

THE 17TH ANNUAL NEXT STAGE THEATRE FESTIVAL REVEALS 2024 PROGRAMMING AND CASTING OCTOBER 16-27, 2024 AT BUDDIES IN BAD TIMES THEATRE

(September 24, 2024) **Toronto Fringe** is proud to announce the programming and casting for the **17th Annual Next Stage Theatre Festival** taking place October 16-27, 2024, with six compelling shows from Toronto, Edmonton, and Halifax including solo shows, musicals, and dramatic theatre.

Next Stage Theatre Festival is the Toronto Fringe's boutique, curated performance festival that allows for elevation and creative risk-taking by six talented companies who are poised and ready for their next stage. Audiences will enjoy programming in two theatre spaces in Buddies in Bad Times Theatre with shows in both the Chamber and Cabaret.

Back by popular demand, **Next Stage** will host a screening of the cult classic *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* on October 27 featuring an all-Deaf shadow cast for the first time in history, presented by The Disability Collective!

Next Stage will also present community programming, parties, and professional development opportunities. On October 16, **Next Stage** audiences, performers and supporters are invited to **Toast to Next Stage** in Tallulah's Cabaret to celebrate the opening of the 17th Next Stage Theatre Festival. On October 19, indie arts workers of all kinds are invited to the **Indie Community Social**, creating space to discuss all the big questions, barriers, and joys of making theatre right now in Toronto, Canada, and the world in general.

The 2024 Next Stage Theatre Festival Line-Up:

In Alphabetical Order

CIVILIZED

CIVILIZED Productions

Playwright: Keir Cutler

Co-Directors: John D. Huston (Métis), Paul Hopkins, Jay Havens

Cast: John D. Huston (Métis)

William Blank is back from the dead and talking to Canadians! He's here to convince YOU of the civilizing influence of government backed Residential Schools. Using songs, jokes, poetry, and sound bites from his days in Sir Wilfrid Laurier's government, Blank will defend the lawless... FLAWLESS... flawless schools they created. What could POSSIBLY go wrong?

GEMINI

Defiance Theatre

Playwright: Louise Casemore

Directors: Mitchell Cushman, Chantelle Han

Cast: Louise Casemore, Vern Thiessen

She's a bartender. He's a regular. With nothing in common except they're both there... every day. Bar games, pop culture, and a crash course through the generational divide – get tied up in the laugh-out-loud bonds of dependency and boredom. A hit of the High Performance Rodeo (Calgary, AB),

GEMINI combines the on-stage forces of Sterling Award winner Louise Casemore (*Undressed, OCD*) and Governor General Award winner Vern Thiessen (*Diviners, Einstein's Gift*).

I WAS UNBECOMING THEN

Downtown Theatre

Playwright: Lyndsey Bourne

Composer: Sam Kaseta

Director: Ilana Khanin

Cast: Astrid Atherly, Olivia Daniels, Tkaia Green, Lara Hamburg, Anikka Hanson, Thea Mae Hesler, Shannon Murtagh, heeyun park 박희윤, Riel Reddick-Stevens, Grace Rockett, Lizzie Song, 陳佳琦 Jenn Tan, Miranda Wiseman, Ellyse Wolter

I Was Unbecoming Then is an intimate new musical mixing hormones and harmonies. In a high school music room in North Vancouver, twelve teenage girls assemble to practice and perfect their parts, desperate to please Bruce, the choir director.

As with any group of girls - as with any choir - they are constantly listening to each other. Tuning and re-tuning. Adjusting to each other's movements, sounds, and rhythms. Finding dissonance and harmony.

THE NOOSE

Abigail Whitney Productions

Director/Producer: Abigail Whitney

Translator: Dr. Asselin Charles

Playwright: Frankétienne

Cast: Edmond Clark, Louco St. Fleur

Two Haitian immigrants - a middle class intellectual and a peasant - clash, banter, and ultimately unite in a New York City basement apartment in the 1980s, fighting for dignity in a world determined to crush their American dreams.

PRUDE

Probably Theatre Collective

Creator & Performer: Lou Campbell

Director: Stevey Hunter

PRUDE is a hilarious and high-energy blend of stand-up and drag. The piece begins as a motivational talk, given to the audience by the King of the Party, there to show everyone HOW TO HAVE A GOOD TIME. Slowly, through lip-syncs and mortifying personal tales, we watch them unravel onstage, digging into the complex experience of being asexual in an (allo)sexual world.

THIS FEELS LIKE THE END

Theatre Aurinko

Playwright: Bonnie Duff

Director: Michelle Blight

Cast: Cameron Laurie, Jasmine Case, Landon Nesbitt, Tara Koehler, Bonnie Duff

This Feels Like The End is a contemporary thriller featuring a cast and crew of Dora-Award winners, emerging artists, and Toronto theatre favourites. One morning, all over the world, the sun doesn't rise, and the lives of five individuals collide in an explosion of faith, folklore, and conspiracy. In Toronto, a mother and child grapple with the inexplicable. Some prepare for Armageddon. One

returns home to northern Finland to people who have, for centuries, lived in darkness for months of the year. What do you do when the world keeps spinning on...even after what feels like the end?

Tickets and passes for Next Stage are on sale now at fringetoronto.com/next-stage/about

In addition to this exceptional programming, Toronto Fringe has secured a matching donor for their fall fundraising campaign, with the Ray Ferris Springboard Fund offering up to \$50,000 to double any donations received! The Toronto Fringe is grateful for this support and will be [accepting donations to this campaign](#) throughout the Next Stage Festival.

Toronto Fringe is a grassroots, charitable organization that runs the Toronto Fringe Festival each July and the annual Next Stage Theatre Festival each October. Toronto Fringe offers various year-round programs that benefit youth, emerging artists, BIPOC artists, artists with disabilities, and the performing arts community at large. Embedded in Fringe's operations are the values of Access, Accountability, Creativity, Exploration, and Support.

Next Stage Theatre Festival

October 16-27, 2024

Buddies in Bad Times Theatre

12 Alexander Street

<https://fringetoronto.com/next-stage/shows>

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