

canadianstage

Canadian Stage looks to the future in 18.19

Matthew Jocelyn's sweeping and bold final season puts long-time artist collaborators in the spotlight, including Robert Lepage, Crystal Pite + Jonathon Young, Akram Khan + Jordan Tannahill, Kim Collier + Daniel Brooks, Sandra Laronde, Chris Abraham, Njo Kong Kie, playwright Lucy Kirkwood, director Estelle Shook, and choreographer Hofesh Schechter.

The company also welcomes new artists and celebrates new partnerships with Peggy Baker + musical accomplices from Arcade Fire, Pierre Guillois, Tiago Rodrigues, Sook-Yin Lee + Zack Russell, Eda Holmes + Centaur Theatre, and Ravi Jain + Why Not Theatre.

Toronto, ON – Matthew Jocelyn, Artistic & General Director, today unveiled Canadian Stage's 18.19 season, the last under his nine-year tenure leading the company. Looking forward to the future while acknowledging his imprint on the company, Jocelyn leaves Canadian Stage with a legacy season of seventeen productions, which places original work from long-time collaborators centre-stage and finds beautifully diverse perspectives on the overarching dialogues of the 21st century.

The 18.19 season features eight original Canadian creations - four of which are world premieres - while continuing to situate local artists in the context of a global community. The season brings work from the UK, France, and Portugal to Toronto, and includes a major collaboration between a Canadian and international artist, alongside two fresh new takes on well-loved classics by innovative directors.

"An essential part of Canadian Stage's role in this country is to nurture artistic development in the long term while facilitating the artistic vision to its fullest extent," said Artistic and General Director Matthew Jocelyn. *"This year we are particularly proud to be placing many of those collaborators into a big spotlight on the Bluma Appel stage. It is vital, and frankly very exciting, for these un-convention-bound Canadian artists to inhabit those big spaces – alongside some of the most powerful and uncompromising work from around the world."*

A characteristically adventurous season that spans classical texts to radical new movement theatre pieces, to brilliantly innovative experiments with theatrical form from around the globe, 18.19 also carries forward the company's ongoing emphasis on collaboration across multiple platforms, institutional and artistic. The season includes co-productions and partnerships with Akram Khan Company, Centaur Theatre, Luminato Festival, the Stratford Festival, Crow's Theatre, Groundling Theatre, Theatre Français de Toronto, Kidd Pivot,

Electric Company and Fall for Dance North, while Njo Kong Kie and Red Sky Performance continue in their Berkeley Street Residencies and a new residency begins with Ravi Jain's Why Not Theatre.

"Collaboration is at the heart of our artistic endeavour and it's written into the bedrock of the past decade of Canadian Stage's history. As the industry has grown and changed in Canada I think we've come to see how collaboration enables us to mutualize our resources to create better art," adds Jocelyn. *"Sharing and nurturing ideas with the artist collaborators and companies, including those represented in this season, has been the great joy of my time at Canadian Stage, and we are honoured to have them grace our theatres now and into future seasons."*

Opening the Bluma season in 18.19 is *Xenos*, the highly anticipated final solo performance from the world-renowned dance artist Akram Khan, with a text written by Jordan Tannahill – a partnership born of their respective time with Canadian Stage. Arriving in October 2018, *Xenos'* movement shifts between classical kathak and contemporary dance to explore the legacy of over four million non-white men mobilized for the first world war and wholly alienated from their homelands. With only four shows in Toronto, the Canadian Stage presentation is one of three partners to kick off the North American tour of this truly landmark piece of dance theatre.

One of the most innovative pairings in recent memory has undoubtedly been between the remarkable Canadian choreographer Crystal Pite and actor/writer Jonathon Young, the creators of the PanAM-Canadian Stage co-commission, *Betroffenheit*, which Canadian Stage presents for the third time later this spring. In March of 2019, these acclaimed creators will premiere *Revisor*, a new dance theatre work that uses the language of farce to speak of a world riddled with corruption. This exciting new work is a Kidd Pivot Production co-produced by Canadian Stage.

Another powerful partnership with Canadian Stage artistic collaborators brings *The Full Light of Day*, created and directed by Kim Collier (*Tear the Curtain!*) and written by Daniel Brooks (director of *Race, The Other Place*). An immersive, cutting edge multimedia experience, this new film/theatre hybrid unspools at the Bluma in June 2019 in an historic first partnership with Luminato Festival. *The Full Light of Day* is a production from The Electric Company.

Dance and movement-based performance take the stage again at the Bluma with *who we are in the dark*, a world premiere collaboration between Peggy Baker Dance Company and two founding musicians from Arcade Fire. Originally commissioned by Fall for Dance North as a solo work, this new large-scale production sees Peggy Baker collaborating with a company of eight prodigious dancers and live performance by musicians Jeremy Gara and Sarah Neufeld, in an exploration and illumination of what happens in the darkness.

Turning to the world stage, political undercurrents are likewise the very fabric of the largest non-Canadian dance presentation Canadian Stage has ever hosted at the Bluma Appel, *Grand Finale*, from the internationally-celebrated choreographer Hofesh Schechter (*Political Mother*). A Hofesh Schechter Company production presented by Canadian Stage, this ambitious production features ten dancers and six musicians searching for hope in the chaos of a world in freefall.

While celebrating new work, Canadian Stage's 31st season also gives audiences another opportunity to see Robert Lepage's masterpiece, *887* - the intimate solo spectacle that has mesmerized audiences the world over since premiering at Panamania 2015. Returning to the Bluma Appel after a short run in the 16.17 season, this Canadian Stage co-production will be on stage in May 2019.

In the spirit of revisiting landmark productions, Canadian Stage joins forces with the Stratford Festival, Crow's Theatre, and Groundling Theatre Company, to bring Chris Abraham's rip-roaring sell-out production of *Tartuffe* (Stratford Festival, 2017) to Toronto at the Bluma; and at the Berkeley a new partnership is forged with Ravi Jain's Why Not Theatre as Berkeley Street Company in Residence, with their innovative and provocative *Prince Hamlet*. Produced by the company at the Theatre Centre in the spring of 2017, *Prince Hamlet* is a fully integrated re-telling of Shakespeare's classic performed in English and American Sign Language.

The Berkeley is home to eight productions in 18.19, spanning various origins and genres. The season opens with the Canadian premiere of *The Children* by Lucy Kirkwood (UK), whose *Chimerica* was produced at Canadian Stage in 2016. A near-future drama set in the aftermath of a catastrophe that puts a spotlight on our individual and collective responsibility to future generations, *The Children* is a co-production between Canadian Stage and Centaur Theatre, Montreal, directed by Centaur's Artistic Director Eda Holmes.

Also hailing from the UK, in November 2018 Canadian Stage produces the Canadian premiere of *Every Brilliant Thing*, written by Duncan Macmillan and Johnny Donahoe. This life-affirming and magical piece - featuring a single actor and unexpected interactions with the audience - will be directed by Estelle Shook, a graduate of the York University and Canadian Stage MFA program who most recently directed *Sunday in Sodom*, half of the Dora Award-winning double bill *Botticelli in the Fire/Sunday in Sodom* by Jordan Tannahill.

A new commission from multimedia provocateur Sook-Yin Lee and playwright/filmmaker Zack Russell (*Ajax: por nobody*, *All Our Happy Days Are Stupid*), *Unsafe* is a Berkeley Street Theatre world premiere commission developed in residence at Canadian Stage. A satirical investigation of the history and present day reality of artistic censorship in Canada and around the world, this topical and timely theatrical experiment promises to ignite debate.

18.19 also brings two international productions to the Berkeley, one celebrating the necessity of language, the other revelling in joyous silence. From France, Canadian Stage presents the North American premiere of a Compagnie le Fils du Grand Réseau production of their Moliere Award-winning silent comedy in the spirit of Buster Keaton and Jaques Tati, *Bigre*. From Portugal comes A Teatro Nacional D. Maria II production, written and performed by Tiago Rodrigues, *By Heart*. Rodrigues invites ten audience members on stage to memorize a Shakespearean sonnet while unravelling a mystery of memory, storytelling, and the essential importance of words, in this co-presentation between Canadian Stage and Theatre Français de Toronto.

Red Sky Performance and Njo Kong Kie both continue their residencies as Berkeley Street partner companies in 18.19. This two-year residency program allows select Toronto-based companies the opportunity to develop and present new work with administrative and artistic support from Canadian Stage. Past partners have included Crow's Theatre, Necessary Angel, and The Company Theatre. In October, Red Sky Performance follows their 17.18 work *Backbone* with *Trace*, a new cutting-edge dance creation that explores Indigenous connections to ancestral origins.

Toronto composer Njo Kong Kie, whose critically-acclaimed *Mr Shi and His Lover* enjoyed a third Toronto presentation at the Tarragon this past fall, and who will present *Picnic in the Cemetery* at the Berkeley this spring, presents the world premiere of *I Swallowed a Moon Made of Iron*, a Chinese song cycle set to the poetry of Xu Lizhi that gives voice to millions of migrant workers around the globe. Performances are in May 2019.

As always, the season begins under a canopy of stars and trees in the park, with the 36th season of Shakespeare in High Park. 18.19 sees SiHP highlighting two of Shakespeare's most beloved classics, *Romeo and Juliet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Actor/director Frank Cox-O'Connell is on board to direct *Romeo and Juliet*, returning to High Park following his critically-acclaimed 2016 portrayal of Hamlet. Tanja Jacobs, a 2017 graduate of the York/Canadian Stage MFA program who will co-direct *Love and Information* later this spring at the Berkeley, returns to High Park to direct *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, following her hugely successful re-imagining of *Twelfth Night* in 2017.

Programming enrichment activities continue throughout the 18.19 season with pre and post-show chats, hands-on workshops and open-door forums, while expanded partnerships with local school boards and other social organizations expand reach to younger audiences.

Following the highly successful launch in 17.18 of the youth engagement series *Territorial Tales*, the series will continue in 18.19 and is in the process of review.

As part of its year-round artist training programs, Canadian Stage announces three incoming participants to the 2018 RBC Emerging Artist Program: Director Development participants are Ali Joy and Nikki Shaffeeullah and the Company in Residence is Bad New Days. Each of the directors and the company will receive administrative, production, and artistic support from the company to develop and workshop new works for the stage throughout the 2018 season.

18.19 Subscription renewals are on sale now with flexible four-show packages starting from \$166 and a seven-play subscription package starting from \$257.25 (including all fees and HST). Subscriptions may be purchased online at canadianstage.com, by phone at 416.368.3110 or in person at the Berkeley Street Theatre Box Office (26 Berkeley Street).

Single tickets will be on sale April 16, 2018. Full details on the productions and Subscription packages are available online at canadianstage.com. Performances take place at the company's three historic venues: the Berkeley Street Theatre, the Bluma Appel Theatre and the High Park Amphitheatre.

18.19 SEASON SPONSOR



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For more information or interview requests, please contact:

Suzanne Cheriton, RedEye media, 416-805-6744, suzanne@redeyemedia.ca

18.19 season overview >

[SHAKESPEARE IN HIGH PARK: ROMEO and JULIET + A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM](#)

By William Shakespeare

Romeo and Juliet directed by Frank Cox-O'Connell

A Midsummer Night's Dream directed by Tanja Jacobs

Now in its 36th season of outdoor theatre magic, Shakespeare in High Park presents adventurous adaptations of two of the bard's most popular and enduring works. The tragic romance of *Romeo and Juliet* and the frolicking comedy of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

immerse you in tales of rebellious love in the face of authority – the best way to spend a summer night in Toronto.

June 28 – September 2 | High Park Amphitheatre (Pay-What-You-Can tickets)

A Canadian Stage production in collaboration with the Department of Theatre, School of the Arts, Media, Performance and Design at York University

[THE CHILDREN](#)

By Lucy Kirkwood

Directed by Eda Holmes

“A richly suggestive and beautifully written piece of work, Lucy Kirkwood is the most rewarding dramatist of her generation” – The Independent

In a remote countryside cottage, two retired scientists live a seemingly quiet life in the aftermath of a devastating catastrophe at a nearby nuclear power station. When an old friend and colleague unexpectedly turns up at their door, they soon discover the shocking reason for her visit, forcing them to confront their responsibility for past actions and to make a difficult choice about future generations.

September 25 – October 21 | Berkeley Street Theatre

A Canadian Stage and Centaur Theatre co-production

[XENOS](#)

Directed, choreographed, and performed by Akram Khan

Written by Jordan Tannahill

“One of the biggest names in British dance today.” – Toronto Star

“A masterpiece... eye-wideningly beautiful.” – The Guardian (*On Desh*)

In his highly-anticipated final solo performance work, world-renowned dance artist Akram Khan (*Desh, Toro*) unearths the experience of colonial soldiers in the First World War. Over four million non-white men were mobilized for the conflict, but if they did return home their stories were never told. Separated from their own histories, homelands, and countrymen, they became xenoï (foreigners). With text from acclaimed Canadian playwright Jordan Tannahill and movements that shifts between classical kathak and contemporary dance, *XENOS* reveals a story of loss, hope and human redemption.

October 18 – 21 | Bluma Appel Theatre

An Akram Khan Company production presented by Canadian Stage

TRACE

Conceived and directed by Sandra Laronde

“Red Sky Dance is a delight to the eye.” – Toronto Star

“Powerful, hypnotizing, flawless.” – The Dance Current (on *Backbone*)

To know where you’re going, you need to have an origin. From our Berkeley Street Company-in-Residence Red Sky Performance (*Backbone*), *Trace* is a sumptuous new dance and music creation that explores Indigenous connections to ancestral beginnings. Inspired by Anishinaabe cosmology – our star and sky stories – *Trace* maps our history and future evolution.

October 30 – November 11 | Berkeley Street Theatre

A Red Sky Performance production presented by Canadian Stage – Berkeley Street company-in-residence

GRAND FINALE

Choreography, direction and original music by Hofesh Schechter

“Choreographic fireworks...set, music, pounding percussion and dancer’s bodies soaring high, the apocalypse of *Grand Finale* shakes the compass of tribal dance. A must see.” – Le Monde

Internationally celebrated choreographer Hofesh Schechter’s (*Political Mother*) latest work is a spectacularly bold and ambitious production featuring ten dancers and six musicians. At once comic, bleak, and beautiful, *Grand Finale* evokes a world at odds with itself, full of anarchic energy and violent comedy. Filtering this irrepressible spirit, Schechter creates a vision of a world in freefall: part gig, part dance, part theatre and wholly original.

November 14 – 18 | Bluma Appel Theatre

A Hofesh Schechter Company production presented by Canadian Stage.

EVERY BRILLIANT THING

Written by Duncan Macmillan with Jonny Donahoe

Directed by Estelle Shook

“Heart-wrenching, hilarious...possibly one of the funniest plays you’ll ever see, full stop.” - The Guardian

Ice cream, rollercoasters, the smell of old books – as a mother battles chronic depression, a child creates a list of everything that makes life worth living. As time passes and the list grows, what began as a naïve attempt to deal with tragedy becomes an epic chronicle of life’s small joys. Staged in an in-the-round setting, this touching, funny and intimate solo piece charts the lengths we will go for those we love.

November 27 – December 16 | Berkeley Street Theatre
A Canadian Stage production

[TARTUFFE](#)

Written by Molière

Translated by Ranjit Bolt

Directed by Chris Abraham

“I’ve never seen a funnier *Tartuffe* than this one... A shameless laugh-fest.” – The Globe and Mail (Best of 2017)

“Hilarious performances from a stacked Stratford Festival cast led by the sublime Tom Rooney...A big hit.” – Toronto Star

Vice becomes virtue in Molière’s timeless satire of religious hypocrisy – or is it the other way around? Falling under the spell of sky con artist Tartuffe, wealthy, bourgeois Orgon risks his estate and his family to harbor the pious-seeming vagabond; but when their guest finally reveals his true colours, the household is thrown into chaos. Chris Abraham’s production presents Molière’s dark comedy through a contemporary lens, deftly exploring how truth becomes blurred in the quest for power.

January 13 – 27 | Bluma Appel Theatre
A Stratford Festival production presented by Canadian Stage, Crow’s Theatre, Groundling Theatre Company, and David Versus Goliath Productions

[PRINCE HAMLET](#)

Written by William Shakespeare

Adapted + directed by Ravi Jain

“This is no ordinary Hamlet...Remixed, reinvigorated avant bard for our times.” – Toronto Star
Best of 2017 – Toronto Star, NOW Magazine

Ravi Jain’s remixed, reimagined, and bilingual *Prince Hamlet* features a cross-cultural, gender-bent cast, challenging conventional ideas of who gets to tell this story. Struggling with the death of his royal father and his mother’s hasty re-marriage to his uncle – and murderer of the king – Hamlet undertakes the harrowing task of avenging his father’s untimely death. Combining spoken word and American Sign Language, this groundbreaking production creates a fully integrated retelling for both hearing and Deaf audiences.

February 6 – 24 | Berkeley Street Theatre

A Why Not Theatre production presented by Canadian Stage – Berkeley Street
company-in-residence

[who we are in the dark](#)

Concept, choreographic composition, + direction by Peggy Baker

Composition + live music by Jeremy Gara + Sarah Neufeld of *Arcade Fire*

“One of Canada’s most renowned dance artists.” – The Globe and Mail

Choreographed by acclaimed Canadian dance artist Peggy Baker, *who we are in the dark* offers the immediacy of daring contemporary dance, supercharged live music, and sophisticated design elements from artists working with pigment, projection, and light. Jeremy Gara and Sarah Neufeld, both members of Grammy Award-winning rock band *Arcade Fire*, are joined on stage by seven extraordinary dancers in a work that explores and illuminates shifting identities, betrayals, secrets, and intimacies played out in the dark.

February 21 – 24 | Bluma Appel Theatre

A Peggy Baker Dance Projects production presented by Canadian Stage in collaboration with
Fall For Dance North

[REVISOR](#)

Created by Crystal Pite + Jonathon Young

“Devastating and powerful” – The Globe and Mail (on *Betroffenheit*)

“Raw...riveting drama...virtuosic dance.” – The Guardian (on *Betroffenheit*)

From the creators of the internationally acclaimed *Betroffenheit* (winner of the Olivier Award for Best New Work Dance Production) comes a new dance/theatre work about corruption, farce, and the forces of radical change. Young adapts an archetypal comic plot to generate the score for Pite's stunning choreography. As dialogue and dance come in and out of alignment, *Revisor* is moved by its own opposing internal forces to create a theatrical expression of startling depth and complexity.

March 7 – 16 | Bluma Appel Theatre
A Kidd Pivot Production presented by Canadian Stage

[UNSAFE](#)

Created by Sook-Yin Lee + Zack Russell

In a town hall like no other, multimedia artist and broadcaster Sook-Yin Lee and playwright/filmmaker Zack Russell invite the world's most controversial creators (and their detractors) to untangle the anxieties and taboos that make some art acceptable and some art not. Developed in residence at Canadian Stage, *Unsafe* is a provocative and timely theatrical experiment.

March 12 – 31 | Berkeley Street Theatre
Commissioned and produced by Canadian Stage

[BIGRE](#)

Co-written and created by Pierre Guillois, Agathe L'Huillier, and Olivier Martin Salvan
Directed by Pierre Guillois

"Totally irresistible...laughs, laughs, and more laughs." – Le Monde
Molière Award for Best Comedy (2017)

Two men live next to each other on the top floor of an apartment building. One is maniacally neat, the other a manic slob. One day a beautiful young woman moves into the room down the hall...and all hell breaks loose. A painfully funny story of the disastrous unraveling of day-to-day urban life, performed entirely without words. France's smash hit "mélo-burlesque" *Bigre* bursts at the seams with twisted gags and brilliant physical comedy in the tradition of Buster Keaton and Jacques Tati.

April 11 – 21 | Berkeley Street Theatre

A Compagnie le Fils du Grand Réseau production presented by Canadian Stage in collaboration with Théâtre Français de Toronto

[887](#)

Ex Machina/Robert Lepage

“Glittering...wondrous...raw emotional force.” – The New York Times (Critic’s pick)

At once mesmerizing and deeply moving, Robert Lepage’s spectacular *887* is one of this country’s greatest solo stage works, created and performed by one of our greatest storytellers. From his childhood in 1960s Quebec City, Lepage charts the social and political moments that shaped both our country and his identity. An unforgettable theatrical experience told with cinematic flair and stunning design, *887* is a must-see Canadian masterpiece.

May 3 – 12 | Bluma Appel Theatre

An Ex Machina Production presented by Canadian Stage

[I SWALLOWED A MOON MADE OF IRON](#)

Created by Njo Kong Kie

Set to the poetry of Xu Lizhi

“An engaging, provocative evening for mind and ear” - NOW Magazine (on *Mr. Shi and His Lover*)

Chinese poet Xu Lizhi writes about his life making electronic parts on an assembly line in a factory in Shenzhen, China. Powerful, haunting and gut-wrenching, Xu’s words give voice to millions of migrant workers around the globe whose existence is often forgotten. The world premiere of this song cycle by the composer of *Mr. Shi and His Lover* and *Picnic in the Cemetery* pays tribute to the life of Xu Lizhi and countless others whose unseen struggles provide the amenities of our digital lives.

MAY 16 -26 | Berkeley Street Theatre

A Music Picnic & Point View Art production presented by Canadian Stage - Berkeley Street company-in-residence

BY HEART

Written and performed by Tiago Rodrigues

“So deep, so intelligent and so magnificent that we come out of it profoundly moved.” – Le Figaro

“A lesson in word power.” – The Seattle Times

In *By Heart*, Portuguese playwright and actor Tiago Rodrigues teaches a Shakespearean sonnet to 10 people from the audience. While they commit the verse to memory, Rodrigues blends in stories of his grandmother, anecdotes from writers of note, and characters from world literature. As the piece unfolds, the mystery that binds these tales together is revealed. *By Heart* is about the importance of memory, of smuggling words and ideas in the safe hiding space of our brains and our hearts.

May 30 – June 2 | Berkeley Street Theatre

A Teatro Nacional D. Maria II Production presented by Canadian Stage with Théâtre Français de Toronto

THE FULL LIGHT OF DAY

Writer + Co-Creator Daniel Brooks

Director + Co-Creator Kim Collier

“Ingenious... Brilliant fusion of two enduring art forms” - The Globe and Mail (on *Tear the Curtain!*)

The Full Light of Day tells the story of Mary, an aging matriarch in a wealthy Canadian family. As she approaches the end of her life, Mary is forced to contend with her husband's legacy and the misdeeds that brought her family money, privilege and prestige. A new film/theatre hybrid from the same creative team behind 12.13's groundbreaking *Tear the Curtain!*

June 7 – 13 | Bluma Appel Theatre

An Electric Company Theatre production co-presented by Canadian Stage and Luminato
Presented as part of the 2019 Luminato Festival

About Canadian Stage

Founded in 1987, Canadian Stage is one of the country's leading not-for-profit contemporary performing arts companies, sharing new, innovative stage work from Canada and around the world. Led by Artistic & General Director Matthew Jocelyn, Canadian Stage produces and presents a new hybrid of multidisciplinary performance that pushes the boundaries of form and style, integrating theatre, dance, music, multimedia and more. Canadian Stage is dedicated to reinforcing the presence of Canadian art and artists within an international cultural dialogue, by acting as a home, incubator and exporter of leading Canadian and global performance. The company stages an annual season at three historic locations: the Bluma Appel Theatre; the Berkeley Street Theatre; and the High Park Amphitheatre, home to Shakespeare in High Park. Offering a range of education, artist training and community outreach programs, Canadian Stage is committed to cultivating tomorrow's artistic innovators and audiences. For more information, visit canadianstage.com.