A pre-show podcast providing insight into R+J’s artistic concept, set design, and more is available by clicking the icon to the right. The podcast was designed with blind and low vision patrons in mind, and is enjoyable by all.
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.
IF YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT A FRIEND OR LOVED ONE, OR HAVE SUICIDE-RELATED CONCERNS, HELP IS AVAILABLE. PLEASE CONNECT WITH THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES:

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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 is 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
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The Stratford 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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WHO, HOW AND WHY

BY RAVI JAIN

Classic plays are universal. They transcend time, language, borders and cultures. At the core of a classic is a central question that addresses fundamental reflections on who we are as humans.

I’ve come to understand that classics often carry the baggage of their own history. They bring with them expectations, memories and even the story of the story itself: “Oh, so-and-so’s Romeo was spellbinding; there will never be another like it.” Without knowing it, when watching a new production of a classic, many artists and audiences who’ve seen earlier versions seek a Xerox copy of what they remember, like revisiting a museum over the years to view an artifact that has been preserved over time. These individuals have assumptions about the way a classic should be done, and the success of a director’s interpretation is measured valuing tradition over invention.

Directors who interpret a classic often rely on an idea of realism, where the nominal time and place of a story need to be obeyed, and casting, costumes, sets and all must be authentic to that time and place. For so long, this way of thinking has limited who gets to tell stories and how we tell them. The heart of theatre is imagination, and when let loose an old story can make both the old and the new experience something together as if for the first time.

This brings us to $R+J$.

The Who:

Our cast is a formidable group of actors who bear no resemblance to that of any previous Stratford production of Romeo and Juliet – or, frankly, any production at the Festival in its esteemed history. We are not who you would expect to tell this story. By changing the who of the storytellers, we see and hear a play in completely new ways, through new lived experiences and imaginations.... Building empathy for the unknown.

The How:

When the story of Romeo and Juliet is told, it almost always begins with a prologue that explains to the audience what is about to happen, including the ending. We learn about the famous star-crossed lovers, and how their parents’ years-long feud, which has forbidden their love, ultimately ends when Romeo and Juliet take their own lives. The story is familiar, and it is often told in familiar ways.

Our play, $R+J$, takes the Romeo and Juliet story and examines it through the perspective of Friar Lawrence, a character who at many points in Shakespeare’s original makes choices that lead – directly and indirectly – to the deaths of the two young lovers. His intentions are good: to “bury their parents’ strife.” But the consequences are tragic.

$R+J$ takes place sometime after the deaths of Romeo and Juliet. In his loneliness, the Friar remembers and reflects on the events of their story. And as he remembers them, the characters come to life in his mind, and in his apartment. They are dreams, they are memories, they are his own constructions of what happened, and as the Friar visits and revisits them, he processes his own role in the events.

Finally, the Why:

It’s another way to look at a play that many of us feel we know. It’s a way to surprise ourselves and to think differently about how we look at the past and our place in it.
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FROM ROMEO AND JULIET TO R+J

BY KIRSTY JOHNSTON

My bounty is as boundless as the sea,
My love as deep; the more I give to thee,
The more I have, for both are infinite.

– Juliet, Act II, scene 2

Although you might be new to the full story of Romeo and Juliet, chances are you already associate their names with youthful, idealistic, love-struck passion and tragedy. Alternatively, this production might be your umpteenth encounter with Shakespeare's famous narrative, and you may have favourite interpretations from the countless versions created in different global contexts and various media. No matter how you arrive at this performance, the artists telling this story welcome you with the hope that something in their adaptation of this long-famous tragedy of "star-cross'd lovers" resonates with you in this extraordinary historical moment.

Nothing about theatre in 2021 is easy or obvious, as artists and audiences respond to the urgent demands of decolonization, Black Lives Matter, #stopasianhate, #metoo, the global pandemic and climate emergency. Add to this the tricky exigencies of collaborative work amid COVID safety protocols and it becomes clear that the stakes must be high for all involved to tell and witness this particular story now.

Award-winning director Ravi Jain and Why Not Theatre approach Shakespearean drama with big questions: “How can we reimagine these stories, who they’re for and who gets to tell them?” Jain acknowledges that asking such questions risks losing what we once understood Shakespearean plays to mean, but that in taking those risks we “re-find the relevance as to why we need to be doing them.” Why Not Theatre’s 2019 touring production of Prince Hamlet fully integrated American Sign Language with spoken English and sought to bring intersectional perspectives to bear on their adaptation of another famous Shakespearean play. R+J features a racially diverse complement of artists of different ages and disability experiences. Here again, the production’s choices about casting, access and inclusion seek to acknowledge the power and privilege of public storytelling. At the heart of this adaptation of Romeo and Juliet is a shared belief in the need for an expanded understanding of who can interpret and witness this text.

What might this story of passionate young love ensnared by grievous old hate mean right now? Some of the play’s purchase on the present leaps from the page. The tragedy centres on young people isolated from each other by an older generation in a dangerous time. Romeo is masked when he first encounters Juliet. The scale of their passionate social rebellion is staggering. The events turn on a letter whose urgent delivery is waylaid by an unanticipated plague quarantine (a familiar event to the London audiences who, around the time of the play’s emergence, witnessed the closing of their theatres due to plague). Perhaps over a year ago we would not have paused to consider the juxtaposition of teenage isolation, large-scale rebellion, masks and quarantines, but they strike us now. Most resonant, however, is the play’s searing demonstration of the tragedy that flows from not taking great care with the stories of love and hate that we inherit, share and act upon. It is a theme as evident in Shakespeare’s tragedy from 425 years ago as it is in this R+J.

That the play itself drew from several prior and well-circulated tales of young lovers divided and doomed by their quarrelling high-status families has been well studied. The strongest
direct source for Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* was Arthur Brooke's 1562 *The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet*. Shakespeare's care in shaping the narrative emerges in the striking changes he made to Brooke's poem. For example, his play shifts sympathy to the lovers over their elders, packs the action into a few short days, amplifies several roles played by secondary characters and lowers Juliet's age from sixteen to thirteen. The imminence of Juliet's fourteenth birthday on July 31 is noted several times in the dialogue. Her father cites her age and first encourages her suitor Paris to wait two more years for them to wed. Notably, he includes her voice in the initial discussion of consent:

**But woo her, gentle Paris, get her heart.**
**My will to her consent is but a part,**
**And, she agreed, within her scope of choice**
**Lies my consent and fair according voice.**

Paris insists, however, that Juliet is of marriageable age already. Lady Capulet and Juliet's nurse build context for his claims with references to their own marriage experiences. The Nurse, who has cared for Juliet since she was a baby, also introduces the long grief of child loss when she sees in Juliet echoes of her own lost daughter, Susan, who, but for tragedy, would have been Juliet's age. The Nurse keeps track of the girls' ages in relation to an earthquake eleven years earlier, establishing their shared history and longstanding subjection to destructive forces far greater than human desire. This production's casting of fourteen-year-old actor Eponine Lee in the role of Juliet introduces critical stakes in how this story is shared and also requires all involved to attend carefully to the critical matter of consent.

Shakespeare’s characterization of Romeo and Juliet may have drawn from his own family life. His eldest child, Susanna, was nearly thirteen when he wrote the play, and this has led some critics to wonder if she may have inspired the character's rebellious strength and voice. Juliet is Shakespeare's first tragic heroine and, measured in terms of her number of lines, third among all of his female characters. The demands of the role are high as she matures swiftly through the action, from a sheltered youth in a private garden to a new wife contemplating suicide in the family tomb. Shakespeare’s loss and burial of his only son, Hamnet, in August 1596 has also been queried as a source for the tragedy. In contrast with Shakespeare’s family, however, Romeo and Juliet are only children. This critical fact heightens the tragedy of their loss, for it also signals the end of their family houses.

While this production's casting follows Juliet's cited age in the original text, in other directions the distances between the actor and character identities are akin to those of the play's original cast. As for all of Shakespeare's first productions, cross-gender casting would have been assumed and the company actors who originally played Juliet, Lady Capulet and the Nurse would have been male. Many productions have, over time, played with this feature. Female actors, for example, were among the most lauded Romeos of the nineteenth century. This production returns the Nurse role to a male actor, while Tybalt, Benvolio and the Friar are all played by women. Without cross-gender casting today, remarkably few women’s voices would be heard in Shakespearean productions, as the plays offer seven times as many roles for men as women.

In this production, the pivotal role of Friar Lawrence is amplified and played by award-winning playwright, filmmaker, director and actor Alex Bulmer. Known internationally for her innovations and activism in disability theatre, Bulmer has particularly focused her recent work on serving blind theatre artists and audiences. For example, since 2019, her Blind Imaginings workshops run through the Canada Council have sought to “re-imagine the creative process from a non-sighted perspective, de-centring vision, and asking what can be discovered when we imagine beyond the assumed.” How, for example, might the relationship between Friar Lawrence and Romeo be shaped and revealed by the former's blindness? Such questions have been central in this adaptation, as Bulmer’s longstanding artistic processes and aesthetics clearly resonate with those of Jain and his collaborators.
R+J is anchored in Friar Lawrence’s memories of Romeo and Juliet’s tragic deaths five years earlier. He has developed rituals to mark the anniversary, and audiences come to the story through these. Layers of sound help to connect the present and past, as do the objects he preserves and touches as memory aids. Adapting Romeo and Juliet as the Friar’s memory play centres his understanding of the tragic events. The frame invites audiences to imagine beyond any prior assumptions about the story in order to attend to it anew. Perhaps, beyond these assumptions, its bounty right now may be, as Juliet suggests, “boundless as the sea.”

NOTES


4. Alex Bulmer website. alexbulmer.co.uk

Kirsty Johnston is a professor at the University of British Columbia Department of Theatre and Film. Her research and teaching explore disability arts and intersections of disability, access, and performance.
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Born in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1564, William Shakespeare was the eldest son of John Shakespeare, a glover and tanner who rose to become an alderman and bailiff of the town, and Mary Arden, the daughter of a wealthy farmer. The exact date of his birth is unknown, but there is a record of his baptism at Stratford’s Holy Trinity Church on April 26. Since an interval of two or three days between birth and baptism would have been quite common, tradition has it that he was born on April 23 – the same date as his death fifty-two years later.

The young Shakespeare is assumed to have attended what is now King Edward VI Grammar School in Stratford, where he would have studied rhetoric, grammar and ancient Roman literature in its original Latin. In 1582, when he was eighteen, he married Anne Hathaway, a farmer’s daughter who was eight years his senior. Anne was pregnant at the time, and the couple’s first daughter, Susanna, was born a few months afterwards in 1583. Twins followed two years later: a son, Hamnet, who died at the age of eleven, and a second daughter, Judith.

Nothing further is known of Shakespeare’s life until 1592, by which time he was sufficiently established as an actor and writer in London to be the target of a literary attack by a jealous fellow playwright, Robert Greene. Soon afterwards, an outbreak of plague forced the temporary closure of the theatres, and Shakespeare turned his attention instead to his long narrative poems *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*. He also began writing the Sonnets, a series of 154 complex and often ambiguous poems on themes of love, jealousy and mortality that have aroused much biographical speculation. By 1595, Shakespeare was back in the theatre, writing and acting for the Lord Chamberlain’s Men. His income as one of London’s most successful dramatists enabled him, in 1597, to buy a large house called New Place back in Stratford, and in 1599 he became a shareholder in London’s newly built Globe Theatre.

In 1603, when James I had succeeded Elizabeth on the throne, Shakespeare’s company was awarded a royal patent, becoming known as the King’s Men. Meanwhile, the playwright continued his business dealings in Stratford and in London, where in 1613 he bought a property known as the Blackfriars Gatehouse. He is believed to have spent increasing amounts of his time in Stratford from around 1609 until his death on April 23, 1616. He is buried in the town’s Holy Trinity Church.
THE CAST

Friar  Alex Bulmer
Juliet  Eponine Lee
Romeo  Dante Jemmott
Lady Capulet, Tybalt  Beck Lloyd
Benvolio  Lisa Nasson
Mercutio  Sepehr Reybod
Capulet  Rick Roberts
Nurse  Tom Rooney

ARTISTIC CREDITS

Director  Ravi Jain
Designer  Julie Fox
Lighting Designer  André du Toit
Composer and Sound Designer  Thomas Ryder Payne
Producer  David Auster
Casting Director  Beth Russell
Creative Planning Director  Jason Miller
Producer for Why Not Theatre  Kevin Matthew Wong
Creative Consultant  Alex Bulmer
Stage Manager  Alice Ferreyra Galliani
Assistant Stage Manager  Neha Ross
Apprentice Stage Manager  Erin Cunningham
Youth Advocate and Equity Consultant  Maggie Blake
Creative Enabler and Access Support for Alex Bulmer  Leah Cherniak
Blind and low-vision access consultants  Bruce Horak
Mala Naraine, Ed.D
Vision Loss Rehabilitation Ontario
Production Assistant  Rebecca Beith
Technical Director  Robbin Cheesman

MUSIC

Original music recorded by Thomas Ryder Payne
Original Songs
“Lost In My Mind”
Words and music by Eponine Lee, with additional material by Dante Jemmott

“Just You and I”
Words and music by Eponine Lee

Director of Music  Franklin Brasz
Music Administrator  Janice Owens

Special Thanks
Kat Germain
Ed Martin
Linda Prystawska

THIS PRODUCTION INCLUDES BURNING OF SAGE AND CANDLES
BACKSTAGE

Head Stage Carpenter
David McDonald

Head Electrician
Mick McDonald

Head Property
Jeffrey Hughes

Head Sound
Mike Watters

Crew
Craig Geiger
Hilary Pitman

Wardrobe Head
John Bynum

Wardrobe Attendant
Cvetka Fujs

Wigs and Makeup Head
Tracy Frayne

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Director of Production
Simon Marsden

Associate Director of Production
C.J. Astronomo

Scene Shop Manager
Evan Bonnah-Hawkes

Associate Technical Director
David Campbell

Production Administrator
Carla Fowler

Technical Director
– Scenic Construction
Andrew Mestern

Technical Direction Assistants
Laura Coleman
Zach Fedor
Frank Incer

Transportation
Dirk Newbery
James Thistle

PROPERTIES

Head of Properties
Dona Hrabluk

Assisted by
Ken Dubblestyne
Heather Ruthig

Properties Buyer
Kathleen Orlando

SCENIC ART

Head Scenic Artist
Duncan Johnstone

Assistant Scenic Artist
Michael Wharran

Assisted by
Blair Yeomans

SCENIC CARPENTRY

Head Carpenter
Ryan Flanagan

Assistant Head Carpenter
Paul Cooper

Assisted by
Simon Aldridge
Paul Hyde
Scott King
Corey Mielke
John Roth
Jody Satchell
Scott Schmidt
Mark Smith
Cliff Tipping

Sewers
Karen Merriam
Christine Yundt

Bijoux/Decoration
Liane Guttadaura

Boots and Shoes
Michael Karn

Dyeing
Sylvia Minarcan

Costume Breakdown and Paint
Lisa Hughes

Millinery
Monica Viani

COSTUME

Costume Director
Michelle Barnier

Cutters
Luci Pottle
Jennie Wonnacott

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THE COMPANY

ALEX BULMER
2021: Friar in and co-adaptor and creative consultant for R + J. Stratford debut. Named one of the most influential disabled artists by UK’s Power Magazine, Alex Bulmer has worked internationally across theatre, film, television, radio and education for thirty years. She is fuelled by a curiosity of the improbable, committed to collaborative art practice, and deeply informed by her experience of becoming blind. Alex is artistic director of Common Boots Theatre, co-founder of Crippling The Stage, lead curator of CoMotionFestival 2022 with Harbourfront Centre, and has worked with numerous companies in Canada and the UK. She is a mentor for Deaf and disabled artists, emboldens others to imagine beyond the assumed, and celebrates that disability is good for art.

DANTE JEMMOTT
2021: Romeo in R + J. Stratford debut. Dante Jemmott is an actor and recording artist who is eager to offer his gifts during this pivotal stage in the performing arts industry. Dante has appeared in the York University Department of Theatre’s productions of William Shakespeare’s Coriolanus, Charles Mee’s Iphigenia 2.0, Suzan-Lori Parks’s 365 Days/365 Plays and Amy Rutherford’s Mortified. Training: York University’s Acting Conservatory. Instagram:@dantejemmott. Et cetera: Dante is thrilled to be a part of such an amazing team, and is excited to be part of sharing this new world of Romeo and Juliet with you.

EPONINE LEE
2021: Juliet in R + J. Stratford debut. Elsewhere: Meghan in The Fixing Girl, Carrie in The Girl, Her Mum and The Raccoon With No Name (Young People’s Theatre); Fan/ Belinda Cratchit in A Christmas Carol (Soulpepper Theatre Company); Mamillius in A Winter’s Tale (Shakespeare in the Ruff); Lorna in The Full Light of Day (Luminato Festival/Electric Company); various characters in carried away on the crest of a wave (Tarragon Theatre). Film: Mona in Queen of the Morning Calm (QOTMC Productions). Awards: Canadian Film Festival Best Breakout Performance, 2020; NOW Magazine Breakthrough Toronto Stage Artists, 2019. Et cetera: Creator and performer of We Will Be: Rising as a Community, SummerWorks Performance Festival, 2020; dramaturge for Child-Ish (Sunny Drake and The CHILD-ISH Collective).

BECK LLOYD
LISA NASSON
2021: Benvolio in R + J. Second season. Elsewhere: Thriving Tree in SCANNER (Factory Theatre Wired); Angelina in Spirit Horse (Roseneath Theatre); Temina in Munschtime! (Young People’s Theatre); Margaret in Fatty Legs (Xara Choral Theatre); Genevieve in Lullaby: Inside the Halifax Explosion (Eastern Front Theatre); Christine in Offensive Fools (Neptune Theatre); Katarina in Vivaldi’s Ring of Mystery (Neptune Theatre). Training: Birmingham Conservatory for Classical Theatre, George Brown Theatre School, Neptune Theatre Acting Conservatory. Online: lisanasson@gmail.com, Instagram @lisanasson. Et cetera: Lisa would like to thank her family for encouraging her imagination.

SEPEHR REYBOD
2021: Mercutio in R + J. Stratford debut. Sepehr Reybod (he/him) is an Iranian-Canadian actor and playwright based in Toronto. He has worked with such companies as Canadian Stage, Factory Theatre, fu-GEN Theatre and Geordie Theatre in Montreal. Sepehr received training at York University’s Acting Conservatory and further training as a member of Factory Theatre’s Mechanicals 2018-2019, part of their Training Enhancement Programs. He was a member of Factory’s playwright’s training unit, the Foundry 2019-2020, where he began developing his second play, The Karkhaneh. As part of their groundbreaking Bedrock Creators’ Initiative, The Karkhaneh was in residency at Factory throughout the 2020-2021 season.

RICK ROBERTS
2021: Capulet in R + J. Second season. Stratford: Zastrozzi in Zastrozzi. Elsewhere: Prince Hamlet (Why Not Theatre); Animal Farm, Waiting for Godot and Accidental Death of an Anarchist (Soulpepper); Enemy of the People, Within the Glass, The Small Room at the Top of the Stairs, Molière, John and Beatrice and Rune Arlidge (Tarragon Theatre); Proud (Belfry Theatre); Julius Caesar (Citadel Theatre). Film/TV: Jack, Fortunate Son, This Life, Frankie Drake, Coroner (CBC), Still Mine, North of Albany, All My Puny Sorrows, FarCry 6 (Ubisoft). Director: Miss Coledonia, Person of Interest, A Midsummer Night’s Dream (Soulpepper). Playwright: Orestes (Tarragon Theatre), Fish/Wife, Kite, co-wrote the musical Mimi with Melody Johnson and Allan Cole (Tarragon). Awards: ACTRA and CSA award for Jack (CBC). Training: National Theatre School of Canada.

TOM ROONEY
2021: Nurse in R + J. 13th season. Stratford: Coriolanus, Napoli Milionaria!, Twelfth Night, The School for Scandal, Tartuffe in Tartuffe, Breath of Kings, The Taming of the Shrew, Love’s Labour’s Lost, Crazy for You, Man of La Mancha, Measure for Measure, Waiting for Godot, Wanderlust, Winter’s Tale, For the Pleasure of Seeing Her Again, Macbeth, Julius Caesar, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, All’s Well That Ends Well. Elsewhere: Cyrano de Bergerac, Victory (Shaw Festival); The Wedding Party (Crow’s Theatre/TIFT); Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf? (Citadel); The Seagull, Someone Else (Crow’s); My Mother’s Feet (Munich); Hairspray (Toronto, Broadway); Hamlet (NAC); Roméo et Juliette (Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan). Film/TV: CBC’s This Is Wonderland; The Gilda Radner Story; The Day After Tomorrow; Murdoch Mysteries; Coroner. Awards: Two Gemini nominations; Dora Award, Outstanding Actor, 2013; Sterling Award, Best Actor, 2016.

THE COMPANY

LISA NASSON

SEPEHR REYBOD

RICK ROBERTS

TOM ROONEY

Birmingham Conservatory, 2019, 2021

2021: Benvolio in R + J. Second season. Elsewhere: Thriving Tree in SCANNER (Factory Theatre Wired); Angelina in Spirit Horse (Roseneath Theatre); Temina in Munschtime! (Young People’s Theatre); Margaret in Fatty Legs (Xara Choral Theatre); Genevieve in Lullaby: Inside the Halifax Explosion (Eastern Front Theatre); Christine in Offensive Fools (Neptune Theatre); Katarina in Vivaldi’s Ring of Mystery (Neptune Theatre). Training: Birmingham Conservatory for Classical Theatre, George Brown Theatre School, Neptune Theatre Acting Conservatory. Online: lisanasson@gmail.com, Instagram @lisanasson. Et cetera: Lisa would like to thank her family for encouraging her imagination.

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2021: Mercutio in R + J. Stratford debut. Sepehr Reybod (he/him) is an Iranian-Canadian actor and playwright based in Toronto. He has worked with such companies as Canadian Stage, Factory Theatre, fu-GEN Theatre and Geordie Theatre in Montreal. Sepehr received training at York University’s Acting Conservatory and further training as a member of Factory Theatre’s Mechanicals 2018-2019, part of their Training Enhancement Programs. He was a member of Factory’s playwright’s training unit, the Foundry 2019-2020, where he began developing his second play, The Karkhaneh. As part of their groundbreaking Bedrock Creators’ Initiative, The Karkhaneh was in residency at Factory throughout the 2020-2021 season.

RICK ROBERTS
2021: Capulet in R + J. Second season. Stratford: Zastrozzi in Zastrozzi. Elsewhere: Prince Hamlet (Why Not Theatre); Animal Farm, Waiting for Godot and Accidental Death of an Anarchist (Soulpepper); Enemy of the People, Within the Glass, The Small Room at the Top of the Stairs, Molière, John and Beatrice and Rune Arlidge (Tarragon Theatre); Proud (Belfry Theatre); Julius Caesar (Citadel Theatre). Film/TV: Jack, Fortunate Son, This Life, Frankie Drake, Coroner (CBC), Still Mine, North of Albany, All My Puny Sorrows, FarCry 6 (Ubisoft). Director: Miss Coledonia, Person of Interest, A Midsummer Night’s Dream (Soulpepper). Playwright: Orestes (Tarragon Theatre), Fish/Wife, Kite, co-wrote the musical Mimi with Melody Johnson and Allan Cole (Tarragon). Awards: ACTRA and CSA award for Jack (CBC). Training: National Theatre School of Canada.

TOM ROONEY
2021: Nurse in R + J. 13th season. Stratford: Coriolanus, Napoli Milionaria!, Twelfth Night, The School for Scandal, Tartuffe in Tartuffe, Breath of Kings, The Taming of the Shrew, Love’s Labour’s Lost, Crazy for You, Man of La Mancha, Measure for Measure, Waiting for Godot, Wanderlust, Winter’s Tale, For the Pleasure of Seeing Her Again, Macbeth, Julius Caesar, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, All’s Well That Ends Well. Elsewhere: Cyrano de Bergerac, Victory (Shaw Festival); The Wedding Party (Crow’s Theatre/TIFT); Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf? (Citadel); The Seagull, Someone Else (Crow’s); My Mother’s Feet (Munich); Hairspray (Toronto, Broadway); Hamlet (NAC); Roméo et Juliette (Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan). Film/TV: CBC’s This Is Wonderland; The Gilda Radner Story; The Day After Tomorrow; Murdoch Mysteries; Coroner. Awards: Two Gemini nominations; Dora Award, Outstanding Actor, 2013; Sterling Award, Best Actor, 2016.
ERIN CUNNINGHAM
2021: Apprentice stage manager of \textit{R + J}. Second season. \textit{Stratford}: 2020 production assistant for the Tom Patterson Theatre prior to the provincial shutdown. \textit{Elsewhere}: Apprentice stage manager – \textit{Trott Stanley} (Factory Theatre); \textit{Lunenburg, Book Club} (Port Stanley Festival Theatre); \textit{King Arthur The Panto} (Port Hope Festival Theatre); \textit{Freaky Friday, Blackbird} (Theatre Aquarium); \textit{The Snow Queen, The Monkiesst King} (Canadian Children’s Opera Company); backstage technician at FLATO Markham Theatre. \textit{Training}: University of Windsor School of Dramatic Art.

ANDRÉ DU TOIT
2021: Lighting designer of \textit{R + J}. Stratford debut. \textit{Elsewhere}: \textit{Prince Hamlet} (Why Not Theatre); \textit{Getting Married, The Orchard} (Shaw Festival); \textit{Now You See Her, Mouthpiece} (Quote Unquote Collective); \textit{The Cove, Le Grand Continental} (Luminato); \textit{Jerusalem} (Outside the March/Company Theatre); \textit{Animal Farm, A Delicate Balance, Vimy, The 39 Steps} (Soulepper); \textit{This Was the World, Guarded Girls, Harlem Duet} (Tarragon Theatre); \textit{Italian Mime Suicide, Poofozzapedia, Melancholiac, The Double} (Bad New Days); \textit{Oraltorio} (Obsidian/Soulepper); \textit{Love and Information} (Canadian Stage); \textit{The Assholes, As I Lay Dying} (Theatre Smith-Gilmour). \textit{Awards}: Three Dora Awards and twelve nominations for Outstanding Lighting Design.

ALICE FERREYRA GALLIANI
2021: Stage manager of \textit{R + J}. Fifth season. \textit{Stratford}: \textit{Hamlet, Henry VIII, Birds of a Kind, Bakkhai, Death and the King’s Horseman} workshop (2020), Langham Directors’ Workshop Presentation (2019), Avon Theatre production assistant (2015). \textit{Elsewhere}: Stage manager: \textit{Every Silver Lining} (Next Stage Festival); \textit{Maggie & Pierre} (Grand Theatre); \textit{Ladies and Gentlemen, Boys and Girls} (Roseneath Theatre); \textit{The Drowsy Chaperone, Footloose, The Addams Family, Spring Awakening, Spelling Bee, Nine} (Randolph College); \textit{Godspell} (Theatre Sheridan); \textit{Anne of Green Gables, Evita, Shrek the Musical} (LOT). Assistant stage manager: Tafelmusik; \textit{The Canadian} (Thousand Islands Playhouse), Apprentice stage manager: \textit{Hamlet} (Tarragon Theatre); \textit{The Magic Flute} (Canadian Opera Company); \textit{City of Angels} (Theatre by the Bay); \textit{The Story} (Theatre Columbus); \textit{The Test} (The Company Theatre). \textit{Training}: Sheridan College (Technical Production). \textit{Et cetera}: Gracias a todos los que me ayudaron a llegar hasta aqui.

JULIE FOX

2021 PRODUCTIONS STREAMING THIS FALL
WATCH FOR DETAILS: STRATFORDFESTIVAL.CA/ATHOME
ARTISTIC COMPANY

CHRISTINE HORNE

2021: Co-adaptor and assistant director of R + J. Stratford debut. Elsewhere: Prince Hamlet, Iceland (Why Not Theatre); Portia’s Julius Caesar (Shakespeare in the Ruff); Tom at the Farm (Buddies); The Seagull (Crow’s); Belleville (Company Theatre); Vimy, Farther West (Soulepepper); Between the Sheets (Nightwood); Andromache (Necessary Angel); Romeo and Juliet (Canadian Stage); The Turn of the Screw (DVxT); Miss Julie: Sheh’mah (KICK Theatre); Gorey Story (Thistle Project). Audio: First Métis Man of Odessa (Factory). Film: Robin & Mark & Richard Ill, Hyena Road, The Captive, Stories We Tell, The Stone Angel. TV: Hey Lady!, Malory Towers, Hudson & Rex, Frankie Drake Mysteries, Murdoch Mysteries, Saving Hope, Remedy, Republic of Doyle, Rookie Blue, Othello. Awards: Dora Award, Canadian Screen Award, Birks Diamond Tribute to Women in Film. Et cetera: Christine is a member of Shakespeare in the Ruff’s incoming Collective Artistic Leadership.

CHRISTIAN HOROSZCZAK

2021: Assistant lighting designer of Why We Tell the Story, You Can’t Stop the Beat, Play On!, R + J, Edward Albee’s Three Tall Women and Freedom. Stratford debut. Elsewhere: Lighting design for All the Sex I’ve Ever Had (Mammalian Diving Reflex; Tokyo, Kyoto and Frankfurt), Entrances and Exits (Howland Company), Kiviuq Returns (Qaggiavuut!/Banff Centre). Assistant lighting design for Fall for Dance North. Training: National Theatre School, Banff Centre, Queen’s University. Awards: Canada Council John Hirsch Prize for Direction, Ontario Arts Council Pauline McGibbon Award for Direction, Dora Award/Toronto Theatre Critics Award/NOW Magazine show of the decade for Salt-Water Moon. Et cetera: Christian is endlessly grateful for the years of generosity and love from family, friends and mentors throughout his life. Much love to Ryan and a special dedication to Tim Fort.

RAVI JAIN

2021: Co-adaptor and director of R + J. Second season. Elsewhere: Founder and Co-Artistic Director of Why Not Theatre. Toronto-based stage director Ravi Jain is a multi-award-winning artist known for making politically bold and accessible theatrical experiences in both small indie productions and large theatres. Directing credits include The Mahabharata, Prince Hamlet, What you won’t do for love (starring Drs. David Suzuki and Tara Cullis), A Brimful of Asha, Salt-Water Moon, Sea Sick (co-director Franco Boni), We are Proud to Present…, Like Mother Like Daughter. Training: NYU Tisch School for the Arts, École Jacques Lecoq. Awards: Canada Council John Hirsch Prize for Direction, Ontario Arts Council Pauline McGibbon Award for Direction, Dora Award/Toronto Theatre Critics Award/NOW Magazine show of the decade for Salt-Water Moon.

THOMAS RYDER PAYNE

NEHA ROSS
2021: Assistant stage manager of R + J. Stratford debut. Selected credits: Stage manager: *Prince Hamlet*, *ICELAND* (Why Not Theatre); *We Are Proud to Present...* (Theatre Centre); *Animal Farm*, 27 Club (Soulpepper Theatre); *Other Side of the Game* (Cahoots Theatre, Obsidian Theatre); *One Thing Leads to Another* (Young People’s Theatre); *Fare Game: A Life in Toronto’s Taxis* (Theatre Passe Muraille); *Brown Balls* (fu-GEN); *People Power* (Carlos Bulosan). Assistant stage manager: *Kim’s Convenience* (Soulpepper Theatre); *The Birds and the Bees*, *The Wilberforce Hotel*, *Mary’s Wedding* (Blyth Festival); *Lady in the Red Dress* (fu-GEN). Training: Technical Production, Theatre Sheridan College. Et cetera: Neha would like to send a special shout-out to her support team: Fam, Marcel, Jo, Pallavi, Sees Chantelle, Kev + Virgilia!

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.

SIM SUZER

CYNTHIA TOUSHAN
2021: Production stage manager of the Festival Theatre Canopy and Studio Theatre. 25th season. Stratford: Shows include *Chicago* (interrupted by COVID), *Billy Elliot*, *A Chorus Line*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Camelot*, *Oklahoma!*, *West Side Story*, *My Fair Lady*, *Man of La Mancha*, *Hello, Dolly!*, *The King and I* and others. Elsewhere: Over 40 years as a stage manager in live entertainment including gala events, music concerts, opening ceremonies and fundraising events including *A Christmas Carol* for the Stratford Hospice. Over 25 years with the Canadian Opera Company as a stage manager; production stage manager and resident director of *Jersey Boys*, Toronto; 25 years as a singer/dancer and choreographer in Canadian theatre; associate director/ choreographer to her mentor, Alan Lund. Et cetera: Love to Paul, daughters Stephanie and Jennifer, son-in-law Andrew, and her grandchildren, Kennedy, Koston and Connor. I am so grateful to be back at work.

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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 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 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 Shakespearean Festival Endowment Foundation Board mourns the loss of Director Robert Badun, a member of the Endowment Foundation Board from 2017, and as its Chair from 2020, until his passing in April of 2021. Rob is remembered by his fellow Directors for his unwavering service and unique combination of expertise, wisdom, leadership and humility.

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