

A gonzo true-crime story about homophobia, violence, sex, and mystery, *Shove It Down My Throat* premieres at Buddies, March 30 – April 14

A **Buddies in Bad Times Theatre** and **Pandemic Theatre** production

SHOVE IT DOWN MY THROAT

By Johnnie Walker

Buddies in Bad Times' 40th anniversary season continues next month with the world premiere of a new play by **Johnnie Walker**, *Shove It Down My Throat*, a co-production with Toronto indie company Pandemic Theatre (*Daughter*, *Take d Milk*, *Nah?*, *The Only Good Indian*). A fierce and freewheeling exploration of a powerful true story, *Shove It Down My Throat* was created through the Buddies Residency Program, marking the company's tenth main stage production to emerge from the program.

In 2013, Luke O'Donovan was arrested after a knife fight at a New Year's party in Atlanta, Georgia. The media portrayed him as a maniac who went on a stabbing spree, while Luke said he was the victim of a queer-bashing, punished for fighting back. In 2014, theatre artist Johnnie Walker began corresponding with the incarcerated O'Donovan, leading to online research, interviews with O'Donovan's friends, a trip to the scene of the crime, and the creation of a new play.

Hailed by *Xtra* as "the top of Canada's queer theatre class", playwright Johnnie Walker (*Redheaded Stepchild*) brings his unique flair to a riveting true crime story that puts queerness, identity, and complicity through a theatrical kaleidoscope. At a time when media is increasingly polarized and online comments allow everyone to weigh in, *Shove It Down My Throat* speaks to our desire for a simple narrative and an ever-elusive truth, as Johnnie sifts through the various versions and accounts of the incident, and of Luke himself.

Pandemic Theatre's artistic director **Tom Arthur Davis** (*Take d Milk*, *Nah?*, *Mahmoud*) directs Walker in the piece, performing alongside an ensemble cast bringing together the worlds of theatre, drag, burlesque, and comedy. Featuring **Daniel Carter** (*The Youth/Elders Project*), **Willard Gillard** (BoylesqueTO), **Kwaku Okyere** (*The Seat Next to the King*), **Craig Pike** (*LULU v.7 // aspects of a femme fatale*), **Heath V. Salazar** (*The Wolves*), and **Anders Yates** (Second City). The world of *Shove It Down My Throat* is brought to life by set and costume designer **Anahita Dehbonehie** (*Brotherhood*, *the Hiphopera*; Stratford's *Breath of Kings*), lighting designer **Rebecca Vandevelde** (*Take d Milk*, *Nah?*, *Sound of the Beast*), and sound designer **Jivesh Parasram** (*Take d Milk*, *Nah?*, *They Say He Fell*).

The script for *Shove It Down My Throat* was developed in collaboration with Playwrights' Workshop Montréal.

MEDIA INFO

INTERVIEWS – Listed artists are available for interviews in English.

OPENING NIGHT – Opening night is **Wednesday, April 3 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. www.buddiesinbadtimes.com/media

RELAXED PERFORMANCE

A relaxed performance will be held on Thursday, April 4th at 8:00PM. Patrons can book \$10 tickets in advance using the code “RP10.”

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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SHOVE IT DOWN MY THROAT

by **Johnnie Walker**

directed by **Tom Arthur Davis**

starring **Johnnie Walker, Daniel Carter, Willard Gillard, Kwaku Okyere, Craig Pike, Heath V Salazar + Anders Yates**

set + costume design by **Anahita Dehbonehie**

lighting design by **Rebecca Vandevelde**

sound design by **Jivesh Parasram**

assistant directed by **Rhiannon Collett**

stage managed by **Waleed Ansari**

production management by **Oz Weaver**

Previews: March 30th + 31st, April 2nd

Opening Night: April 3rd

Closing Performance: April 14th

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

Established in 1979, Buddies in Bad Times Theatre is Toronto’s leading destination for artistically rigorous, alternative theatre and a world leader in developing queer voices and stories for the stage. Over the course of its history, it has evolved into the largest facility-based queer theatre company in the world and has made an unparalleled contribution to the recognition and acceptance of queer lives in Canada.

buddiesinbadtimes.com

Founded in 2009, Pandemic Theatre is a Toronto-based company mandated to create, develop, and produce work from critical and underrepresented perspectives that engage social and political themes. Our work is to challenge the role of aesthetics in a broader ideology. We strive to create spaces where political discourse is not only possible, but encouraged. Pandemic’s work has toured across Canada and internationally, including New York City, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Nova Scotia, Vancouver, Calgary, Kingston, Ottawa-Gatineau, and Sibiu (Romania).

pandemictheatre.ca