

## BUDDIES IN BAD TIMES ANNOUNCES PROGRAMMING FOR 2017/18 SEASON

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**TORONTO: June 21, 2017.** Artistic Director **Evalyn Parry** announced an exciting line-up for Buddies in Bad Times Theatre's 2017/18 season today. The season presents a series of engaging, timely productions that grapple with questions of race, indigeneity, sex, queerphobia, religion, and climate change. It includes a new multidisciplinary work co-created by Parry, a national tour of the 2016 hit *Black Boys*, and the premiere of a new work from the Buddies Residency Program, alongside several shows from guest companies. It is a season of partnerships and conversations, both new and ongoing, with theatre companies and artists at a local and national scale.

The company also announced that the upcoming season will take place in a renovated facility. With support from the City of Toronto and the Department of Canadian Heritage's Cultural Spaces Fund, Buddies' home on Alexander Street will undergo important renovations over the next year including an improved cabaret space, accessibility upgrades, new seating, and soundproofing.

In announcing the season, Parry remarks: *"This season we implicate ourselves both in history and in our collective future. I'm excited to unveil significant new queer works on our stage, as well as welcoming back audience favourites from last season. I am also excited to be deepening our relationships with Toronto's most groundbreaking indie companies, and establishing new and innovative partnerships with theatre makers here in Toronto and across the country."*

The Buddies season opens in October with ***Kiinalik: These Sharp Tools***, an exciting collaboration between Buddies artistic director **Evalyn Parry** and Inuk artist and Qaggiavuut artistic director **Laakkuluk Williamson Bathory**. The piece blends Parry's unique style of storytelling and music with Williamson Bathory's Uarjeeneq (Greelandic mask dance), putting a face to the colonial histories, power structures, and the changing climate that lie between them. *Kiinalik: These Sharp Tools* is a co-production between Buddies and **Theatre Passe Muraille**, a unique partnership between two venue theatre companies to share resources and introduce audiences to work being done on other stages in Toronto. This partnership continues later in the season with ***Acha Bacha***, a new play by **Bilal Baig** about the intersection of queerness, gender identity, and Islamic culture that will premiere on the Theatre Passe Muraille stage in January 2018, directed by **Brendan Healy**.

In November, **Roseneath Theatre** and Buddies collaborate to bring the Dora-nominated ***Outside*** by **Paul Dunn** to the theatre for a week-long run of high school matinees, with two public performances – a rare chance for a general audience to see this powerful and moving piece of theatre. After a successful debut last year, Buddies continues its partnership with **Native Earth Performing Arts** with ***The 2-Spirit Cabaret*** in November as part of the Weesagechak Begins to Dance Festival.

Canada's longest running new works festival, **The Rhubarb Festival**, will be back in February for its 39<sup>th</sup> year, with Festival Director **Mel Hague** at its helm. Also returning, after a hugely successful run this past season, is **Saga Collectif's *Black Boys***, which hits the Buddies stage in February following a national tour to Calgary, Montreal, and Vancouver. The show, a multidisciplinary investigation of queer male Blackness, is co-created and performed by the

Dora-nominated ensemble of **Thomas Olajide, Tawiah Ben M'Carthy, and Stephen Jackman-Torkoff**, in collaboration with director **Jonathan Seinen** and choreographer **Virgilia Griffith**.

Closing the 2017-18 season is a work emerging from the Buddies Residency Program. Collaborating with **the red light district**, Buddies will mount **LULU v.7 // aspects of a femme fatale**, created by **Susanna Fournier, Ted Witzel, and Helen Yung**. *LULU v. 7* is the culmination of a series of pieces deconstructing one of Western drama's most provocative and problematic figures – Frank Wedekind's Lulu. The project has been in residence at Buddies since 2014, involving more than 30 of the city's most exciting writers and theatre artists in the process.

Buddies also welcomes five productions from a variety of guest companies. **Nightwood Theatre** presents the world premiere of **Audrey Dwyer's Calpurnia**, produced with **Sulong Theatre**, and brings back two of last season's hits – the Dora-nominated **Unholy** by **Diane Flacks**, and a presentation of **Quote Unquote Theatre's** Dora Award-winning **Mouthpiece**, by **Norah Sadava and Amy Nostbakken** (produced in association with **Why not Theatre**). Vancouver's **Zee Zee Theatre** brings **Dave Deveau's** critically-acclaimed **My Funny Valentine** to the cabaret space while **Modern Times Stage Company** returns to Buddies with a new production of **Guillermo Verdecchia's bloom**, inspired by TS Eliot's *The Wasteland*, directed by **Soheil Parsa**.

## 2017-18 SHOW LISTINGS

A Buddies in Bad Times Theatre and Theatre Passe Muraille co-production

### **KIINALIK: THESE SHARP TOOLS**

written + performed by **Evalyn Parry + Laakkuluk Williamson Bathory**

directed by **Erin Brubacher**

live video by **Elysha Poirier**

music by **Cris Derksen + Evalyn Parry**

**October 24 – November 5, 2017**

A concert and a conversation, *Kiinalik: These Sharp Tools* is the meeting place of two people, and the North and South of our country. Inuk artist Laakkuluk Williamson Bathory and queer theatre-maker Evalyn Parry met on an Arctic expedition from Iqaluit to Greenland. Now sharing a stage, these two powerful storytellers map new territory together in a work that gives voice and body to the histories, culture and climate we've inherited, and asks how we reckon with these sharp tools.

Roseneath Theatre in association with Buddies in Bad Times Theatre present

### **OUTSIDE**

by **Paul Dunn**

directed by **Andrew Lamb**

starring **G. Kyle Shields, Mina James + Giacomo Sellar**

**November 17 – 18, 2017**

A group of students trace back the roots of trauma after an act of homophobic violence tears a school community apart. Written during the rise to prominence of Gay Straight Alliances,

*Outside* looks at issues of depression, violence, bullying, and suicide from the perspective of the young people who deal with it every day. Written for young audiences and seen by over 30,000 high school students across Ontario, this production is a rare opportunity for the general public to see a powerful and moving piece of theatre.

A **Native Earth Performing Arts** and **Buddies in Bad Times Theatre** production

## **THE 2-SPIRIT CABARET**

**November 24, 2017**

Back for a second year, *The 2-Spirit Cabaret* is a celebration of the unrelenting strength, beauty, and talent of queer and 2-Spirit Indigenous people. Buddies and Native Earth Performing Arts present an evening of performances, music, and spoken word as part of *Weesageechak Begins to Dance* - Native Earth's 30th annual festival of Indigenous works.

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

## **UNHOLY**

by **Diane Flacks**

directed by **Kelly Thornton**

starring **Diane Flacks, Barbara Gordon, Niki Landau, Blair Williams + Bahareh Yaraghi**

**November 23 – December 10, 2017**

Should women abandon religion? Four female panelists face off in a wild, whip-smart public debate about religion and misogyny. With opinions flying from across the religious and political spectrum, *Unholy* delivers a hilarious, no-holds-barred look at contemporary women in organized religion.

**Buddies in Bad Times Theatre** welcomes a **Zee Zee Theatre** production

## **MY FUNNY VALENTINE**

by **Dave Deveau**

directed by **Cameron Mackenzie**

starring **Conor Wylie**

**January 10 – 21, 2018**

In February 2008, a fifteen-year-old boy asked another boy in his class to be his valentine. The next day, that boy shot and killed him during first period. *My Funny Valentine* enters the minds of people on the fringes of a murder that will forever affect them and examines the ripple effect of hatred in a community. Haunting, moving, and at times strangely comedic, *My Funny Valentine* cracks open the greater humanity of a town trying to heal.

**Buddies in Bad Times Theatre** welcomes a **Nightwood Theatre + Sulong Theatre** production

## **CALPURNIA**

written + directed by **Audrey Dwyer**

**January 14 – February 4, 2018**

A hilarious and provocative look at class, race, and family dynamics under the roof of a wealthy Jamaican-Canadian home. As Julie, a screenwriter, seeks to redress *To Kill a Mockingbird* through the perspective of Calpurnia - the Finch family maid - her tactics meet with explosive results at an important family dinner party. A brave, insightful, and outrageous new play.

A Theatre Passe Muraille and Buddies in Bad Times Theatre co-production

## **ACHA BACHA**

by **Bilal Baig**

directed by **Brendan Healy**

**January 30 – February 18, 2018**

For years, Zaya has balanced his relationship with religion and his queer identity; but as secrets from the past reveal themselves, and crisis strikes his family, he is torn between loyalties, culture, and time. *Acha Bacha* boldly explores the intersections between queerness, gender identity, and Islamic culture in the Pakistani diaspora. It is a show about the way we love, the way we are loved, and how sometimes love is not enough.

**Note:** This production takes place at Theatre Passe Muraille

A Buddies in Bad Times Theatre production

## **THE 39TH RHUBARB FESTIVAL**

Festival director **Mel Hague**

**February 14 – 25, 2018**

Canada's longest-running new works festival returns for a 39th year. Rhubarb transforms Buddies 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 venturing into uncharted territory.

A Buddies in Bad Times Theatre production

## **BLACK BOYS**

created by **Saga Collectif**

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

directed by **Jonathan Seinen**

choreography **Virgilia Griffith**

**February 28 – March 11, 2018**

A raw, intimate, and timely exploration of queer male Blackness. *Black Boys* is created from the lives of three people seeking a deeper understanding of themselves, of each other, and of how they encounter the world. As they explore their unique identities on stage, they subvert the ways in which gender, sexuality, and race are performed. Theatrical and intimate, *Black Boys* weaves together the ensemble's own personal stories in search of an integrated self and a radical imagination.

The smash hit production from 2016 comes back to the Buddies stage after embarking on a nation-wide tour to theatres in Vancouver, Calgary, and Montreal.

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

## **BLOOM**

by **Guillermo Verdecchia**

directed by **Soheil Parsa**

starring **Peter Farbridge + Bahareh Yaraghi**

**March 23 – April 8, 2018**

A war orphan and a war veteran live on the fringes of a ruined world – one is trying to remember, while the other is trying to forget. Inspired by TS Eliot's *The Wasteland*, *bloom* is a humorous and haunting story of despair and hope played out between an old man with a decaying soul, and the boy who may bear the seeds of his redemption.

**Buddies in Bad Times Theatre** welcomes a **Nightwood Theatre** presentation of a **Quote Unquote Collective** in association with **Why Not Theatre** production

## **MOUTHPIECE**

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

directed by **Amy Nostbakken**

original music by **Amy Nostbakken**

**April 11 – 22, 2018**

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.

a **Buddies in Bad Times Theatre** and the **red light district** co-production

## **LULU v.7 // aspects of a femme fatale**

co-created by **TED WITZEL, SUSANNA FOURNIER + HELEN YUNG**

**May 1 – 20**

A young femme fatale fucks her way across Europe and through a series of lovers who all wind up dead, until she meets her end at the hands of Jack the Ripper. This is LULU. Based on German playwright Frank Wedekind's 1894 play, this blood-soaked adaptation tears apart a classic text to create a viscerally sexy and energetic treatise on art, sex, and death in the 21st century.

### **MEDIA INFO**

**INTERVIEWS** – Listed artists are available for interviews in English. Contact Aidan Morishita-Miki at 416-975-9130 x35 or aidan@buddiesinbadtimes.com to arrange.

ONLINE RESOURCE – For press releases, high-resolution images, b-roll, artist bios and other pertinent information visit [www.buddiesinbadtimes.com/media](http://www.buddiesinbadtimes.com/media)

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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.