

## **BUDDIES ANNOUNCES PROGRAMMING FOR THE 39<sup>th</sup> RHUBARB FESTIVAL**

Festival Sponsor **TD Bank Group**  
**FEBRUARY 14 - 25, 2018**

**EVENT AND TICKET INFO AVAILABLE ON-LINE AT**  
[buddiesinbadtimes.com/rhubarb](http://buddiesinbadtimes.com/rhubarb)

Canada's longest-running new works festival returns for its 39<sup>th</sup> year this February! For two weeks, The Rhubarb Festival transforms Toronto's Buddies in Bad Times Theatre into a hotbed of experimentation, exploring new possibilities in theatre, dance, comedy, music, installation, and performance art. Rhubarb is the place to experience the most adventurous ideas in performance and catch your favourite artists venturing into uncharted territory.

Rhubarb Festival Director **Mel Hague** comments, "For our 39<sup>th</sup> festival I am so pleased to present this strange and beautiful assortment of offerings. We bring these works together to create Rhubarb - an intersection point at the very edge of the artistic; a space that is brimming with energy, questions, laughter, music, challenge, and fun."

### **Festival highlights include:**

- A community-engaged "concert" by legendary New York performance artist, activist, and writer **Lois Weaver**, in partnership with **FADO Performance Art Centre**
- A new play directed by **Audrey Dwyer** (also directing Nightwood & Sulong Theatre's *Calpurnia* this season at Buddies) and written by **Teneile Warren**
- A cabaret highlighting the lived experiences of three d/Deaf artists (**Tamyka Bullen**, **Ralista Rodriguez**, and **Sage Willow**), in partnership with Edmonton's **Sound Off: A Deaf Theatre Festival**
- A special Rhubarb edition of **Katie Sly's** *Too Queer: A Bi Visibility Cabaret*
- A new movement piece by **Waawaate Fobister** (creator of the Buddies hit *Agokwe*) inspired by the resilience of the Anishinaabe people of Grassy Narrows in the face of displacement, clear-cutting, and mercury poisoning
- A re-imagining of some of the most popular pro-war rallying songs by drag bombshell **Pearle Harbour**
- New short works from **Chala Hunter**, **Kanika Ambrose**, **Esie Mensah**, **Diana Lopez Soto**, Femmes du Feu's **Holly Tredennick**, and more

### **A SPOTLIGHT ON MUSIC**

This year's festival features music prominently, including **Curtis te Brinke's** *Midnight, Toronto*, a quarter-life crisis set to a live score of original indie music; **Erum Khan's** *Noor*, with music by **LAL** and **Anwar Khurshid**; and the launch of a new album, *Angry*, by sibling duo Too Attached (**Vivek Shraya** and **Shamik Bigli**). **Empty Orchestra Dreamland** bring their apocalyptic karaoke to the opening night party, and latinx drag kings **Boiband the Boy Band** help us kick off week two.

### **A STAGE FOR QUEER ARTISTS**

For years, Buddies and Rhubarb have nurtured queer artists and their work. The 39<sup>th</sup> Rhubarb Festival continues this tradition, with projects led by queer, trans, and two-spirit artists such as **Elena Belyea**, **lo bil**, **Yolanda Bonnell**, **Lorene Bouboushian**, **Tamyka Bullen**, **Jill Connell**, **Brian Cope**, **Monica Garrido**, **Bruce Gibbons Fell**, **Jill Flanagan**, **Waawaate Fobister**,

**Charles Hayter, Justin Miller, Alexis O'Hara, Ralista Rodriguez, Vivek Shraya, Curtis te Brinke, Teneile Warren, Lois Weaver, JL Whitecrow, Sage Willow, and Jessica Zepeda.**

### **AGING TAKES CENTRE STAGE AT RHUBARB**

The 39<sup>th</sup> Rhubarb Festival features works from older artists exploring topics of age and aging. **Brian Cope** and **Charles Hayter** ('elder' participants in last season's *Youth/Elders Project*) take on the roles of their own mothers in *MotherLoad*, while **Alexis O'Hara** contemplates aging in a youth-obsessed culture, and **Lois Weaver** shares gathered stories about aging and sex in a musical exploration of the subjects.

On the other end of the age spectrum, Buddies' Emerging Creators Unit, now in its 12<sup>th</sup> year, continues to showcase the voices of emerging queer talents, featuring the work of **Rhiannon Collett, Erum Khan, Kwaku Okyere, and Heath V. Salazar**, led by ECU director **Sunny Drake** and company dramaturg **Mel Hague**.

### **MEDIA INFO**

INTERVIEWS - Festival artists and Festival Director Mel Hague are available for interviews in English. A list of ASL, French, Spanish, Sesotho, and Setswana-speaking artists is available on request.

REVIEW POLICY - Media are invited to participate in the entire festival, but **Rhubarb has a strict no review policy**. For accreditation, contact Aidan Morishita-Miki at 416-975-9130 x35 or [aidan@buddiesinbadtimes.com](mailto:aidan@buddiesinbadtimes.com).

ON-LINE RESOURCE - The Buddies website includes a Media Centre that houses press releases, images, and other pertinent information for easy download.  
[www.buddiesinbadtimes.com/media](http://www.buddiesinbadtimes.com/media)

### **PLEASE ADD TO YOUR LISTINGS / ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Buddies in Bad Times Theatre** presents

#### **THE 39<sup>TH</sup> RHUBARB FESTIVAL**

Festival Director Mel Hague

February 14-25, 2018

TICKETS:

Wed-Sun - \$20 Evening/Day Pass

Emerging Creators Unit Presentations - PWYC

Box Office 416-975-8555 or [buddiesinbadtimes.com/rhubarb](http://buddiesinbadtimes.com/rhubarb)

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

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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. Over the course of its history, it has evolved into the largest facility-based queer theatre company in the world and had made an unparalleled contribution to the recognition and acceptance of queer lives in Canada.