

For immediate release: August 19, 2021

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## Buddies in Bad Times Theatre announces its 2021-22 programming

[buddiesinbadtimes.com/21-22](https://buddiesinbadtimes.com/21-22)

Buddies in Bad Times theatre, the world's largest and longest-running queer theatre, announces a season of programming that brings together opportunities for new creation, artistic development, and community conversations, alongside the return of mainstage programming. The fall months will offer both dedicated development time for artists in various streams and opportunities for audiences to connect with queer and trans artists from home. In the new year, The Rhubarb Festival returns, along with two main stage productions coming out of the Buddies Residency Program. Throughout the season, the theatre's focus on community connection and exchange continues, and grows to bring that conversation to a national level.

Interim Programming Director **Daniel Carter** who has programmed the company's 43<sup>rd</sup> season remarks, "Our artistic offerings this year reflect the time of change that we find ourselves in as a theatre - grappling with themes of community, sustainability, decolonization, and reckoning with the past to imagine new futures. While we continue to navigate the pandemic, we are taking this opportunity to deepen our commitment to developing new queer performance, explore new ways for our theatre to engage with audiences, artists, and broader queer communities, and build upon a year of reflection and learning to continue our transformational work as a company."

In the fall, the theatre focuses on artist development, including the introduction of a new short-form incubator program, **Seeding Work**, an opportunity for artists **Michael Caldwell**, **Kitoko**, and **Julia Phan** to channel their new concepts and explorations into performance prototypes. Returning Residency artists **Martin Julien**, **Heath V. Salazar**, **Pencil Kit Productions** and **We Other Sons** will also be in the space, moving their projects forward throughout the year. As the needs of artists in the theatre sector evolve, Buddies' training opportunities for artist development do as well. The season includes a revamped **Emerging Creators Unit**, led by **Tawiah M'Carthy** and **Philip Geller**, as well as the newly founded **Emerging Company-in-Residence**, working with Deaf queer artists **Natasha Courage Bacchus** and **Gaitrie Persaud-Dhunmoon**. Alongside this development work, a number of audience-facing offerings—including radio plays, outdoor performance, and digital concerts—highlight queer and trans artists across the country in the ***Queer, Far, Wherever You Are*** series.

In the winter, the theatre hosts a national symposium on queer theatre and community, with the second iteration of the **Q2Q Conference**, first hosted in Vancouver in 2016. Presented in association with Vancouver's the frank theatre company, this year's theme, *Refusing the Queer Monolith* explores the diversity of queer theatre creation and creators across Turtle Island. Following an award-winning festival publication last season under the direction of **Clayton Lee**,

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**The Rhubarb Festival** will be back in the space in February, with a new format that sees Festival artists responding to a large-scale installation by architect and artist **Andrea Shin Ling**.

Two projects emerging from the Buddies Residency Program make their mainstage debut in the spring. Indigenous performance group **manidoons collective** mounts ***White Girls in Moccasins***, a fever-dream journey following a girl trying to find her way, and herself, in a colonial world. The play is written by **Yolanda Bonnell** (*bug, The Election*) and co-directed by **Cole Alvis** (*Lilies; Or, The Revival of a Romantic Drama*) and Soulpepper Academy member **Samantha Brown**. Later, **Justin Miller's Pearle Harbour** (*Chautauqua, AgitPop*) takes on a post-apocalyptic lens with ***Distant Early Warning***, a climate-fiction musical spectacle directed by **Lauren Gillis** (*Mr. Truth*), with musical direction by long-time Pearle collaborator **Steven Conway**.

The season also sees the return of the **2-Spirit Cabaret**, in partnership with **Native Earth Performing Arts; QueerCab**; as well as the popular intergenerational exchange series, **In Conversation**, hosted by **leZlie lee kam** and **Ty Sloane**. The monthly series will continue to be offered digitally, expanding the program's geographic reach, even as much of the theatre's programming—including dance parties, community events, and workshops in **Tallulah's Cabaret**—returns cautiously to the space.

With attention to ongoing COVID restrictions, dates and ticketing information will be announced later this fall/winter.

## 2021-22 SHOW LISTINGS

### Queer, Far, Wherever You Are

*Fall 2021*

Building on the success of our first iteration of *Queer, Far, Wherever You Are*—an Instagram live series in spring of 2020—this new curated series of digital offerings will connect audiences with queer and trans artists from Ontario, Alberta, and Manitoba. Programming includes **we quit theatre's 805-4821**, **Makram Ayache's *The Hooves Belonged to the Deer***, and ***The Trans Gemmes: Daddy Let The Girls Out (Oral Edition)***, directed by **Bilal Baig**.

<https://buddiesinbadtimes.com/show/queer-far-wherever-you-are/>

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Buddies in Bad Times Theatre presents, in association with the frank theatre company

### Q2Q-2: Refusing the Queer Monolith

Lead curator & producer **Makram Ayache**

Advisory Committee **Elena Belyea, Yolanda Bonnell, Santiago Guzman, Darrin Haggin, Tawiah M'Carthy, Nikki Shaffeeullah, Anais West, Richie Wilcox, Kaitlyn Yott**

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*December 2021*

A virtual symposium, Q2Q-2: Refusing the Queer Monolith, shines a light on the conversations happening in and around the works we see on stage and asks us to consider the makeup of queer theatre communities across Turtle Island. The conference brings together queer, trans, and 2-Spirit performance creators for a series of digital longtables, panel discussions, and performances, fostering thoughtful exchange and planting seeds of collaboration.

<https://buddiesinbadtimes.com/show/q2q-2-refusing-the-queer-monolith/>

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Buddies in Bad Times Theatre presents

## **The Rhubarb Festival**

Festival Director **Clayton Lee**

Design Lead **Andrea Shin Ling**

*February 2022*

Back for a 43rd year, Rhubarb transforms Buddies into a hotbed of experimentation, with artists challenging our notions of what art-making and art-watching can be. As Canada's longest-running new works festival, Rhubarb is the place to encounter the most adventurous ideas in performance and to catch familiar and unfamiliar artists venturing into uncharted territory.

Following this past year's festival's manifestation as a book, Rhubarb is transforming once again, with design lead Andrea Shin Ling creating a large-scale installation in the Chamber space that will serve as a site for artists to respond to, engage with, and leave their mark on.

<https://buddiesinbadtimes.com/show/the-rhubarb-festival/>

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a manidoons collective & Buddies in Bad Times Theatre production

## **White Girls in Moccasins**

by **Yolanda Bonnell**

co-directed by **Cole Alvis & Samantha Brown**

*Spring 2022*

Miskozi goes on a search for herself and her culture, accompanied by her inner white girl, Waabishkizi, and guided by Ziibi, a manifestation of an ancestral river. An irreverent reclamation story, *White Girls in Moccasins* world-hops between dreams, memories, and a surreal game show as Miskozi grapples with living her own truth in a society steeped in white supremacy.

<https://buddiesinbadtimes.com/show/white-girls-in-moccasins/>

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a Pearle Harbour & Buddies in Bad Times Theatre production

## **Distant Early Warning**

by **Justin Miller**

directed by **Lauren Gillis**

music direction and arrangements by **Steven Conway**

*Spring 2022*

Not long from now, in the scorched Arctic Circle, a fanatic group of survivors gathers around the planet's last standing radar dish. Above them, from low Earth orbit, the Grand Prize Winner sends prophetic warnings about the survivors' forgotten history, while their leader plots her escape. Distant Early Warning is a climate-fiction musical spectacle about the irresistible cycles of hope, memory, and violence.

<https://buddiesinbadtimes.com/show/distant-early-warning/>

### **MEDIA INFORMATION**

**INTERVIEWS** - Listed artists are available for interviews in English. Contact Aidan Morishita-Miki at [aidan@buddiesinbadtimes.com](mailto:aidan@buddiesinbadtimes.com) to arrange.

**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)