

BUDDIES IN BAD TIMES ANNOUNCES PROGRAMMING FOR 2016/17 SEASON

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TORONTO: April 19, 2016. Artistic Director **Evalyn Parry** announced an exciting line up for Buddies in Bad Times Theatre's 2016/17 Season today. Parry's first programmed season presents a series of engaging, timely productions that invite new conversations and perspectives onto Buddies stage. The season includes a queer spin on a hit improv comedy, the world premiere of a multidisciplinary project developed in the Buddies Residency Program, and a community-driven theatre project directed by Parry. The company also welcomes back a number of guest companies throughout the season.

In announcing the season, Parry remarks: *"I am thrilled to present a season that's full of risky new creation, in conversation with classics of the modern stage. For me, queer theatre is about challenging form as well as content: finding new ways for our theatre to engage with and reflect our community. I look forward to inviting the community onto our stage – both literally and figuratively – this season."*

Following sold out runs across North America, **Rebecca Northan** brings her hit show ***Blind Date*** to Buddies to kick off the mainstage season in September. *Blind Date* pairs a sexy clown with a willing audience member for a 90-minute, improvised show, starting with the titular blind date, then skillfully maneuvering through the evening in a "perfect marriage of theatre and comedy". This re-imagined version of the play, being developed specifically for Buddies by Northan in collaboration with **Evalyn Parry**, explores queer romance for the first time. **Julie Orton**, a veteran performer in *Blind Date*, takes on the role of Mimi and **David Benjamin Tomlinson** will play the newly-created role of Mathieu. Each night, one of these saucy clowns takes to the stage, offering audiences a chance to have go on a blind date and become that evening's romantic hero. On this new incarnation of the show, Northan says, *"Bringing Blind Date to Buddies feels like the next most obvious and exciting step for the show to take! It's a wonderful opportunity to share the love that is at the heart of this show."*

Buddies continues the tradition of presenting works emerging from its Artist Residency program, collaborating with **Saga Collectif** to mount the world premiere of ***Black Boys*** in November. *Black Boys* is a raw and intimate piece of devised theatre featuring three of Canada's most exciting young actors in a timely exploration of queer Blackness. The play is co-created and performed by **Thomas Olajide** (co-creator and performer of *This Must Be the Place: The CN Tower Show*), **Tawiah Ben M'Carthy** (creator and performer of the nationally-toured Buddies hit *Obaaberima*) and **Stephen Jackman-Torkoff** (appearing in Jordan Tannahill's upcoming *Botticelli in the Fire & Sunday in Sodom*), in collaboration with director **Jonathan Seinen** and choreographer **Virgilia Griffith**.

The season culminates with ***The Youth/Elders Project***, an exciting new community arts project that continues the important work of Buddies' Queer Youth Arts program. In partnership with the **519 Church Street Community Centre** and the **Senior Pride Network**, this project will involve youth and elder queer and trans* community members in a year-long series of workshops exploring local and personal queer histories through story exchange and community-engaged research. Led by Buddies artistic director (and former Young Creators Unit director) **Evalyn Parry**, participants will devise an original show that will hit the Buddies stage in June. There will be an information session for folks interested in participating in the project on June 1, 2016

Canada's longest running new works festival **The Rhubarb Festival** will be back in February for its 38th year, with Festival Director **Mel Hague** at its helm.

Buddies also welcomes six productions from a variety of Toronto guest companies. **Nightwood Theatre** presents a double-bill of **Norah Sadava** and **Amy Nostbakken's** Dora Award winning **Mouthpiece** (in collaboration with **Quote Unquote Theatre**) and **Quiver** by **Anna Chatterton** and returns later in the season with the world premiere of **Unholy** by **Diane Flacks**. **Modern Times Stage Company** and **Aluna Theatre** bring back their multi-Dora-award-winning **Blood Weddings**, a 20th century masterpiece by Spanish playwright **Federico García Lorca**, and **Theatre Rusticle** brings a new twist to another classic with their production of **Our Town**, directed by **Allyson McMackon**. Finally, Buddies' founding artistic director, **Sky Gilbert** brings a new play about the HIV prevention drug Truvada to the stage with **It's All Tru**, produced by the **Cabaret Company**.

2016-17 SHOW LISTINGS

Buddies in Bad Times Theatre presents

BLIND DATE

a Spontaneous Theatre Creation by **Rebecca Northan**

in collaboration with **Evalyn Parry** and Buddies in Bad Times Theatre

starring **Julie Orton** or **David Benjamin Tomlinson**

September 20 – October 9, 2016

There's nothing like the thrill of a first date... anything can happen! In this reimagined version of Rebecca Northan's smash hit play, the saucy Mimi, or the handsome Mathieu, take turns finding love with a different person every night – plucked right from the audience. Following sold out runs across North America, this fast and funny fusion of improv, theatre, and clown takes its first-ever journey into queer romance and welcomes a whole new community of romantic heroes who will have you falling in love every night.

Buddies in Bad Times Theatre proudly welcomes a **Quote Unquote Theatre** production presented by **Nightwood Theatre**

MOUTHPIECE

created and performed by **Norah Sadava + Amy Nostbakken**

directed by **Amy Nostbakken**

original music by **Amy Nostbakken**

October 21 – November 6, 2016

A harrowing, humorous, and heart-wrenching journey into the female psyche. In the wake of her mother's death, *Mouthpiece* follows one woman, for one day, as she tries to find her voice. Interweaving a cappella harmonies, dissonance, text and physicality, two performers express the inner conflict that exists within a modern woman's head: the push and the pull, the past and the present, the progress and the regression.

Buddies in Bad Times Theatre proudly welcomes a **Nightwood Theatre** production

QUIVER

written + performed by **Anna Chatterton**

directed by **Andrea Donaldson**

October 21 – November 6, 2016

A single mother and a rebellious teenage daughter collide when a love interest comes between them, leaving 14-year-old Maddie caught in the crossfire. Armed with little more than a microphone, a laptop, and a vocal processor, writer-performer Anna Chatterton masterfully creates a sonic landscaper to tell this dark and deliciously funny story of a passionate and imperfect family.

Saga Collectif and **Buddies in Bad Times Theatre** present

BLACK BOYS

created by **Stephen Jackman-Torkoff, Tawiah Ben M'carthy + Thomas Olajide**

with **Virgilia Griffith, + Jonathan Seinen**

directed by **Jonathan Seinen**

starring **Stephen Jackman-Torkoff, Tawiah Ben M'carthy + Thomas Olajide**

choreography **Virgilia Griffith**

November 19 – December 11, 2016

A raw, intimate, and timely exploration of queer Blackness. Through the dynamics of movement, text, and design, *Black Boys* reveals the lived experiences of three Black men as they seek a deeper understanding of how their bodies encounter the world and of each other. As they explore their unique identities, they playfully subvert the ways in which gender, sexuality, and race are performed. Their virtuosic performances challenge assumptions and unleash the possibilities of their imaginations.

Buddies in Bad Times Theatre proudly welcomes a **Nightwood Theatre** production

UNHOLY

by **Diane Flacks**

directed by **Kelly Thornton**

starring **Diane Flacks, Pat Hamilton, Niki Landau, Blair Williams + Bahareh Yaraghi**

January 15 – February 5, 2017

Set in a fictional live public debate that asks “should women abandon religion?”, *Unholy* is about the complex intersection of religion and misogyny, and the conflict between ideology and desire. As four female panelists face off in a provocative battle of wits, passion and attraction outside the debate fuels fire at the podium, leaving the women, their moderator and the entire audience to a spiral into free fall.

Buddies in Bad Times Theatre presents
THE 38TH RHUBARB FESTIVAL
festival director **Mel Hague**

February 15 – 26, 2017

Canada's longest-running new works festival returns for a 38th year. For two weeks, Buddies is transformed into a hotbed of experimentation, with artists exploring new possibilities in theatre, dance, music, and performance art. Rhubarb is the place to see the most adventurous ideas in performance and to catch your favourite artists venture into uncharted territory.

Buddies in Bad Times Theatre proudly welcomes a **Modern Times Stage Company** and **Aluna Theatre** production

BLOOD WEDDINGS

by **Federico García Lorca**

translation by **Langston Hughes**

directed by **Soheil Parsa**

starring **Beatriz Pizano, Bahareh Yaraghi, Carlos Gonzalez-Vio, Derek Kwan, Sochi Fried + Jani Lauzon**

MARCH 4 – 19, 2017

A family vendetta comes to a boil when a bride-to-be runs away with the son of the enemy. This 20th Century masterpiece is a powerful and poetic metaphor for the oppressive forces that corrupt our ability to love freely. Aluna Theatre and Modern Times bring their multi-Dora Award winning production back to Buddies for a limited engagement.

Buddies in Bad Times Theatre proudly welcomes a **Theatre Rusticle** production

OUR TOWN

by **Thornton Wilder**

directed by **Allyson McMackon**

starring **Hume Baugh, Augusto Bitter, Matthew Finlan, Chala Hunter, Jenna-Lee Hyde, François Macdonald, Viv Moore, Lucy Rupert, Priscilla Taylor + Geoffrey Whynot**

March 26 – April 2, 2017

Thornton Wilder's 1938 Pulitzer Prize winning drama collides with Theatre Rusticle's imagistic and physically poetic style to tell the story of daily life, love, marriage, and death in the town of Grover's Corners. The company's hallmark physicality meets Wilder's timeless questions about how place defines us, how we live, how we love and our place in this big universe.

Buddies in Bad Times Theatre proudly welcomes a **Cabaret Company** production

IT'S ALL TRU

written + directed by **Sky Gilbert**

starring **David Coomber + Stephen Jackman-Torkoff**

May 3 – 14, 2017

Kurt and Trevor are a perfect gay couple – a young prince charming and a charming silver fox – whose marriage is threatened by the appearance of a sexy street boy named Gideon. Did Gideon have condomless sex with Trevor? Did Trevor give him permission? And did Trevor take his Truvada?

Buddies in Bad Times Theatre and The 519 Church Street Community Centre in partnership with the Senior Pride Network present

THE YOUTH / ELDERS PROJECT

directed by **Evalyn Parry**

In an exciting new partnership between Buddies, The 519, and the Senior Pride Network, *The Youth / Elders Project* brings together young and old to create a living document of our personal queer histories. Integrating text, movement, music, and design, a group of queer youth and elders embark on an oral history of queer lives. This intergenerational ensemble will offer a snapshot of queer life as a way to preserve personal histories and engage a new generation with the possibilities of queer identity.

MEDIA INFO

INTERVIEWS – Listed artists are available for interviews in English. Contact Mark Aikman at 416-975-9130x40 or mark@buddiesinbadtimes.com to arrange.

ON-LINE RESOURCE – For press releases, high-resolution images, b-roll, artist bios and other pertinent information visit **www.buddiesinbadtimes.com/media**

Established in 1979, Buddies in Bad Times Theatre is a professional Canadian theatre company dedicated to the development and presentation of queer theatre. The largest and longest running queer theatre in the world, Buddies has made an unparalleled contribution to the recognition and acceptance of queer lives in Canada and is Toronto's leading destination for artistically rigorous alternative theatre.