (Tarragon); *Body Politic*, *Freda and Jem* (Buddies); *Unholy* (Nightwood); Titania in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Yichud* (TPM); Diane's internationally acclaimed and well-toured solo shows *Myth Me*, *By a Thread*, *Random Acts*, *Bear With Me*. **Film/TV:** Writer: *Baroness Von Sketch Show*, *Workin' Moms*, *Kids in the Hall*, *Working the Engels*. Acting: *Portrait of a Serial Monogamist*, *Take This Waltz*, *Alias Grace*. **Radio:** National Parenting columnist for CBC radio, contributor to *Tapestry*, *DNTO*. **Award Nominations:** Chalmers for *SIBS*; Dora for *Unholy* (playwriting) and *By a Thread*, *Body Politic* (performance); Emmy for writing for *Kids in the Hall*. **Upcoming:** Developing two new plays: *Guilt* and *Cassandra*. **Et cetera:** For my kids, Eli and Jonny, the inspirations for Nathan. dianeflacks.com.

ACTING COMPANY



DANNY GHANTOUS



RON KENNEL



HANNAH MILLER



ALON NASHMAN



HARRY NELKEN

DANNY GHANTOUS

2019: Guard in *Henry VIII*, Saladin in *Nathan the Wise* and Waiter in *Birds of a Kind*. Stratford debut. **Elsewhere:** Thomas in *The Philosopher's Wife* (Paradigm Productions); Dar in *The Invisible Hand* (Theatre Aquarius); Jacob in *Salt-Water Moon* (Why Not Theatre); Demetrius in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Shakespeare in the Ruff); Ben in *Sheets* (Veritas Theatre); Wilfrid in *Tideline* (Hart House Theatre); Sadiq in *A Line in the Sand* (Factory Theatre). **Film/TV:** Lead in Skylesse Films' *Victim*, lead in *Marty*. **Training:** Ryerson University, BFA Theatre Performance: Acting. **Awards:** Toronto Theatre Critics for *A Line in the Sand*. Nominations: 2016 Dora Award for *A Line in the Sand* and 2018 My Entertainment World Award for *Midsummer*. **Online:** Instagram: @daaaangh. **Et cetera:** Danny is a Greek-born, Egyptian-raised Lebanese-Palestinian actor who works and resides in Toronto. Danny is honoured to be a part of the 2019 Stratford Festival.

RON KENNEL

2019: Second Gentleman and Cardinal Campeius in *Henry VIII*, Bonafides in *Nathan the Wise* and Rabbi in *Birds of a Kind*. Eighth season. **Stratford:** *An Ideal Husband*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Julius Caesar*, *Cymbeline*, *Timon of Athens*, *King John*, *Henry IV*, *The Duchess of Malfi*, *Brothers Karamazov*, *Orpheus Descending*, *The Swanee*, *Agamemnon*. **Elsewhere:** *Lear* (Groundling), *The Boat* (TNB/Neptune), *Mr. New Year's Eve* (Blyth), *The Maids* (Buddies in Bad Times), *Mother Courage*, *St. Carmen of The Main* (NAC), *Death of the King*, *Macbeth*, *Aurash* (Modern Times), *Monsieur D'Eon Is a Woman* (Pea Green), *Picasso at the Lapin Agile* (Canadian Stage). **Film/TV:** *Dr. Cabbie* (writer), *Reveille* (writer, director, producer), *Leaving Turtleford* (director); acting credits include *Pompeii*, *Hemlock Grove*, *Angland Undercover*, *Mutant X*, *La Femme Nikita*. **Training:** George Brown Theatre School. **Awards:** Two Dora nominations – Best Actor; Harold Award. **Online:** Twitter @iscribe. **Et cetera:** Video game credits include *Far Cry Primal*, *Assassins Creed* and *Starlink*.

HANNAH MILLER

2019: Eden in *Birds of a Kind* and appears in *Nathan the Wise*. Stratford debut. **Elsewhere:** Marcellus/Guildenstern/Player Queen/Osric in Why Not Theatre's bilingual (ASL and English) production of *Prince Hamlet* (director Ravi Jain); Rabbi Michael Levitz-Sharon in *Bar Mitzvah Boy* (Harold Green Jewish Theatre); Lividia Swan in Peter Anderson's *Head Over Heels* (Caravan Farm Theatre); Abigail Williams in *The Crucible* (Soulpepper); Sandy in *The Crackwalker* (Theatre Passe Muraille). **Film/TV:** Guest spots on *Dark Matter* (SYFY), *Murdoch Mysteries* (CBC) and *Saving Hope* (CTV); as well as some obscure docudramas you might have seen on TV very late at night. **Training:** Soulpepper Academy; George Brown Theatre School. **Awards:** Dora nomination for Best Ensemble in *Prince Hamlet* (Why Not Theatre). **Online:** @hanniemiller.

ALON NASHMAN

2019: David in *Birds of a Kind*. Second season. **Stratford:** Co-creator and performer of *Hirsch*. **Elsewhere** (selected): *Hamlet*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Botticelli in the Fire/Sunday in Sodom**, *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*, *THIS* (Canadian Stage); *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Forests*, *Scorched**, *Democracy*, *Remnants** (Tarragon Theatre); *The Wild Duck* (Soulpepper); *Hedda Gabler* (Volcano Buddies in Bad Times); *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot** (Birdland Theatre); *Macbeth* (Modern Times); Narrator/Storyteller in *Tales of Two Cities* (Tafelmusik). Toured nationally and internationally with *Kafka and Son*, *Alphonse*, *The Snow Queen*, *Charlotte: A Tri-Coloured Play with Music* (Theatrtle). **Awards:** *Dora Award for Outstanding Production, Toronto Theatre Critics Award, Outstanding Performance Awards: Prague Fringe, Orlando Fringe, Ottawa Fringe, Germany's Thespis Festival, South Africa's National Arts Festival. This is Alon's sixth time performing in a play by Wajdi Mouawad. **Online:** alonnashman.com.

HARRY NELKEN

2019: Patriarch in *Nathan the Wise* and Etgar in *Birds of a Kind*. Stratford debut. **Elsewhere:** Shelly in *Glengarry Glen Ross*, Jorgenson in *Other People's Money*, Sam in *The Homecoming* (Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre); Josef in *Butcher*, Marvin in *The Stone Angel* (co-production with National Arts Centre), Chasuble in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Floyd in *Cold Comfort* (Prairie Theatre Exchange); Einstein in *Einstein's Gift*, van Daan in *The Diary of Anne Frank* (Winnipeg Jewish Theatre); Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*, Polonius in *Hamlet* (Shakespeare in the Ruins); Al in *The Sunshine Boys* (Cheminaius Theatre); Eli in *Zadie's Shoes* (Factory Theatre). **Film/TV:** *Nikola Tesla* and *The End of the World*; *Harry Nelken At Your Service* (documentary). **Training:** Workshops with Carol Rosenfeld, John Hirsch, Ron Eyre, James Dodding, Ulla Ryum, Giles Block. **Awards:** Best Performance, 2008 season, for Shelly in *Glengarry Glen Ross* (Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre).

ACTING COMPANY



SARAH ORENSTEIN



BARAKA RAHMANI



STEPHEN RUSSELL



OXSANA SIRJU



ALADEEN TAWFEEK

SARAH ORENSTEIN

2019: Daya in *Nathan the Wise* and Norah in *Birds of a Kind*. Fifth season. **Stratford:** Queen Elizabeth (*Shakespeare in Love*), Penfield (*Possible Worlds*), White Queen (*Alice Through the Looking-Glass*), Matilda (*Zastrozzi*). **Elsewhere:** Originally from Halifax, she first appeared at age five with Neptune Theatre. Selected theatre: *The Message, Scorched, Hope Slide, The Retreat, The Collected Works of Billy the Kid, Mrs. Klein* (Tarragon); *The Virgin Trial* (ATP); *My Name is Asher Lev* (HGJT); *The Glass Menagerie* (Grand); *Oslo, The Normal Heart, Stuff Happens* (Studio 180/Mirvish). 13 seasons with Shaw Festival: *Heartbreak House, The Millionaire, Bliethe Spirit, Councillor at Law*. **Film/TV:** *Fugitive Pieces, Orphan Black, Murdoch Mysteries, The Calling, Reign*. **Directing:** Assistant director: *Oslo, King Charles III* (Mirvish/Studio 180). **Awards:** Dora (Best Actress), *Patience*; Capital Critics' Circle (Best Actress), *Doll's House*. Recipient: 2018 RBC Emerging Director.

BARAKA RAHMANI

2019: Wahida in *Birds of a Kind*. Stratford debut. **Elsewhere:** *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley* (Arts Club Theatre Company); *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (The Grand Theatre); *Almost Maine, Wit* (Pacific Theatre); *TBD* (Radix Theatre); *Der Wink* (Leaky Heaven); *Marrow* (Alley Theatre; Resounding Scream). **Film/TV:** *Slasher* (S3, Netflix); *Incendies; Nina's World*. **Training:** BFA in Theatre from Simon Fraser University. **Awards:** Two-time Jessie Award nominee; recipient of the Vancouver Fringe Artistic Risk Award (2015). **Online:** Instagram: barakarahmani. **Et cetera:** This show is very close to the heart for Baraka, who was born and raised in the Middle East, and constantly strives to bridge gaps through her passion for the arts. Baraka dedicates this show to her mother, Wafa.

STEPHEN RUSSELL

2019: Lord Chamberlain in *Henry VIII* and understudy in *Birds of a Kind*. 36th season. **Stratford:** Gaunt (*Breath of Kings: Rebellion*), Silence (*Breath of Kings: Redemption*), Helicanus (*The Adventures of Pericles*), Doc (*West Side Story*), Slim (*Of Mice and Men*), Mr. Brownlow (*Oliver!*), Chorus Leader (*Oedipus Rex*), Cornwall (*King Lear*) at the Lincoln Center in New York and the title roles in *Julius Caesar, Richard II* and *Henry VI*. **Elsewhere:** He has appeared in theatres across Canada, most recently as Alex Priest in *Heisenberg* at the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre (2018). **Film/TV:** His most recent film project is the part of Pontius Pilate in *The Gospel of John*. **Et cetera:** He lives in Stratford with Astrid.

OXSANA SIRJU

2019: Jane Seymour in *Henry VIII*, Rachel in *Nathan the Wise* and Nurse in *Birds of a Kind*. Second season. **Stratford:** Margherita in *Napoli Milionaria!*, Messenger in *The Comedy of Errors* and appeared in *The Tempest*. **Elsewhere:** Hedda Gabler in *Hedda Gabler*, Blanche in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Viola in *Twelfth Night*, Lady Balthazar in *The Comedy of Errors*, Horatio in *Ophelia*, The Good Woman in *A Party for Boris* (York University); Mrs. Harper in *Innocence Lost* (Ovation Academy). **Film/TV:** Recurring role on *Workin' Moms* (CBC). **Training:** York University, London Academy of Music & Dramatic Art, Birmingham Conservatory for Classical Theatre, 2017-2018. **Online:** @itsoksanasirju. **Et cetera:** This year is for my mother and father, Brianna, Alesha, Jyn-Li and Michelle... and for Maya, my love, my light.

BIRMINGHAM CONSERVATORY, 2017/18

ALADEEN TAWFEEK

2019: Wazzan in *Birds of a Kind* and appears in *Nathan the Wise*. Stratford debut. **Elsewhere:** El Fayoumy in *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot* (Infurnace Theatre); Bert Healy in *Annie* (BIS Cairo); various roles in *El Bernamig El Tarfeehy* (Théâtre de Carthage). **Film/TV:** *Flarsky, The Truth About the Harry Quebert Affair, The Hummingbird Project, The Looming Tower, Mother!, X-Men Apocalypse, The Art of More, Incendies*. **Training:** Introduction to the Meisner Technique Workshop; International Actor Core Group; Straeon Acting Studios (since 2008); two years of ballet and jazz – Conservatoire de Danse de Montréal. **Online:** aladeentawfeek (Instagram). **Et cetera:** Aladeen is also an award-winning director of video game trailers.

ARTISTIC COMPANY



FRANCESCA CALLOW



ANTONI CIMOLINO



ALICE FERREYRA



MARIE FEWER-MUNCIC

FRANCESCA CALLOW

2019: Designer of *Henry VIII* and *Birds of a Kind*. 12th season. **Stratford:** Francesca has spent over 10 years working as a design assistant and designer at the Stratford Festival. **Elsewhere:** Francesca has worked as a designer and design assistant in Canada, the U.S. and U.K. While working in England as an art director for film and television (BBC and Channel 4), she also studied Architectural History at Oxford University and Historic Conservation at Oxford Brookes University, and has worked for English Heritage, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, founded by William Morris, and for Condé Nast at *The World of Interiors* magazine.

ANTONI CIMOLINO

2019: Artistic Director of the Stratford Festival. Director of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Birds of a Kind*. 32nd season. **Stratford:** Directing credits include *The Tempest*; *Napoli Milionaria!*; *The School for Scandal*; *Macbeth*; *The Hypochondriac*; *Hamlet*; *The Alchemist*; *King Lear*; *The Beaux' Stratagem*; *Mary Stuart*; *The Merchant of Venice*; *Cymbeline*; *The Grapes of Wrath*; *Bartholomew Fair*; *Coriolanus*, with Colm Feore and Martha Henry; *As You Like It*, featuring original music by Barenaked Ladies; *King John*; *Love's Labour's Lost*, with Brian Bedford; *Twelfth Night*, with William Hutt; *The Night of the Iguana*; and *Filumena*, with Richard Monette. Among his other accomplishments, Mr. Cimolino was instrumental in establishing the Festival's Endowment Foundation, which now stands at \$81 million, as well as in the renovation of its Avon Theatre and the creation of its Studio Theatre. In January 2018, Mr. Cimolino and Executive Director Anita Gaffney launched a \$100-million campaign to build a glorious new Tom Patterson Theatre, a campaign that had already achieved 70% of its target at the time of its public launch. **Elsewhere:** The Canadian premiere of *ENRON* (Theatre Calgary); *Twelfth Night* (Attic Theatre, Detroit); *A Woman of No Importance* (Hilberry Theater, Detroit). A champion of the arts and culture, Mr. Cimolino served as the Founding Chair of Culture Days, a nation-wide celebration of arts and culture in Canada. He has initiated collaborations with several prestigious theatre companies, including Montreal's Théâtre du Nouveau Monde, Ottawa's National Arts Centre, New York's Lincoln Center and City Center, San Francisco's American Conservatory Theater and the Chicago Shakespeare Theater. He also spearheaded the Festival's involvement in a joint project with CUSO International, Canada's international volunteer co-operation agency, to establish a performing arts and educational centre in the city of Suchitoto, El Salvador.

ALICE FERREYRA

2019: Assistant stage manager of *Henry VIII* and *Birds of a Kind*. Third season. **Stratford:** Apprentice stage manager of *Bakkhai*. Production assistant for the Avon Theatre. **Elsewhere:** Stage management credits include *Maggie & Pierre* (Grand Theatre); *Ladies and Gentlemen, Boys and Girls* (Roseneath Theatre); *The Drowsy Chaperone*, *Footloose*, *The Addams Family*, *Spring Awakening*, *Spelling Bee*, *Curtains*, *If We Were Birds*, *Nine* (Randolph Academy for the Performing Arts); *Godspell* (Theatre Sheridan); *Seussical Jr.* (Capitol Theatre); *Anne of Green Gables*, *Evita*, *Shrek the Musical* (Lower Ossington Theatre). Assistant stage manager: *Tafelmusik*; *The Canadian* (Thousand Islands Playhouse). Apprentice stage manager: *Hamlet* (Tarragon Theatre); *The Magic Flute* (Canadian Opera Company); *City of Angels* (Theatre By the Bay); *The Story* (Theatre Columbus); *The Test* (The Company Theatre). **Et cetera:** Adam, thank you for being my constant.

MARIE FEWER-MUNCIC

2019: Production stage manager of the Studio Theatre. 13th season. **Stratford:** Stage manager: *Julius Caesar*, *Romeo and Juliet* (2017), *Bunny*, *Possible Worlds*, *Hirsch*. Assistant stage manager: *Tartuffe*, *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*, *Evita*, *Kiss Me, Kate*, *Macbeth*, *Rice Boy*, *Romeo and Juliet* (2008), *Caesar and Cleopatra*, *My One and Only*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *The Duchess of Malfi*, *The Blonde*, *the Brunette* and *the Vengeful Redhead*. Apprentice stage manager: *Noises Off*. **Elsewhere:** Theatre Sheridan, Edinburgh Fringe Festival, Tarragon Theatre, Theatre Erindale, Theatre Direct Canada/Eldritch Theatre, Theatre Passe Muraille/Obsidian Theatre Company, Bluewater Summer Playhouse, Charlottetown Festival. **Training:** Sheridan College. **Et cetera:** Much love to Emily and Michael.

ARTISTIC COMPANY



ADAM HARENDORF



LEVON ICHKHANIAN



KIM LOTT



JAMIE NESBITT



ANITA NITTOLY

ADAM HARENDORF

2019: Sound designer of *Birds of a Kind*. Second season. **Stratford:** Assistant sound design for *Fiddler on the Roof*. **Elsewhere:** *Alligator Pie*, *The Cherry Orchard* (Souleppper); *Beauty and the Beast*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Elf: The Musical*, *La Cage aux Folles*, *The Jungle Book* (Neptune Theatre); *Under the Stairs*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *James and the Giant Peach* (Young People's Theatre); *Hedwig* (TIFT); *Cannibal! The Musical* (Starvox); *Pirates of Penzance*, *Dear Johnny Deere*, *Closer Than Ever*, *Educating Rita*, *Driving Miss Daisy*, *Third Floor* (Thousand Islands Playhouse); *Lost in Yonkers*, *Visiting Mr. Green* (HGJT). **Film/TV:** *Tin Canyon*, *Ted-Ed*, *Typesetter Blues* (TOGETHER: Words + Pictures). **Training:** Music Industry Arts at Fanshawe College. **Awards:** Merritt Award nomination for Outstanding Sound Design. **Online:** 14blue.com. **Et cetera:** Adam dedicates this show to his two sons, Avery and Reid.

LEVON ICHKHANIAN

2019: Composer for *Birds of a Kind*. Stratford debut. **Elsewhere:** 40 plus years performing, composing and production; Beijing Olympics, Men's World Handball Games (Qatar), Montreal Jazz Festival, Nashville Chamber Orchestra, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Adiss, Zakir Hussain, Loreena McKernitt, A.R. Rahman, Marvin Hamlisch, Elton John, Brian Wilson, Rufus Wainwright, Peter Murphy, Daniel Lanois, Barbra Streisand, Gustavo Santaolalla and Atom Egoyan. **Film/TV:** *Robbing the Cradle of Civilization* (winner – Silver Medal New York Festival); *A Jake and a Tom* (winner – Hollywood Family Film Festival); *Season of Song: Canadian Tenors and Friends* (winner – Gemini Award). **Training:** PhD candidate, Ethnomusicology, York University. **Online:** levonmusic.com. **Et cetera:** Rich musical family history: Father, Edouard – Musical Director; uncle Joseph – Founder, Classical Guitar Program, Beirut Conservatory of Music; uncle Jacques – Flamenco guitarist; cousin Hovannes Darbinian – Armenian Tar leading scholar/performer, choir master, Etchmiadzin, Armenia (oldest cathedral in the world). Life is complete with Sevan, Taline, Edouard and Caterina.

KIM LOTT

2019: Production stage manager of the Studio Theatre. Stage manager of *Mother's Daughter*. 22nd season. **Stratford:** Stage manager credits (selected): *The Matchmaker*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Evita*, *West Side Story*. Assistant stage manager credits (selected): *Treasure Island*, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, *South Pacific*, *The King and I*, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, *Henry V*, *Much Ado About Nothing*. **Elsewhere:** Stage manager credits (selected): *Ring of Fire*, *Hana's Suitcase*, *Annie*, *Twist and Shout* (Grand Theatre); *My Fair Lady* (Drayton Entertainment). Assistant stage manager credits (selected): *The Spitfire Grill*, *Proof* (Grand Theatre); *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (Opera Ontario); *The Who's Tommy* (Elgin Theatre). **Et cetera:** Gratitude to my beautiful loved ones I am blessed to celebrate with every day and share energy, enthusiasm, breakfast, joy, laughter and unconditional love. Be well & shine.

JAMIE NESBITT

2019: Projection designer of *Billy Elliot the Musical*, *Little Shop of Horrors* and *Birds of a Kind*. Second season. **Stratford:** *The Rocky Horror Show*. **Elsewhere:** Jamie designs across North America and Europe. His résumé includes Shaw Festival, Canadian Stage, NAC, Souleppper, Vancouver Playhouse, Citadel, Theatre Calgary, Palazzo Circus (Berlin), Calgary Stampede Grandstand Show, Bard on the Beach, Arts Club, Charlottetown Festival, Electric Company, Kidd Pivot (Germany/Canada), Pacific Opera, Opéra de Québec, Company 14 (New York), Vancouver Opera, Why Not, Neptune, The Belfry, Old Trouts, ARC, Cahoots, PTE, Touchstone, Vertigo, Pi Theatre, Theatre Network, Birdland, Rumble Productions, Gateway, Green Thumb, Yukon Arts Centre, and many more. Graduate of Studio 58. **Awards:** Eight Jessie nominations, one Jessie Award, three Critter nominations, two Critter Awards, two Sterling nominations, five Betty nominations, two Betty Mitchell Awards, one Capital Critics Award, 2008 Mayor Arts Award (Vancouver), 2007 Sam Payne Award, 2006 Earl Klein Memorial Scholarship. **Online:** jamienesbitt.com.

ANITA NITTOLY

2019: Fight director for the 2019 season and intimacy coach of *Birds of a Kind*. Fourth season. **Stratford:** 2013: assistant fight director; 2017: associate fight director; 2018: associate fight director. **Elsewhere:** Centaur Theatre (2019 – *The Last Wife*, 2018 – *Successions*, 2017 – *The 39 Steps*), Carousel Players (2019 – *Whole World*), Blyth Festival (2018 season), Outside the March/The Company Theatre (2018 – *Jerusalem*), Canadian Opera Company (2014/15/16). Anita is the stage combat instructor at the National Theatre School in Montréal and teaches workshops year-round across southern Ontario. Anita also works as a stunt performer and stunt actor in the film and TV industry. Selected credits: *Enhanced*, *Teen Titans*, *The Boys*, *Dark Matter*, *KIN*, *Designated Survivor*, *12 Monkeys*, *Murdoch Mysteries*.

ARTISTIC COMPANY



PETER PASYK



ALISON PEDDIE



BETH RUSSELL



ALIA STEPHEN



ANN STUART

PETER PASYK

2019: Assistant director of *Birds of a Kind*. Third season. **Stratford:** Assistant director: *The School for Scandal*, *Breath of Kings*. **Elsewhere:** Peter directed the Dora-nominated productions *Killer Joe*, *Dying City*, *When the World Was Green* and *The Jones Boy*; the world premières of Jordan Tannahill's *Late Company* (Theatre Centre), Rosamund Small's *Sisters* (Soulpepper), and Rosa Laborde's *Like Wolves* (GCTC); the Toronto premières of *The Nether*, *Poison* and *Killer Joe* (Coal Mine Theatre), and *The Circle* (Tarragon Theatre); and the Winnipeg première of *Outside Mullingar* (Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre). Peter was the Artistic Director Intern at Crow's Theatre, a director-in-residence at Tarragon Theatre and Shaw Festival, and a participant in Stratford's Michael Langham Workshop for Classical Direction. **Awards:** Best Production, *NOW* Audience Choice Award (*Late Company*). Two-time Dora Award nominee for Outstanding Direction; Winnipeg Theatre Award nominee for Outstanding Direction.

MICHAEL LANGHAM WORKSHOP, 2016/17

ALISON PEDDIE

2019: Stage manager of *Birds of a Kind*. Stratford debut. **Elsewhere:** Production stage manager at the Shaw Festival for seven seasons. Credits include *The Horse and his Boy*, *Mythos*, *Saint Joan*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Whisky Bar*, *You Never Can Tell*, *Arms and the Man*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Present Laughter* (production stage manager, Shaw); *The Fantasticks*, *Fronteras Americanas*, *What the Butler Saw*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *Top Girls*, *Waiting for the Parade* (production stage manager, Soulpepper); *The Stepmother*, *A Little Night Music*, *Tristan, Mock and Mabel*, *Arms and the Man*, *Rosmersholm*, *Autumn Garden*, *The Constant Wife*, *Floyd Collins*, *Pal Joey*, *The Plough and the Stars* (stage manager, Shaw Festival); *Rice Boy*, *The Shape of Things*, *Adam Baum and the Jew Movie* (stage manager, Canadian stage); *Cloud 9* (stage manager, Mirvish); *Music for Contortionist*, *Liquor*, *Guns*, *Karate*, *Little Mercy's First Murder* (stage manager, Tarragon).

BETH RUSSELL

2019: Casting director of the Stratford Festival. 11th season. **Elsewhere:** In addition to casting, Beth has been an artists' agent, co-producer of CBC-TV's *Triple Sensation*, Senior Vice President: Casting and Creative Development for Livent, National Casting Director for CBC Radio Drama and Artistic Associate for Toronto Arts Productions (now Canadian Stage). As casting director, Ms Russell has been responsible for Broadway and West End premières of productions including *Parade*, *Ragtime*, *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.

ALIA STEPHEN

2019: Assistant lighting designer of *Henry VIII*, *Nathan the Wise* and *Birds of a Kind*. Second season. **Stratford:** Assistant lighting designer of *The Rocky Horror Show*, *An Ideal Husband* and *Julius Caesar*. **Elsewhere:** Worked primarily in Vancouver and the U.K.; credits include lighting design for *Alternative Routes* (National Dance Company Wales); *PROUD*, *People Like Us* (Firehall Arts Centre); *Supernatural Noir* (Fugue Theatre); *Adding Machine: The Musical* (Pipedream). Set/lighting design for *Cabaret* (Pipedream). Set/lighting/projection design for *Secret Service* (Fugue Theatre). Assistant lighting design for *Topdog/Underdog*, *Boeing Boeing*, *Henry and Alice Into the Wild*, *Circle Mirror Transformation* (Arts Club); *Blue Box* (Nightswimming). Assistant projection design for *Falstaff* (Bard on the Beach). **Training:** Completing thesis work for MA in Lighting Design, Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. BFA in Theatre Production and Design, UBC. Diploma in Technical Theatre, Capilano University. **Online:** aliatephen.com.

ANN STUART

2019: Stage manager of *Henry VIII* and assistant stage manager of *Birds of a Kind*. 38th season. **Stratford:** Ann has worked in all four of the Festival's theatres on over 70 productions with Artistic Directors Michael Langham, Robin Phillips, John Neville, David William, Richard Monette and Antoni Cimolino. She also worked as personal assistant to Robin Phillips. From 2007 until 2016 she was coordinator of the Birmingham Conservatory for Classical Theatre under Director Martha Henry. This is her sixth production with Antoni Cimolino, her ninth with Martha Henry and her thirtieth play from Shakespeare's canon. She also stage-managed Directors' Workshop Projects for Kate Newby, Sarah Kitz and Andrew Kushnir. Ann has won two unsolicited Guthrie Awards, had an exhibition of her backstage photographs and is writing a history of Hart House Theatre (University of Toronto). Remembering Nel always.

ARTISTIC COMPANY



MICHAEL WALTON



BOB WHITE



MAXWELL T. WILSON

MICHAEL WALTON

2019: Lighting designer of *Billy Elliot the Musical*, *Little Shop of Horrors* and *Birds of a Kind*. 15th season. **Stratford** (selected): *The Rocky Horror Show*, *The Music Man*, *The Tempest*, *Napoli Millionaire!*, *Guys and Dolls*, *The School for Scandal*, *Tartuffe*, *Macbeth*, *A Chorus Line*, *The Hypochondriac*, *Hamlet*, *The Sound of Music*, *Oedipus Rex*, *King Lear*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Othello*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *The Matchmaker*, *Twelfth Night*, *As You Like It*. **Elsewhere**: *A Doll's House Part 2* (RMTCl Mirvish); *The Full Light of Day* (Electric Company); *Tartuffe* (Canadian Stage/Stratford); *The Humans* (Citadel/Canadian Stage); *A Christmas Carol*, *Enron* (NAC); *Jenufa*, *Maria Stuarda*, *Albert Herring* (Pacific Opera Victoria); *Così Fan Tutte* (Canadian Opera Company); *A Word or Two* with Christopher Plummer (CTG/Stratford, Los Angeles); *Yoshimi Battles the Pink Robots*, *Sideways* (La Jolla Playhouse); *Julie*, *The Other Place*, *Harper Regan*, *Venus in Fur* (Canadian Stage); *Chimerica* (RMTCl/Canadian Stage).

BOB WHITE

2019: Director of The Foerster Bernstein New Play Development Program. Dramaturge of *Mother's Daughter*, *Birds of a Kind* and *The Front Page*. 11th season. **Stratford**: Dramaturgy credits include *Paradise Lost*, *Brontë: The World Without*, *The Breathing Hole*, *The Virgin Trial*, *Bunny*, *The Last Wife*, *Christina*, *The Girl King*, *Taking Shakespeare* and *Hirsch*. **Elsewhere**: Artistic Director, Alberta Theatre Projects, Calgary (1999 to 2009); Co-Director, Banff Playwrights Colony (1997 to 2009); Artistic Director, Factory Theatre, Toronto (1979 to 1987). Director of over 75 productions from Cow Head, Newfoundland, to Victoria, British Columbia, and places in between, but mostly in Calgary and Toronto. **Training**: Loyola College, Montreal, and University of Alberta. **Awards**: Member, Order of Canada; Honorary Doctor of Laws (LLD), University of Calgary; eight Betty Mitchell Award nominations and three wins: "Outstanding Direction" (Calgary). In 2018, Bob was awarded the GE Lessing Award for Career Achievement by the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas.

MAXWELL T. WILSON

2019: Production stage manager of the Studio Theatre. Stage manager of *Nathan the Wise*. 21st season. **Stratford** (selected): *An Ideal Husband*, *Treasure Island*, *The Breathing Hole*, *Breath of Kings: Rebellion*, *Carousel*, *Man of La Mancha*, *The Three Musketeers*, *Taking Shakespeare*, *Henry V*, *Hosanna*, *Peter Pan*, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *Cabaret*, *South Pacific*, *My One and Only*, *The Winter's Tale* and *Death of a Salesman*. **Elsewhere**: Max's career spans over 30 years, including work with Citadel Theatre, Theatre Calgary, Edmonton Opera, Opera Atelier, the Canadian Opera Company, Canadian Stage, Young People's Theatre and Mirvish Productions. **Training**: BA, University of Lethbridge. **Awards**: 2012 and 2017 Guthrie Award. **Et cetera**: For a change, Max works with a leading purveyor of orchid-growing supplies at ravenvision.ca.

THE MICHAEL LANGHAM WORKSHOP FOR CLASSICAL DIRECTION

Overseen by Antoni Cimolino, Artistic Director, and Martha Henry, Director of the Michael Langham Workshop, this program offers an unparalleled opportunity for directors in the mid-stages of their careers to develop their craft within the rich artistry of the Stratford Festival. Each participant works as the assistant or associate director on one production in the season, as well as being offered classes focused on the classics. In the fall, selected participants direct a short piece of classical theatre performed for an invited audience.

Participants this season: Rodrigo Belfuss, Mikaela Davies, Brad Hodder, Ash Knight, Andrew Kushnir, Julia Nish-Lapidus, Jennifer Stewart. Alumni this season: Graham Abbey, Alan Dilworth, Peter Pasyk, Zack Russell, Birgit Schreyer Duarte, Ted Witzel.

We extend our thanks to the Department of Canadian Heritage, the late Johanna Metcalf and the George Cedric Metcalf Foundation and the Philip and Berthe Morton Foundation.

This program is made possible in part by the Government of Canada



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THE BIRMINGHAM CONSERVATORY FOR CLASSICAL THEATRE

Stephen Ouimette leads this intensive professional training program that nurtures talented young actors for a future in classical theatre.

Selected by audition, participants are usually graduates of an accredited theatre training program who have at least two years' professional experience. Upon completion of the program – which includes, among other activities, classes in voice, movement and text with Festival coaches and distinguished guest instructors – participants may be offered places in the following season's acting company. Thirty-one members of this season's company are past participants.

The Birmingham Conservatory for Classical Theatre is made possible by the support of the Birmingham family, the Stratford Festival Endowment Foundation and the Department of Canadian Heritage. The 2019 in-season work of Conservatory participants is supported by the Marilyn & Charles Baillie Fund and by John & Therese Gardner.

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