

# Buddies in Bad Times Theatre

## 2024 - 25 Season Announcement

### *Queerness is Divine Mystery*

June 25, 2024 (Toronto, ON): **ted witzel**, Artistic Director of Buddies in Bad Times Theatre, today announced the company's 46th season, a full year of programming, held by the phrase "Queerness is Divine Mystery," co-curated with Buddies' Artistic Associate **Erum Khan**.

The works in this season, witzel's first at the helm of the mainstay queer institution, seek out queerness not only as identity but as a way of being and acting in the world. Together Khan and witzel have pulled together works that gesture at audacious, poetic expressions of queerness, reaching toward the expansive and the divine.

The season features: rarely performed masterwork *Roberto Zucco* by **Bernard-Marie Koltès** translated by **Martin Crimp**; the world premiere of *Oraculum* created by drag artists and Canada's Drag Race finalists **Denim** and **Pythia**; the Toronto premiere of *There is Violence, There is Righteous Violence, and There is Death or; The Born-Again Crow* by **Caleigh Crow**; Genrefuck, a series of curated, movement-driven solo pieces; and the 46th iteration of the Rhubarb Festival. Plus, **New Ho Queen** moves in as Buddies' first-ever party-in-residence.

The season also includes the Canadian premiere of *Shedding a Skin* by **Amanda Wilkin** in association with Nightwood Theatre, and the world premiere presentation of *Last Landscape* from Bad New Days.

Buddies will also launch *I Won't Envy* a new podcast series where artist **Vivek Shraya** leads intimate one-on-one conversations with fellow artists who disclose their experiences with professional jealousy.

"All of our anchor works this season touch on transformation and ascension to the level of the mystic, gesturing toward a transcendent energy inside of queerness," says witzel. "Buddies is the world's largest and longest-running queer theatre company. Locally, we're known as a sacred venue where Toronto's queer creative heart beats (and flutters, and pounds). We know that these shows and artists will push us to dream big, and help (re)introduce Toronto to Buddies as a place to encounter the pleasure of a disobedient, experimental edge within an otherwise well-mannered artistic landscape."

This is Buddies' first full season under a new vision and leadership team, helmed by witzel, with Artistic Associate Erum Khan, Operations Director **Kristina Lemieux**, and Producer **Aidan Morishita-Miki**. Visit [BuddiesInBadTimes.com](https://BuddiesInBadTimes.com) to learn more.

## THE SEASON

Proud Season Partner: BMO

### Roberto Zucco

**By Bernard-Marie Koltès translated by Martin Crimp**

**September 15 to October 5, 2024 | Opens September 19**

ted witzel directs the season opener, a neo-noir masterwork from legendary postmodernist French writer Bernard-Marie Koltès. Set in France in 1989, and written as Koltès was dying of AIDS, the play traverses the realms between true crime and mythic fantasy. It delves into the criminal underworld of Europe, offering a critique of rampant capitalism and liberal family values.

Witness the living through the eyes of the dead. *Roberto Zucco* lures us into the wet streets and gloomy rooms of 1980s Europe, where a charming antihero battles his cosmic urge to kill. Koltès' sordid swan song is Greek tragedy kissed by Gregg Araki—breathlessly violent but with a pitch-black wit and occasional syrupy sweetness that leaves you disarmed. It shines a blistering sun on our darkest impulses; by the end, you'll wonder if we're just flightless birds in the face of our fates.

### Nuit Blanche

**October 5, 2024 | All night long**

Buddies and Nuit Blanche have been eyeing each other across the dance floor and finally hooked up—and obviously, the result is sexy. We're bringing you a full-facility function that bridges underground scenes.

The intersecting and overlapping projects taking over the theatre's historic building echo the makeouts and sweat stains of years of parties and performances. We're serving you ballroom with performances by **FakeKnot** and DJ sets by **Karim Olen Ash**, and a touch of whimsy with pop art performance duo **xLq**. Leave a love letter to your missed connection in Buddies' glittering bathrooms before you crawl home. You won't sleep a wink (but if you did, this is the party you'd dream of).

### Next Stage Theatre Festival

**October 16 to 27, 2024**

**Presented by the Toronto Fringe**

Next Stage is Toronto Fringe's curated, boutique festival—an elevated performance experience where audiences can access artistically rigorous work from new producers ready to bring their shows to the “next stage” of development. Returning to Buddies for a second year, the festival once again offers six dynamic pieces across a range of forms, alongside community programming, parties, and professional development opportunities. Visit [FringeToronto.com](https://www.fringetoronto.com) to see the full lineup.

## **Oraculum**

**December 1 to 15, 2024 | Opens December 5**

**A Buddies in Bad Times and Denim and Pythia co-production**

Get a glimpse into the enigmatic imaginations of two of Canada's premier drag artists.

**Denim** and **Pythia** take you on a journey of self discovery and divine mystery, as filtered through the crystal ball (or computer screen rather) of an online psychic reading website.

Combining performance, puppetry, and projection into an otherworldly spectacle, *Oraculum* pulls back the velvet curtain on gender and spirituality.

## **Last Landscape**

**January 12 to 26, 2025 | Opens January 14**

**Bad New Days, in partnership with Common Boots Theatre**

In a sometime somewhere devoid of nature, clownish 'workers' enter an empty space and assemble a series of artificial landscapes, striving to recreate the natural world from memory. But are we seeing the deep past? Or some genetically modified future? The world premiere of *Last Landscape*, conceived and directed by **Adam Paolozza**, employs Bad New Days' signature brand of physical theatre, offering a playful meditation on extinction, ecological grief and interspecies care, where colossal puppets of prehistoric megafauna roam free. On the brink of environmental collapse, it offers brave new possibilities for how we might share this big green miracle/marble.

## **Rhubarb Festival**

**February 13 to 23, 2025**

Rhubarb is Buddies at its rawest—a hotbed of unruly creatives queering what it means to make and experience art. Multi-disciplinary curator **Ludmylla Reis** helms this 46th iteration of Canada's longest-running genre-bending live arts festival. Make sure you stay hydrated (Tallulah's Cabaret can help with that).

## **There is Violence, There is Righteous Violence, and There is Death or; The Born-Again Crow**

**March 9 to 29, 2025 | Opens March 13**

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

**Directed by Jessica Carmichael**

Queer Métis theatre artist Caleigh Crow tends towards themes of metaphysics, class struggle, magic, and serious whimsy. This is the Toronto premiere of her Indigenous Voices Awards-nominated play, directed by Jessica Carmichael.

In *There is Violence*, Beth wants to burn it all down: the coconut milk section, the lady razor section, the healthy snacks section. The whole damn superstore. She only makes it to the magazine rack, but her act of resistance (or "public breakdown") gets her fired and lands her back with her mom in the suburbs—where a talking crow shows her how to harness her powerful political rage. A cul-de-sac gothic with a searing punk sensibility, *There is Violence* reads like an unearthed X-Files episode the suits were too afraid to air. It demands that we acknowledge our fury. Because how else can we feel real?

## **Shedding a Skin**

**By Amanda Wilkin**

**April 22 to May 4, 2025 | Opens April 24**

**A Nightwood Theatre production in association with Buddies in Bad Times**

On the 15th floor of a London tower block, a revolution takes place. Myah has ejected herself from a corporate hellscape only to crash-land in the spare room of an elder named Mildred—an evasive auntie with laminated house rules and hidden wounds. But healing takes many shapes, and sometimes it looks like sneaking your roommate's duckanoo.

*Shedding a Skin* is a one-woman buddy comedy for the heartbroken—a series of exquisitely observed, quietly radical scenes that offers a hand to those feeling the weight of the world. Drop your baggage at the door. Connection is resistance.

Canadian Premiere. Directed by **Cherissa Richards**.  
2020 Winner of The Verity Bargate Award.

## **Genrefuck**

**May 14 to 31, 2025**

**Never Walk Alone** by Julie Phan | **Goner** by Marikiscrycrycry | **Reina** by Augusto Bitter & **Bijuriya** by Gabriel Dharmoo

**A Buddies in Bad Times performance series in partnership with fu-GEN Theatre, PNSNV, and Pencil Kit Productions**

Four movement-driven solo pieces. Four audacious artists. Buddies offers space for intimate works to converse and collide through a series of rolling double-bills pairing local works with touring shows. This new platform features work from **Julie Phan, Marikiscrycrycry, Augusto Bitter, and Gabriel Dharmoo**.

Bitter's world premiere *Reina* envisions the many lives of the anonymous woman depicted on a bag of Harina P.A.N. corn flour, as Phan's world premiere *Never Walk Alone* uses endurance pole dance to spin a story of family, burnout, and economics. Dharmoo's *Bijuriya* code-switches between drag, song, and sound as it navigates its creator's dual personas, while the Canadian premiere of *Goner* reimagines Black horror aesthetics for a live context through fearsome and sensuous choreography.

This is art on the edge of gender and genre. Welcome to Genrefuck.

**AND MORE!...**

## **Vivek Shraya's I Won't Envy**

**A podcast by Vivek Shraya co-produced with Buddies in Bad Times**

*I Won't Envy* is a new podcast series where award winning author and artist **Vivek Shraya** has intimate one-on-one conversations with fellow artists working in various fields—including performance artist Alok, musician **Sara Quin** (from Tegan and Sara) and writer **Alicia Elliott**—who disclose their experiences with professional jealousy.

In Season 1, launching this October, we'll talk about when artists have felt most triggered, how they have managed (sometimes poorly) this feeling, and what they have learned from their jealousy.

*I Won't Envy* will change how you think about jealousy being an emotion that we must feel ashamed about.

### **Party in Residence: New Ho Queen**

An event should suspend time and create worlds. If you think that's too high a standard, just watch us. We know that parties are an art form—and so does **New Ho Queen**, our first-ever party-in-residence. With Queer Asian Love at the heart of all they do, New Ho Queen is a collective of artists, leaders in design, performance, film and fashion, that work together to produce joyful, new dance floor experiences. If you were lucky enough to be at their Lunar New Year party last year, you know what we're talking about. They'll be celebrating the Year of the Snake at Buddies (so we suggest you start prepping your look now).

### **Tallulah's**

Like its ambisexual namesake, Buddies' in-house bar and performance space Tallulah's Cabaret does it all. It's throbbing club nights and community tap dance lessons. High-concept drag and low-stakes open mics. Go for pre-drinks but stay late for the post-show discourse—maybe even spark that next collaboration. With local brews and sober options that aren't an after-thought, Tallulah's is the come-as-you-are bar for old friends, new lovers, partiers, poets, and curious passerby. See you under the chandeliers.

*Tallulah's Cabaret is open Wednesday to Sunday from 6:00 p.m. to midnight (or later). Check out [buddiesinbadtimes.com/events](https://buddiesinbadtimes.com/events) or @tallulahscabaret for the upcoming calendar.*

Tickets for the 2024/25 season go on sale this August.

### **About Buddies in Bad Times Theatre | [buddiesinbadtimes.com](https://buddiesinbadtimes.com) | @buddiesto**

Buddies in Bad Times Theatre is the world's largest and longest-running queer theatre. For 46 years, Buddies has carved out a sexy, disobedient edge in Toronto's theatre scene and has been a world leader in amplifying queer voices and developing their stories for the stage. In its year-round theatre season, Buddies is a home for artistic risk—a place where emerging talent hone their radical visions, and where established artists to do the daring works other theatres might shy away from. Since 1979, Buddies has welcomed over one million audience members and premiered over 1,000 new works for the stage.