

Tarragon Announces 2023-24 Season

Seven plays from new and returning voices, including six world premieres!

April 25, 2022, TORONTO - Artistic Director **Mike Payette** and Managing Director **Andrea Vagianos** are thrilled to announce **Tarragon Theatre's 2023-24 season**: a season that continues Tarragon's commitment to new Canadian works from across the country. Embracing the intergenerational and intersectional artists that make Tarragon the national hub for new creation, this season features legendary playwrights returning home to Tarragon, award-winning voices in their Tarragon debut and bold new ways of storytelling that embrace interdisciplinary representation. Tarragon's 2023-24 season offers **six World Premiere productions** and a **Toronto Premiere**, including partnerships with national theatre establishments and celebrated independent companies.

The Tarragon team is also pleased to announce the **continuation of the Greenhouse Festival** in January 2024, welcoming a new cohort of artist collectives! Greenhouse is an in-house incubation program, showcasing new works from conception to presentation, relishing all the discovery, mess and joy of creating new work. With public performances, building activations and a host of events, the Greenhouse Festival is the perfect way to experience Tarragon's support for new artists.

Tarragon is also excited to announce a new family-focused initiative supported by **The Steve and Sally Stavro Family Foundation**. The **Tarragon Family Series** will showcase performances for young theatre-goers and their families on weekends throughout the season, with free admission for children (under 12) and low cost tickets for parents and guardians. Launching with a call for artists this summer, the Tarragon Family Series will bring Payette's vision for intergenerational programming to fruition, welcoming audiences of all ages to Tarragon Theatre.

"It was deeply humbling to re-open our doors for our first full season last year, and welcome theatre-lovers and artists who were eager to be back together again. I have been moved by the generosity of our community and their excitement for Tarragon during our artistic transitional year as we empowered our mission of championing new work from the richness of Canadian voices and their stories; highlighting the immensity of the Canadian experience and its unique intersectionality. This is an exciting time for us and the stories and productions we are sharing underline the impact of some of the country's most lauded playwrights and those who are creating new trailblazing paths." notes **Artistic Director Mike Payette**.

He continues, *"This is a season that embraces intergenerational conversation while uplifting enchanting artistic form and the breadth of our cultural perspectives, all-the-while building bridges with artists and companies in Toronto and across the country. We are thrilled to welcome audiences to a season brimming with new pieces that will entice curiosity, inspire, challenge, move and look deeper into ourselves and each other in beautiful and unexpected ways."*

2023-24 begins with **THE LAST EPISTLE OF TIGHTROPE TIME** from celebrated Canadian artist **Walter Borden** (Tarragon's *Harlem Duet*). We're proud to present this **Tarragon Theatre/NAC presentation of the NAC/Neptune Theatre production**, which is being resurrected from its cancelled NAC engagement due to convoy disruption in Ottawa in February 2022. In this one-man piece, Borden offers a performance that features 10 characters, and returns to the story initially written and performed in 1986 as *Tightrope Time Ain't Nuthin' More Than Some Itty Bitty Madness Between Your Twilight & Your Dawn*, re-imagined through the unmatched vision of director **Peter Hinton-Davis** (Tarragon's *The Hooves Belonged to the*

Deer). Onstage for its Toronto premiere from **Sept 19 – Oct 15, 2023**.

Our season continues with the world premiere of **Nikki Shaffeeullah's A POEM FOR RABIA**. Told over three centuries, *A Poem for Rabia* highlights Shaffeeullah's lyrical storytelling through three women from the same bloodline and their hopes as they escape the weight of oppression to find flight. With co-direction from **Clare Preuss** (Theatre Passe Murraile's *Cake*) and **Donna-Michelle St. Bernard** (Tarragon's *Our Fathers, Sons, Lovers and Little Brothers*), *A Poem for Rabia* is an epic journey across time, oceans and tectonic shifts in political history. Presented in association with **Nightwood Theatre** and **Undercurrent Creations**. Onstage for its world premiere **Oct 17 – Nov 12, 2023**.

Next we're excited to welcome back to Tarragon Theatre two-time Governor General's Award-winner **Morris Panych** with a world premiere of his newest show **WITHROW PARK**. With direction from the inimitable **Jackie Maxwell** (Tarragon's *Light*), and featuring an unmatched cast with **Benedict Campbell** (Tarragon's *All Other Destinations Are Cancelled*), **Corrine Koslo** (Tarragon's *The Memory of Water*), **Nancy Palk** (Tarragon's *Sequence*) and **Johnathan Sousa** (Coal Mine Theatre's *Yerma*), *Withrow Park* offers Panych's quick wit and dark comedy in a story that asks who watches us from the darkness, and what happens when we stare back? **Withrow Park** makes its world premiere **Nov 7 - Dec 3, 2023**.

To ring in the new year we're excited to announce the return of the **GREENHOUSE FESTIVAL!** After the incredible success of Greenhouse 2023, Tarragon will welcome a new cohort of artist collectives, for our process-led, interdisciplinary residency. With the full support of Tarragon's artistic team, the collectives will develop new works in residence from Aug 2023 - Jan 2024, culminating in live performances alongside installations and events that activate the entire building. It's the perfect showcase of Tarragon's support of new work. Greenhouse continues growing at Tarragon in **January of 2024**.

We're also excited to collaborate again with **Nightswimming Theatre's PURE RESEARCH**, with their innovative research-based process that was integral to the success of the Greenhouse Festival in 2023.

Spinning out of her comic monologue at our 50th Birthday Bash, **Diane Flacks** (Tarragon's *Waiting Room*) returns to Tarragon with the world premiere of **GUILT (A Love Story)**. A deeply personal examination of familial breakdown focusing on Flacks' personal odyssey, *Guilt* brings the perspective of a self-sacrificing Jewish mother who becomes the instigator of a family's dissolution. This one-woman show written and performed by Flacks and directed by **Alisa Palmer** (Tarragon's *East of Berlin*) opens our 2024 regular programming. *Guilt (A Love Story)* will have its world premiere **Feb 6 - Mar 3, 2024**.

The season continues with more from **Donna-Michelle St. Bernard** and **3 FINGERS BACK**. A double bill of two plays from her *54ology*, Donna-Michelle offers *Give It Up* and *The Smell of Horses*. This work is co-produced with **lemonTree creations**, with direction from **Cole Alvis** (manidoons collective/Luminato's *bug*) and **Yvette Nolan** (The Arts Club's *The Unplugging*). *3 Fingers Back* offers differing vantage points of the same world, diving into the dark side of war from the perspectives of interrogator and interrogated. *3 Fingers Back* will have its world premiere **Feb 27 - Mar 24, 2024**.

Dora-Award winning playwright **Christine Quintana** (Young People's Theatre's *Selfie*) is next with **EL TERREMOTO**, welcoming **Guillermo Verdecchia** (Tarragon's *The Jungle*) back to Tarragon as director. *El Terremoto* is an epic where the titular earthquake echoes the chaos in a family of three sisters still dealing with the loss of their parents. *El Terremoto* will have its world premiere **Mar 26 - Apr 21, 2024**.

Closing the season, Tarragon Artistic Director **Mike Payette** directs **Audrey Dwyer's COME HOME: THE LEGEND OF DADDY HALL**. A decade-spanning story based on true events of the life of John Hall and

told through poetic text, music and song featuring original music from **Spy Dénommé-Welch** and **Catherine Magowan** (*Unsettled Scores*). Originally part of our Tarragon Acoustic series, *Come Home* has been completely re-imagined for the stage. *Come Home: The Legend of Daddy Hall* is a play about the afterlife, love, legacy and being legendary. *Come Home: The Legend of Daddy Hall* will have its world premiere **May 14 – Jun 9, 2024**.

The 2023-24 season brings a continuation of Payette's vision to open our doors to wider audiences and artists alike, through community, collaboration and true support of creation in all forms. We're excited to welcome you all home to Canada's Neighbourhood Theatre.

Tarragon Theatre 2023-24 Season At-A-Glance

The Last Epistle of Tightrope Time (Toronto Premiere)

A Tarragon Theatre/NAC presentation of the NAC/Neptune Theatre production

Written and Performed by Walter Borden

Directed by Peter Hinton-Davis

Mainspace

September 19 – October 15, 2023

From legendary Canadian artist Walter Borden, *The Last Epistle of Tightrope Time* is a deeply personal reflection on Walter's journey of life. An invigorating autobiographical performance, Walter re-visits the show, initially written and performed in 1986 as *Tightrope Time Ain't Nuthin' More Than Some Itty Bitty Madness Between Your Twilight & Your Dawn*. Through a solo performance featuring 10 characters, Walter explores homosexuality from a Black perspective and offers an experience of the resiliency of the human spirit.

A Poem for Rabia (World Premiere)

A Tarragon Theatre Production in association with Nightwood Theatre and

Undercurrent Creations

Written by Nikki Shaffeeullah

Co-Directed by Clare Preuss and Donna-Michelle St. Bernard

Extraspace

October 17 – November 12, 2023

An epic journey across time, oceans, and tectonic shifts in political history. *A Poem for Rabia* weaves the stories of three queer women from the same bloodline: Zahra, a disillusioned activist in 2053, navigating a Canada that has just abolished prisons; Betty, in 1953 British Guiana, caught between her new secretarial job at the Governor's office and the growing national independence movement; and Rabia, an Indian domestic worker in 1853, abducted by colonial 'recruiters' and sent sailing from Calcutta to the Caribbean on an indentured labour ship.

Withrow Park (World Premiere)

By Morris Panych

Directed by Jackie Maxwell

Mainspace

November 7 – December 3, 2023

Three people gaze out their living room window as the days pass. Across the street in Withrow Park life goes on – or is it a dream? Then a knock at the door. Time has found them, hiding in plain sight. Or possibly it's just a man in a wrinkled suit. But they must act, now, or forever be devoured by their own indifference. Logan Avenue awaits, and beyond it, heaven, perhaps. They can no longer live on the periphery of their own lives. They must invite the young man to dinner.

With direction from Jackie Maxwell, and from the mind of Morris Panych, *Withrow Park* asks what we see in the darkness, and who is watching us from the light.

Guilt (A Love Story) (World Premiere)
Written and Performed by Diane Flacks
Directed by Alisa Palmer
Mainspace

February 6 – March 3, 2024

An all-new play about pathos; the “unshakable monster that is guilt,” and the things we’re not supposed to talk about. *Guilt (A Love Story)* is a deep dive into a complex, uncomfortable, and highly human feeling. A state of being that most of us, especially parents, wrestle with inelegantly. Focusing on Flacks’ personal odyssey *Guilt* brings the perspective of a self-sacrificing Jewish mother who becomes the instigator of a family's dissolution. Societal effects, causes and casualties and the feeling that we have when we’ve profoundly hurt others. This exploration may not pull punches, but don’t worry, it’s accompanied by laughs - because how else do we get through anything?

Diane Flacks returns to Tarragon Theatre with *Guilt (A Love Story)*, her 5th one-woman show.

3 Fingers Back (World Premiere)
A double bill featuring *Give It Up & The Smell of Horses*
by Donna-Michelle St. Bernard
Co-Directed by Cole Alvis and Yvette Nolan
Extraspace

February 27 - March 24, 2024

Where stakes are high and kindness is in short supply.

3 Fingers Back is a double bill with a panoramic view of how we choose to treat each other: the captive, their captors and those who bear witness.

When we run out of options, we find out who we really are. In *Give It Up*, two women strategize to survive interrogation, and the cost of freedom. In *The Smell of Horses*, three soldiers plot to extract information through their humanity and the confines of duty.

From celebrated artist Donna-Michelle St. Bernard, this double bill of plays from her *54ology* occupies different vantage points of the same world.

El Terremoto (World Premiere)

Written by Christine Quintana

Directed by Guillermo Verdecchia

Mainspace

March 26 - April 21, 2024

Twenty years have passed since the three Jurado sisters lost their parents, and life just seems to continue on in their East Vancouver home. A birthday party, a failed proposal and a missed connection fill the days and months until an earthquake nearly destroys the city, and brings forward a shocking turn of events that splits their world wide open.

From Dora-Award winning playwright Christine Quintana, *El Terremoto* is a dramatic comedy about how nothing matters, so everything matters.

Come Home: The Legend of Daddy Hall (World Premiere)

Written by Audrey Dwyer

Directed by Mike Payette

Mainspace

May 14 - June 9, 2024

When John Hall is confronted by his ancestors, he is forced to revisit his entire life. Worlds collide as he travels back through time rediscovering life as a husband, father, son, war scout and freedom fighter. As he relives his dangerous past, John must decide – continue life as the oldest man, abandon everything and serve those on the earthly plane or exist in the Unknown.

Based on true events, *Come Home: The Legend of Daddy Hall* is told through poetic text, music and song.

A play about the afterlife, love, legacy and being legendary. *Come Home* asks where we come from, where we're headed and what we may be asked to do when we get there.

Greenhouse Festival

A festival of creation at Tarragon Theatre

January 2024

Throughout the Tarragon building.

Never Stop Growing

The Tarragon team is pleased to announce the return of the ***Greenhouse Festival*** in January 2024, as we welcome a new cohort of artist-collectives! Greenhouse is an in-house incubation program that relishes in the discovery, mess, and joy of creating new work. Featuring public performances, building-wide activations and animations, and special presentations from celebrated creators, the Greenhouse Festival is the perfect way to experience the next generation of Tarragon artists.

Tarragon Family Series

Family friendly programming throughout the season

Bring your kids to the theatre!

With support from The Steve and Sally Stavro Family Foundation, we are excited to welcome the next generation of theatre-goers to enjoy the world of imagination and play with the *Tarragon Family Series*. This family-friendly weekend programming, with performances FREE for children under 12 and discounted tickets for parents/guardians, will be sure to delight the little ones!

Paprika Festival **May 2024**

Originally established in 2001 with then Artistic Director Urjo Kareda, the Paprika Festival showcases work entirely created by young artists. Paprika returns to its roots at Tarragon Theatre in Spring 2024.

HOW TO GET TICKETS TO TARRAGON SHOWS:

Subscriptions and tickets can be purchased online at www.tarragontheatre.com, by phone at 416-531-1827 or in person at the Tarragon Theatre Box Office at 30 Bridgman Avenue.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Tarragon Theatre continues to offer the most flexible subscription packages in the city, allowing patrons to choose their productions and change their dates free of charge, and offering many different price points to suit all schedules and budgets.

2023-24 Earlybird Subscriptions

7-Play and 5-Play subscriptions are currently on sale, with discounted subscriptions for Students and Artswokers. Early bird pricing ends on June 30, 2023.

ABOUT TARRAGON THEATRE

Tarragon Theatre is a creation and playwrights' theatre. We seek to create theatre that investigates artistic form, which may incorporate non-traditional practices and methods of storytelling, and may integrate other disciplines such as movement, music or non-text

based performance - all toward creating enriching and provocative theatre experiences for the artist and audience. Our philosophy is to create an environment that fosters artistic

discourse within the ecology of Canadian theatre, new play development and dramaturgy practice. We open our doors to celebrate and learn from the scope of voices that make up our country and the various artistic practices that resonate within them. To that end, Tarragon is equally a hub for creation and development as it is a production company, with the ultimate goal of creating a meaningful experience for our artists to thrive and bridge their ideas from concept to realization. Mike Payette has been the Artistic Director since September 2021.

For more information visit www.tarragontheatre.com.

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