

cicadas
Tarragon Theatre
Fact Sheet

This fact sheet has key information about the show and the theatre that you may find useful and that may help you to fully enjoy your time with us.

Key Information

Location:	Tarragon Theatre Mainspace
Address:	30 Bridgman Ave Toronto ON M5R 1X3
Onstage:	May 5th - May 24th Tue - Sat at 7:30pm and Sun at 2:00pm
Previews:	May 5th & May 6th at 7:30pm
Mask Required Performance:	Sat May 9th at 2:00pm
Preshow Tarragon Talk:	Tue May 12th 6:00pm - 7:00pm
Postshow Talk Backs:	Sun May 10th, Thu May 14th, Sun May 17th, Thu May 21st
Student Matinées:	Wed May 13th & Wed May 20th at 1pm
ASL Interpreted Performance:	Thu May 21st at 7:30pm
Audio Described Performance:	Sun May 23rd at 2pm
Performance Length:	2 hours and 10 minutes with one Intermission
Intermission:	There is one 15 minute Intermission for this show.
Quiet Room:	There is no Quiet Room for this show.
Late Entry:	Is permitted for this show (Details on page 3).
Reentry:	Is permitted for this show (Details on page 3).

House Program: [click for House Program](#)

Venue Guide: [click for Venue Guide](#)

Audience Resource Guide: [click for Audience Resource Guide](#)

General Things to Know

- Tarragon has two (2) theatres: the Mainspace and the Extraspace.
- This show is performed in the Mainspace, which seats 202 people.
- Evening performances start at 7:30pm. Afternoon performances start at 2:00pm. Student Matinées start at 1:00pm.
- Digital tickets are emailed to you when you book them and will be emailed again on the morning of the performance.
- If you arranged to have your ticket printed for pickup, please arrive 30 minutes before the show starts to get it from the Box Office.
- The lobby has benches to sit on and make yourself comfortable on.
- The Bar/Concessions is open for all performances except Student Matinées.
- Food cannot be eaten in the Mainspace, but can be eaten in the Lobby. Drinks are allowed in the Mainspace. Hot drinks must have a lid.
- Tarragon Theatre only requires masking for certain performances. However, you are welcome to wear one in and around the venue at any time. Please note that some staff may wear masks, but it is not required for staff to be masked.
- The women's washroom is on the ground floor.
- The men's washroom, all gender washroom, and single-stall accessible washroom are on the second floor.

- The second floor can be reached by stairs or elevator.
- This show has assigned seating.
- You can find your seat assignment on your digital or printed ticket.
- The Mainspace will open 30 minutes before the performances, at this time the ushers will start scanning tickets so people can go in and take their seats.
- An Usher will tell you where to find your seat when they scan your ticket.
- Your mobile phone should be set to silent during the performance.
- The Mainspace is air conditioned in warmer weather and may be cold when you first enter. It will quickly heat up once the show begins.
- The lights over the audience will be partially lowered and a recorded message and Land Acknowledgement will play. Then the lights will be lowered until it is dark and the performance will start.
- If you need to leave during the performance for any reason, you can. When an usher notices you trying to leave, they will help you exit to the lobby using the doors you entered from.
- Late Entry is permitted for *cicadas* up to 5 minutes after the performance begins. If you arrive after the performance has already started, please talk to the Box Office staff and they will let you in at an appropriate moment.
- Reentry is permitted for *cicadas*. If you wish to return to the Mainspace and the performance, please talk to the Box Office staff and they will let you back in at an appropriate moment. They may direct you to a different seat depending on how full the Mainspace is and where your original seat was.

About *cicadas*

This is the World Premier of *cicadas* by Chris Thornborrow and David Yee.

In 2032, while on the hunt for a new home in Toronto's Trinity Bellwoods, Trim and Janie are drawn to a very peculiar house. A flood with no leak, an ominous voice, and hordes of cicadas are only three of the many strange things seeping up through the old floorboards. Could a strangely luminous painting unlock long-hidden secrets of what lies beneath the home?

Howling winds, storms, and the ever-present sound of cicadas remind us that nothing stays buried.

cicadas is a modern eco-thriller from the minds of Governor General's Award and Siminovitch Prize laureate David Yee and award-winning composer Chris Thornborrow that serves as both mystery and warning.

About the Performance

Here are some things about this show you may find interesting or helpful as an audience member:

- *cicadas* first began as a radio drama. A link to listen to that version of the show can be found in the [Audience Resource Guide](#).
- Composer Chris Thornborrow and playwright David Yee created *cicadas* in tandem. Sometimes the text of a scene would inspire its music and other times the music of a scene would inspire its text.
- This production of *cicadas* was performed in April at the National Arts Centre English Theatre in Ottawa before travelling to the Tarragon Mainspace in Toronto.

Performer and Character Information

Performer: Monica Dottor

Character: Janie

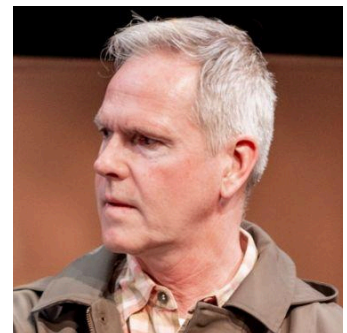
Character Info: Janie is a middle-aged woman. She is the wife of Trim, the mother of Cassie, and the Daughter of Adeline.



Performer: Ryan Hollyman

Character: Trim

Character Info: Trim is a middle-aged man. He is the husband of Janie, the father of Cassie, and the former student of Adeline.



Performer: Elora Patnaik
Character: Adeline and others*
Character Info: Adeline is the mother of Janie. She was Trim's professor of mathematics during his time at university. She died several years before the beginning of the play.



*Other characters played by Elora Patnaik:

The Deer

An embodiment of nature.

Agent

A real estate agent.

Surveyor

An insurance surveyor who addresses claims.

Lucy

A doula hired by Janie.

Flower

A friend of Janie's.

Inspector

A Toronto Building Inspection employee.

Production Photos by Jae Yang

Content Advisory

Please note that the Fact Sheet contains spoilers from this point on.

cicadas deals with and presents content which may be difficult for some, including: suicide, missing children, smoking (cigarettes, vapes), grieving a parent, climate collapse, flooded homes, existential dread, financial and housing insecurity, pregnancy, home birth, rejected insurance claims, and fainting.

- There is swearing/crass language throughout the performance.
- Trim uses a vape and smokes cigarettes a few times during the performance. The cigarette is always an e-cigarette that produces vapour but does not burn or give off smoke.
- Trim and Flower both use lighters onstage during the performance. Each time a lighter is used, the flame is only held for a moment and is not visible for very long. No larger flame is used during the performance.
- Trim falls down a staircase and also faints during the performance. These moments are vigorously rehearsed and no real harm is suffered by the actor.
- When Janie's water breaks no liquid effect is used.
- During the performance it is implied and then confirmed that Adeline died by suicide. The death is not seen onstage, though the method is mentioned once.

Sensory Advisory

- There is live music played throughout the performance using the following instruments: cello, clarinet/base clarinet, piano, and various percussion instruments.
- The music gets loud several times during the performance, particularly the drums. If something is ever too loud you can cover your ears with your hands or put on sound dampening headphones if you brought them. The Box Office can provide earplugs upon request.
- Water based haze is used throughout the performance.
- Fog is used once during the performance near the end of Act Two (2).
- There are colourful flashing lights multiple times during the performance. The highest concentration of these flashes happen:
 - The first few minutes and last few minutes of the performance.
 - Both times the house sinks down in Act Two (2).
 - When the fog effect is used in Act Two (2).
- Characters yell and shout several times during the performance. If something is ever too loud you can cover your ears with your hands or put on sound dampening headphones if you brought them. The Box Office can provide earplugs upon request.
- Janie screams loudly for an extended period when she discovers that her daughter is missing.
- The sound of a ticking clock is played for an extended period near the end of Act One (1).
- Near the beginning of Act Two (2), Flower burns some Palo Santo incense. The scent is strongest in the first few rows.
- When voice over news segments are played, the voices often overlap and speak at the same time.

Plot Summary

- The Deer dances on the stage as music is played. If something is ever too loud you can cover your ears with your hands or put on sound dampening headphones if you brought them. The Box Office can provide earplugs upon request.
 - A real estate Agent gives Trim and Janie a tour of a Toronto house.
 - Janie and Trim debate if this is the right house to raise the baby they are expecting.
 - Janie convinces Trim they should buy the house.
 - The Agent explains that the house has been empty for years, and that if they live here they must never go into the basement.
 - There is a flash back to Trim attending an undergraduate lecture taught by Adeline.
 - Trim and Janie enter the basement of the house while they unpack and discover it is flooded.
 - Months later, a Surveyor is inspecting the basement for insurance claim purposes.
 - Trim claims that the ankle deep water had mysteriously evaporated when he came back to the basement 30 minutes after they left it.
 - The Surveyor tells Trim that his home insurance will not cover the water damage, and that the house is also starting to sink into the ground.
 - Trim leaves when Janie calls to him from upstairs.
 - The Surveyor goes to inspect an air duct and an unseen force pulls his whole body into it and out of sight.
-
- Trim discovers Janie sleep walking and talking to her mother's painting.

- While they are talking about baby names Janie's water breaks.
- Trim calls their doula, Lucy, and starts setting up for their home birth.
- Trim falls down the stairs, then he faints.
- Janie seems to hear a voice the audience cannot and walks to the basement.
- Trim wakes up and follows her down.
- The next day, Janie is telling Lucy about the birth of their daughter, Cassie.
- Janie says the basement had flooded again, and that the water was the exact temperature specified for a home birth.
- Lucy tells Trim that she only missed the birth because when she arrived at the house last night it was covered in a blanket of cicadas.
- Lucy tells Trim he should take his family and leave this house.
- There is a flashback to Adeline giving a lecture about mathematics of cicada seasons.
- As the lecture goes on Adeline seems to be talking about events in the present, warning Trim that Cassie is not safe now that she is turning four (4).
- Trim is woken by Janie yelling that Cassie is missing.
- They search the house and eventually find the word HELP (H \exists LP), with a backwards E (\exists), written on the wall of Cassie's room.

-
- There is a flashback of Adeline and Janie birdwatching and talking about the early stages of Janie and Trim's relationship.
 - Janie asks her mother why she has decided to stop teaching, but Adeline dodges the question.
 - Trim and Janie argue about how to best look for Cassie.

- Trim takes a small clock offstage and smashes it to stop its ticking.
 - Trim lights a cigarette and smokes it.
-

- Janie is dreaming about playing hide and seek with Cassie.
- Still dreaming, Janie thinks she sees Cassie trying to push through the walls of the house.
- Trim finds Janie clawing at the walls of Cassie's room.
- They argue about the different ways they have looked for Cassie in the six (6) months since she disappeared.
- Trim notices something behind the wallpaper Janie had started to pull off.
- Together, they uncover a wall filled with numbers and symbols in neat lines.
- Trim remembers that a backwards E (\exists) is a mathematical symbol meaning "there exists".

INTERMISSION

- Janie invites her friend and spiritual doula Flower over to Cassie's room.
- Trim reveals to Janie that the house is sinking down so much he had to remove the front door.
- Flower lights a bundle of Palo Santo incense.
- Flower leads Janie and Trim in a seance.
- Janie gets increasingly upset that she can't feel Cassie.
- Trim asks Flower to leave and she does.

- Janie and Adeline are birdwatching together, like before.
 - It becomes quickly clear to Janie that something is wrong when Adeline claims that Cassie is here with them.
 - Janie asks Adeline what the argument she (Adeline) had with Trim the day before she died was about, and why she didn't leave a note.
 - Adeline talks about birds that lay their eggs in the nests of other birds.
-

- An Inspector has come to talk to Janie and Trim.
 - He tells them that the city has condemned their house as unsafe and that they must leave it.
 - The Inspector makes a comment about the wall of numbers which triggers sudden understanding in Trim of what it is.
 - He claims that it is using mathematics to express a map of their neighbourhood and house, and that therefore Cassie must still be in the house.
 - Suddenly, the house shakes as it sinks down even more.
 - Trim and Janie rush to the ground floor and the Inspector leaves.
 - The door down to the basement has become overgrown with greenery.
 - There is a flashback to the day before Adeline died.
 - Trim finds the suicide note Adeline placed in Janie's purse and confronts her with it.
 - Adeline explains that she has lost faith in the mathematics she has dedicated her life to.
 - Trim refuses to accept her reasoning and tears up the note.
 - Trim has Adeline promise that they will talk more about this tomorrow.
-

- Trim and Janie realize that neither of them has gone into the basement in the years since Cassie was born.
- Janie tells Trim that she is going down into the basement to find Cassie, and that he cannot stop her.
- After Janie has gone through the basement door, the house starts to shake and then collapses.
- A sequence of news clips are played as voice over to explain the following:
 - The whole neighbourhood around the house collapsed into a giant sinkhole.
 - Over the next year similar sinkholes collapsed in other major Canadian cities.
 - Previously thought extinct species have been seen around the sinkholes.
- Trim returns to the overgrown ruins of his house.
- The Deer appears and talks to Trim, who realizes that the Deer is somehow also Adeline.
- The Deer tells him that Janie and Cassie came home to her.
- Trim opens the basement door and goes down.
- The door closes behind him, leaving the Deer alone onstage.

THE END

Set Description and Photos

The set of *cicadas* looks like the interior of a house with a river running down its middle.

The stage is divided in the middle by an indented, curving pathway meant to give the impression of a riverbed.

On the left side of the curved path, a diagonal wall takes up most of that side of the stage. The wall is not flat, instead it is made of 90 degree corners spaced at regular intervals to give the impression of a staircase flipped onto its side. There is a door in the middle of the wall.

On the right side of the curved path are two raised platforms at the back of the stage. The platform closest to the centre is around chest high, and a curtain of see-through fabric hangs in front of it. Directly to its right is the second platform which is above head height. Both platforms have a staircase behind them for access.

At the front right corner there is a short staircase with steps on both sides of a central landing.

At the beginning of the show the wall, the taller platform, and the short staircase are draped in large sheets of see-through fabric. These coverings are removed in the first few minutes of the performance.



Set Design by Jawon Kang

Contact Information:

If you have any questions or concerns about this Fact Sheet or planning a visit to Tarragon Theatre please reach out.

We love feedback on our accessible programming, if there is anything you would like to share please send us an email or give us a call.

Heather Caplap

Education and Community Access Manager

Email: education@tarragontheatre.com

Phone: 416-536-5018 x 249

Natasha Parsons

Director of Patron Services

Email: patronservices@tarragontheatre.com

Phone: 416-531-1827 x 221

Address

[30 Bridgman Avenue](#)

[Toronto, Ontario, M5R 1X3](#)