

A queer masterpiece, reimagined; *Lilies; Or, the Revival of a Romantic Drama* comes to Buddies, May 4-26

A lemonTree creations, Buddies in Bad Times Theatre and Why Not Theatre production

LILIES; OR, THE REVIVAL OR A ROMANTIC DRAMA

By Michel Marc Bouchard, translation by Linda Gaboriau

As Buddies 40th anniversary celebrations come to a close, the world's largest and longest-running queer theatre company delves into the queer Canadian theatrical canon with an exciting and timely production of *Lilies; Or, the Revival of a Romantic Drama*. Prolific indie company **lemonTree creations** (*Body Politic*, *Rope Running Out*) leads this revival of Michel Marc Bouchard's rarely-produced 1987 masterpiece – the second collaboration between the two companies after 2016's hit production *Body Politic* – this time joined by **Why Not Theatre**.

In 1912, two schoolboys in Roberval, Quebec fall in love performing a play about Saint Sebastian. Their passion is interrupted when one is unjustly sent to prison. Decades later, a group of inmates agree to stage this story of young love in search of their own redemption.

In this reimagined production, director **Cole Alvis** (*bug*, *The Kente Cloth*) actively engages with the prison as the setting where this story unfolds, directing a cast of predominantly Indigenous and Black artists to make visible the high incarceration rates of these communities. Alvis and their directorial team – associate director **Nikki Shaffeeullah** (The AMY Project) and outside eye **Donna-Michelle St. Bernard** (*Cake*, *Sound of the Beast*) – revisit the past with a new lens, incorporating critical discussions around colonialism, the justice system, and their own lived experiences into their creative vision and process. Centring Indigeneity and diverse worldviews, the creative team bring this romantic drama into the 21st century, unearthing love, lies, and colonialism.

Leading the cast are film and stage veterans **Alexander Chapman**, who played Lydie-Anne in John Greyson's film adaptation of *Lilies*, and **Walter Borden** (*Harlem Duet*, *The Tragedie of Lear*). The two are joined by an ensemble of prison inmates 'playing' the 1912 story including **Mark Cassius** (*Ragtime*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*), **Waawaate Fobister** (*Gashkigwaaso*, *Agokwe*), **Tsholo Khalema** (*Box 4901*, *Cake*), **Troy Emery Twigg** (*They Shoot Buffalo, Don't They?*; *Dancing the Universe in Flux*), **Joseph Zita** (*Picture This*), and lemonTree artists **Ryan G Hinds** (*#KanderAndEbb*, *MacArthur Park Suite*) and **Indrit Kasapi** (*Les Moutons*, *The Boys in the Band*). With set and prop design by **Jay Havens** (*bug*, *Th'owxiya: The Hungry Feast Dish*), costume design by **Joanna Yu** (*School Girls; Or, the African Mean Girls Play*, *Body Politic*), lighting design by **Michelle Ramsay** (*Obaaberima*, *Gertrude and Alice*), and sound design by Deanna Choi (*CHiCHO*, *The Wolves*).

MEDIA INFO

INTERVIEWS – Listed artists are available for interviews.

OPENING NIGHT – Opening night is **Thursday, May 9 at 8PM**. Contact Aidan Morishita-Miki at 416-975-9130 x35 or aidan@buddiesinbadtimes.com for accreditation.

ON-LINE RESOURCE – The Buddies website includes a Media Centre that houses press releases, images and other pertinent information for easy download.

buddiesinbadtimes.com/media/

A COMMUNITY ENGAGED PROCESS

Preceding the May 16th performance of *Lilies*, the artist-activist group **Confluence Arts Collective** will present ***The Countess and Me***, an original theatre piece inspired by *Lilies*, created and performed by community members with a range of lived experience with incarceration, and directed by **Nikki Shaffeeullah**.

Additionally, each of the *Lilies* creative team is working alongside a young queer Black, Indigenous, and/or Person of Colour artist apprentice through a unique mentorship partnership with **The AMY Project**, supported by Inspirit Foundation.

ACCESSIBLE PERFORMANCES

A relaxed performance will be held on Sunday, May 19th at 2:30PM. Patrons can book \$10 tickets in advance using the code “RP10” or purchase PWYC tickets at the door.

A Deaf-Interpreted performance in ASL will be held on Friday, May 17th at 8:00PM. Patrons can book \$10 tickets in advance using the code “ASL10”.

PAY WHAT YOU CAN

In celebration of the company’s 40th anniversary Buddies has substantially expanded its program of Pay-What-You-Can tickets. Every **Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Sunday** a block of tickets will go on sale at noon for that day’s performance, and you pick the price. Whatever fits your budget, that’s what the ticket costs. Pay What You Can tickets are available until 7:00pm on weekdays and 2:30pm on Sundays, or until they sell out – whichever comes first.

PLEASE ADD TO YOUR LISTINGS / ANNOUNCEMENTS

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by **Michel Marc Bouchard**

translation by **Linda Gaboriau**

directed by **Cole Alvis**

starring **Walter Borden, Alexander Chapman, Mark Cassius, Waawaate Fobister, Ryan G. Hinds, Indrit Kasapi, Tsholo Khalema, Troy Emery Twigg + Joseph Zita**

set + props design by **Jay Havens**

costume design by **Joanna Yu**

lighting design by **Michelle Ramsay**

sound design by **Deanna Choi**

associate director **Nikki Shaffeeullah**

outside eye **Donna-Michelle St. Bernard**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 26, 2019
Media Contact: Aidan Morishita-Miki
aidan@buddiesinbadtimes.com | 416-975-9130 x35

Previews: May 4th, 5th, 7th & 8th

Opening Night: May 9th

Closing Performance: May 26th

Runs: Tues-Sat 8pm, Sun 2:30pm

Tickets: PWYC - \$40

Box Office 416-975-8555 or buddiesinbadtimes.com

Buddies in Bad Times Theatre, 12 Alexander Street, Toronto ON