



40
SOUND
STREAMS

SURFACE
TENSION

OCTOBER 22, 2022
7 PM & 9:30 PM
Universal Music

Soundstreams'
40th Anniversary
Concert Series

WELCOME TO SURFACE TENSION



It's no accident that percussion is playing a central role in our 40th anniversary season! Toronto is home to two extraordinary figures in the percussion world—Russell Hartenberger and Bob Becker—both members of the famed percussion ensemble Nexus, but also charter members of the Steve Reich Ensemble. In fact, Soundstreams has celebrated Reich's birth anniversaries in his presence every five years since 2005, hosting concerts featuring many of his most significant

works with Nexus as the linchpin. Later this season, on March 25, 2023 at the George Weston Recital Hall, we'll present *Steve Reich: Now and Then*, a slightly delayed 85th birthday present featuring the Canadian premiere of *Reich/Richter* (2019), and *Drumming* (1970-1971), arguably one of the great masterworks of our time.

Toronto is one of the world's leading percussion hubs, due in no small part to the presence of Nexus, but also to Russell Hartenberger's legendary teaching over many years at the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto. Soundstreams has taken full advantage of that reality by hosting a series of percussion-themed festivals and events featuring an array of talent both Canadian and international. In addition to Nexus, Soundstreams has had the good fortune to collaborate extensively with artists of the calibre of Beverley Johnston, Ryan Scott, Aiyun Huang, Noam Bierstone, TorQ and others.

So it's natural that this year our *RBC Bridges* Emerging Composer Program would choose to focus on percussion, as we host our first in-person session since before the pandemic. This program was initiated in 2014 and its distinguished visiting mentors have included such notable composers as R. Murray Schafer, Unsuk Chin, David Lang and Kaija Saariaho. It's a pleasure to welcome Irish artist Donnacha Dennehy as this year's *RBC Bridges* mentor and visiting composer, and to welcome back TorQ as the resident ensemble and featured artists in this evening's program.

There's something primordial about the sound of percussion that goes deep into the human psyche. It's a visceral experience with its own extraordinary physical choreography regardless of the period or cultural influences of the music performed. Tonight's program is truly a feast for the eye and the ear—enjoy!

Lawrence Cherney

Founding Artistic Director

Soundstreams wishes to acknowledge that this production is presented on the traditional land of the Wendat, Anishinabek, Haudenosaunee, and the Mississaugas of the Credit River First Nation. This land is the subject of the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, and we encourage you to learn about your responsibilities to this treaty. Today, this meeting place is the home of many Indigenous people and Soundstreams is grateful to have the opportunity to collaborate and create alongside them.

ABOUT SOUNDSTREAMS



Founded in 1982, Soundstreams is one of the world's leading contemporary music companies and the largest global presenter of new Canadian music. Founding Artistic Director Lawrence Cherney and Executive Director Beth Brown are committed to showcasing the work of Canadian and international composers with a strong focus on themes of social justice that resonate with our time and place. We aim to create and foster a lasting legacy for that music.

Soundstreams curates a spectrum of cross-genre programming designed to engage inquisitive music lovers who seek new directions in music, from chamber music to chamber orchestra, vocal and choral music, and music theatre and opera. Our annual Main Stage Toronto series creates a performance arc that is in turn supported by free outreach programs designed to engage with diverse communities in their own neighbourhoods: *Encounters*, *Town Halls*, and *Inside Look*. We also offer intensive educational and professional development activities for emerging creatives, including the *New Voices* mentorship program for aspiring curators, and the *RBC Bridges* program for early-career composers.

Soundstreams is a driving force for cultural exchange, having fostered collaborations between Canadian and international artists for nearly 30 years. Over those years, we've brought nearly 1,500 composers and performers to Canada to appear on our stages with their Canadian counterparts, many returning with Canadian music to perform in their home countries.

Now this history of cultural exchange has opened the door for Soundstreams to make a leap onto the world stage. We've just returned from a highly successful tour to Germany and the U.K. of two productions featuring music by Claude Vivier—*Musik für das Ende* and *Love Songs*—including linchpin appearances in the Claude Vivier Festival at London's Southbank Centre, arguably one of the most significant celebrations for a Canadian composer ever hosted by a major international venue. These productions have been invited to tour again in May 2024 to Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Ireland. Similar international success is pending for two other recent Soundstreams productions: our Indigenous operas *Two Odysseys: Pimootewin / Gállábártnit*; and *Hell's Fury, The Hollywood Songbook*, starring famed Canadian baritone Russell Braun. These and other recent Soundstreams productions have received favourable press from the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *The Guardian* (London), and the *Wall Street Journal*. ●

SPECIAL THANKS

RBC Bridges is made possible by The RBC Foundation and The Michael and Sonja Koerner Charitable Foundation, with support from The Canadian Music Centre. *Surface Tension* is presented in the memory of Jim Doherty and his tireless dedication to young talent.

SURFACE TENSION PROGRAM

Donnacha Dennehy, Composer and Mentor
2022 *RBC Bridges* Emerging Composer Program

Performers:

TorQ Percussion Quartet, 2022 *RBC Bridges* resident ensemble

Richard Burrows

Adam Campbell

Jamie Drake

Daniel Morphy

2022 *RBC Bridges* Emerging Composers:

Natalia Camargo Duarte

Nolan Hildebrand

Tom Lachance

Minh Tram Nguyen

Benjamin Sigerson

Darren Xu

First Act of program is listed in alphabetical order by title,
not in order of performance.

Beyond the Boundary

Benjamin Sigerson (2022)

Into the Wilderness

Darren Xu

—An Open Conversation

Nepho

Tom Lachance

Strike!

Natalia Camargo Duarte

Super Mega Alpha

Nolan Hildebrand

The 2 postal stamps

Minh Tram Nguyen

INTERMISSION

Surface Tension

Donnacha Dennehy (2019)

Canadian Premiere

SURFACE TENSION PROGRAM NOTES

Beyond the Boundary: was written as a musical interpretation of Toronto-based artist Kyungmin (Kate) Lee's 2021 work of the same name. Her work uses "multi-exposure techniques and achromatic colours to blur the boundaries and contour the image to break down the boundaries of time and space," which lay the foundation for the inspiration of the composition.—BENJAMIN SIGERSON

Into the Wilderness—An Open Conversation: The pandemic has profoundly disrupted my beliefs and values, as it has for many others. Although challenging, it provides me with an opportunity to understand myself better and reconcile different opinions. The process may be distressing, but an honest attempt in embracing each other's views may be just what we need to make peace. *Into the Wilderness—An Open Conversation* is a visceral manifestation of how, when two sides disagree in an argument, they could relentlessly try to dominate and correct each other. After failing to do so, the two sides find a way to coexist.—DARREN XU

Nepho: How can clouds, these large clusters of drops of water, exist in so many well-organized and different shapes? Their journey takes place in many steps, starting with slow ascending and rotating water that attaches to tiny microscopic particles of dust. As water around a grain of dust accumulates and becomes too heavy, it goes back to the earth. Then, the rest of the cloud dissipates under the heat of the sun. The particles of dust and water drops are now invisible, as they can only be seen when they gather.—TOM LACHANCE

Strike!: Protests and social outbursts have marked the recent political situation in Latin America. Because of the pandemic, health and economic crises became the source of uneasiness, and as a result social strikes intensified, especially in my country, Colombia. This short piece is inspired by the drumming that occurred during several of these protests. My goal is to portray a union of forces that represent an entire nation rising up against corrupt policies; with their relentless momentum, these unstoppable forces capable of creating waves of change.—NATALIA CAMARGO DUARTE

Super Mega Alpha: is an exploration of the idea of a super instrument. I first encountered this term when reading Helmut Lachenmann's 2004 article *On My Second String Quartet (Reigen seliger Geister)*. In *Super Mega Alpha*, each percussionist performs individual parts that form a larger gestalt to create a massive super instrument. This idea climaxes when the quartet becomes one humongous drum kit playing driving rhythms inspired by extreme metal music. The climax is followed by a more abstract exploration of a super instrument where the performers freely interpret open graphic symbols.—NOLAN HILDEBRAND

The 2 postal stamps: Crabs are charming dancers. Little tiny water crabs are masters of point technique. These creatures are fragile and find their way of survival through the symbiotic relationship with the hyacinths. The two miniatures, Water

Hyacinth and Little Tiny Crabs, have contrasting characters. The percussionists will try to imitate the crabs' movements swimming and running in and out of the hyacinths, creating a sense of rhythm formed by horizontal movements and making no accent in every grouping. —MINH TRAM NGUYEN

Surface Tension: Commissioned by the University of Notre Dame's DeBartolo Performing Arts Center and the Metropolitan Museum of Art for Third Coast Percussion, and inspired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art's collection of historic percussion instruments.

Inspired by the way various indigenous drums (such as the Irish bodhrán or Middle Eastern frame drums like the Turkish tar) play with the tension of the skin in order to bend the pitch to produce something almost approaching melody, I sought a way of making so-called unpitched drums create pulsating, gliding harmonic spaces in this piece.

I was particularly interested in creating a kind of mobile pitch-space that shifted in and out of various overtone-based tonalities. This is a tall order for drums, instruments that are normally considered unpitched! But I liked the tension implicit in this possible scenario—it triggered my imagination.

Actually realizing this strange idea took some work though, and I am deeply indebted to Third Coast for their assistance and their spirit of complicit adventure and experimentation when I was developing this piece. I knew that I wanted the drums to move continuously through the pitch space, as in a pulsing glissando (something that crops up quite a bit in my music), and I was very happy when we discovered that you could change the tension of the drumheads of tom-tom drums by attaching plastic tubing into a hole on the side and blowing into the drum to tighten the skin of the head, thus raising the pitch.

This alternate tightening and slackening of the drumheads of the toms became the *modus operandi* of the piece—by using this method I was able to gradually build pitch centres and travel between them. Some of these pitch centres are even overtone based. The players must gliss to very specific partials of a fundamental pitch, such as the 7th, 11th, and 13th, creating a strongly fused and resonant harmony. Essential in this quest is the addition of very precisely tuned bongos and travel congas. Of course, the spectra produced by all these drum instruments are rather strange, not really following the pattern of more standard pitched instruments, so even when all the drums are pulsing around a particular pattern of harmonics, one still hears many inharmonic things that create frictions in the way we perceive the pitch material. I find these frictions very interesting, and I sometimes play with them.

As the drums start to go a little out of tune from the continuous tightening and slackening of their heads, I have also written “tuning zones” into the composition, where the players gently tune their drums in a rhythmic way using their normal technique of turning the tuning pegs. I am delighted that TorQ Percussion Quartet will be giving the Canadian premiere of this piece tonight. —DONNACHA DENNEHY ●

SURFACE TENSION ARTISTS

Donnacha Dennehy, composer/mentor



Called “thrilling” by the *Guardian*, and “arrestingly beautiful” by the *New Yorker*, Donnacha Dennehy’s music has featured in festivals and venues such as the Edinburgh International Festival; Carnegie Hall, New York; Barbican, London; Muziekgebouw, Amsterdam; Wigmore Hall, London; Royal Opera House, London; BAM, New York; St. Ann’s Warehouse; Tanglewood Festival; Holland Festival; Kennedy Center; Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival;

Dublin Theatre Festival; ISCM World Music Days; Bang On A Can; Ultima Festival, Oslo; Musica Viva, Lisbon; Saarbrücken Festival; and the Schleswig-Holstein Festival.

His music has been premiered and commissioned by groups and soloists including Alarm Will Sound, Augustin Hadelich, Bang On A Can, Contact, Crash Ensemble, Dawn Upshaw, Doric String Quartet (Carnegie/Wigmore co-commission), Fidelio Trio, Joanna MacGregor, Kronos Quartet, Icebreaker, Nadia Sirota, National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, Oregon Symphony, Orkest de Volharding, Percussion Group of the Hague, philharmonie zuidnederland, San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, So Percussion (Carnegie/Cork Opera House co-commission), St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Third Coast Percussion, Ulster Orchestra (BBC), and United Instruments of Lucilin (Luxembourg). Collaborations include pieces with the writers Colm Tóibín (*The Dark Places*), the director Tom Creed (*The Hunger*, stage version) and Enda Walsh (a trilogy of operas).

Returning to Ireland after studies abroad, principally at the University of Illinois, Dennehy founded Crash Ensemble, Ireland’s now-renowned new music group, in 1997. Alongside the singers Dawn Upshaw and Iarla O’Lionáird, Crash Ensemble features on the debut 2011 Nonesuch release of Dennehy’s music, entitled *Grá agus Bás*. Other releases include a second portrait disc by Nonesuch (*The Hunger*, 2019), a number by NMC Records in London, Bedroom Community in Reykjavik and New Amsterdam and Cantaloupe in New York.

In recent years, Dennehy has concentrated especially on large-scale musico-dramatic works. He has now completed a trilogy of operas with the writer/director Enda Walsh: *The Last Hotel* (2015), *The Second Violinist* (2017) and *The First Child* (2021). Other recent large-scale pieces include the docu-cantata *The Hunger* (2012-16, concert version 2019), originally co-produced by Alarm Will Sound and Opera Theatre St. Louis; *Surface Tension* for Third Coast Percussion (commissioned by the Metropolitan Museum and Notre Dame University); *Overcasting* (2019), commissioned by the LA Philharmonic (for their new music group), and *Tessellatum*, an epic piece for viola (Nadia Sirota) and microtonal adjusted viols (originally multi-tracked by Liam Byrne in the Bedroom Community recording, but now arranged for various ensembles,

including a string orchestra of modern instruments in a new version of 2020). The last couple of years has seen a flurry of orchestral pieces: *Brink* (2020) for Indianapolis Symphony, *Memoria* (2021) for the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland (to be given its US premiere by the Dallas Symphony in May, 2022) and *Violin Concerto* (2021), co-commissioned by the Oregon Symphony, Aspen Music Festival and philharmonie zuidnederland for Augustin Hadelich.

Dennehy's single-movement orchestral piece *Crane* was 'recommended' by the International Rostrum of Composers (2010). In 2017, he won the FEDORA-Generali Prize for Opera (Salzburg/Paris), and in 2021 he was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship. At present, he is writing a large-scale work for Alarm Will Sound, *Land of Winter*, to be premiered at the Beethovenfest in Germany in September 2022. Dennehy now lives in America and is a professor at Princeton University. His music is published by G. Schirmer in New York.

TorQ Percussion Quartet



Described as “outstanding—no, make that astonishing!” (*Ottawa Citizen*) and as having a “sense of unbreakable continuity and energy” (*Toronto Star*), Canada's TorQ Percussion Quartet creates exciting and diverse chamber music. Richard Burrows, Adam Campbell, Jamie Drake and Daniel Morphy have given recital tours across Canada and the US and performed at Ottawa Chamberfest, Open Ears Contemporary Music Festival, Stratford

Summer Music, the Music Garden Toronto, the Canadian Opera Company concert series and many others. They have been featured soloists with ensembles including the Toronto Symphony, Buffalo Philharmonic, Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal, Kitchener Waterloo Symphony, Stuttgart Chamber Choir, and University of Toronto Wind Ensemble. Committed to performing Canadian music, each member of TorQ composes music for the ensemble; in addition, TorQ has premiered over 80 pieces by composers both emerging and established Canadian composers, and 2023 will see them premiere new concertos by Nicole Lizée and Dinuk Wijeratne, and present the Canadian premiere of Viet Cuong's *Re(new)al*.

They have released four solo albums, and their recording (with soloist Ben Reimer) of Lizée's *Katana of Choice* was nominated for a 2019 Juno for “Classical Composition of the Year”; their latest collaboration is a recording with the Elora Singers of new commissions by Melody McKiver, Annika Socolofsky, Carmen Braden and Paul Frehner, to be released in 2023. Strong advocates for musical education, TorQ has played for more than 130,000 students, given masterclasses at universities across North America, and are faculty with the Lunenburg Academy for Music Performance. TorQ are proud to be artists for Yamaha Canada, Innovative Percussion, Remo, Black Swamp Percussion and Dream Cymbals.



Natalia Camargo Duarte, composer

Natalia Camargo Duarte is a Colombian composer from Bogotá, currently based in the United States. She writes music inspired by Latin American folklore, dance, and natural landscapes, among other influences. Natalia enjoys exploring the creative possibilities of blending the cultural richness of Latin American practices with Western musical traditions. Her music is directly

influenced by the diversity of rhythms and grooves of Colombia, and the idea of multiculturalism. Her main goal is to provide through her compositions a message of mindfulness, love, positive change, resilience and hope, all while having fun. Natalia has collaborated with different ensembles including French string quartet Tana, Colombian ensemble La Sociedad, and Ukrainian Nota Bene ensemble. She received her bachelor degree in music composition at Pontifical Xavierian University in Bogotá. Natalia is the recipient of the Christine Eve Rinaldo Memorial merit scholarship awarded by the University of Michigan, where she is currently pursuing her Master's degree in Music composition. Former teachers include Guillermo Gaviria, Julian Valdivieso and Evan Chambers.



Nolan Hildebrand, composer

Nolan Hildebrand is a composer, researcher, and sound artist based in Toronto, Canada. His musical journey began with playing drums to his favourite metal and math-rock albums and has grown to encompass composition in classical ensembles, electroacoustic music, and performance in his solo noise project, BLACK GALAXIE. Nolan's music explores noise, density, kinetic physicality,

and improvisation through graphic notation.

Nolan's music has been played by artists around the world, including the XelmYa Ensemble (Germany), Dejana Sekluic (Belgium), the ECM+ Ensemble (Montreal), and the SANS duo (Los Angeles/New York City). As a performer, Nolan has played at the Cluster Music Festival and the Winnipeg New Music Festival Pop Up Concerts with the eXperimental Improv Ensemble, NUMUS' 2021-22 season (Waterloo, Ontario), and ExitPoints #26 online electroacoustic concerts as BLACK GALAXIE.

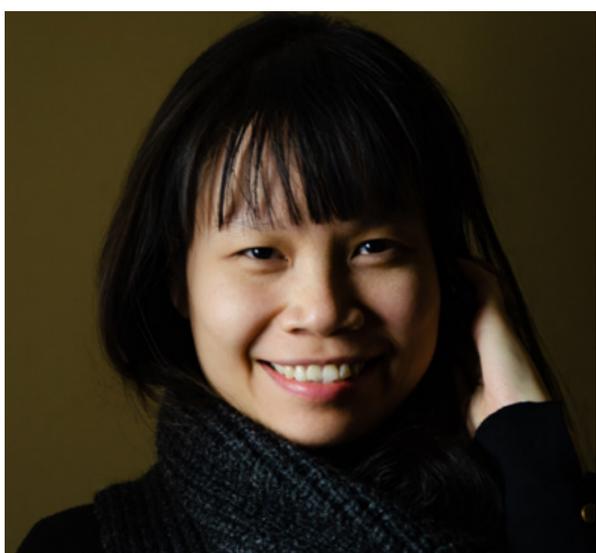
Nolan has been the recipient of numerous academic grants and national awards, including the 2019 SOCAN Awards for Young Composers, 1st prize in the 2021 New Media Press Solo Percussion Composition Competition, the Ontario Arts Council Career Catalyst Grant, the Ontario Graduate Scholarship (OGS), and the SSHRC CGS-Masters award. Nolan has presented his music and graphic score research at the Anestis Logothetis Centenary Symposium (Athens, Greece) and the CeReNeM Composers' Colloquia (Huddersfield, UK).



Tom Lachance, composer

Tom Lachance is a Montreal-based composer whose research is inclined towards synesthesia and how visual or tactile input can affect and generate musical structures and ideas. His exploration takes place in different contexts, sometimes with a narrative outline where associations of sensations are presented through a story, or sometimes through abstract states

or processes. His works have been commissioned and performed by various ensembles, including Paramirabo Ensemble, Nouvel Ensemble Moderne, Cobalt String Quartet and Montreal University Orchestra. He has been part in multidisciplinary projects, such as *La parole des racines*, a piece for solo soprano and dancer, in collaboration with choreographer Mateo Chauchat. He is also collaborating with stage director Frederic Ellis for a series of workshops based on the creation of origamis. He is currently doing a Master of Music degree in composition at the University of Montreal, studying with Ana Sokolovic. He received a Bachelor of Instrumental Composition in 2020 from University of Montreal, studying with Maxime McKinley, François-Hugues Leclair and Pierre Michaud. He also participated in several workshops, including the New Music Session at the Domaine Forget and the Montreal Contemporary Music Lab where he studied with Laurie Radford, Fabian Panisello, Keiko Devaut and Jeffrey Stonehouse.



Nguyen Minh Tram, composer

Nguyen Minh Tram (Tram Cohen) started playing piano at the age of 4, and at the age of 12 had her first media appearance performing selected etudes from *Franz Liszt's themes of Paganini*, broadcast live on National TV, Vietnam. Graduated with great distinction at the Conservatoire of Vietnam, Tram continued her diploma at Concordia University, Montreal,

with a double-major in Visual Arts and Music Performance, special study with Emeritus professor Philip Cohen. She is a performer-composer associate with the Leonardo Research Project, a long-term investigation into high-level music performance. As a pianist, she actively promotes contemporary music and experiments on stage with the tradition of improvising cadenzas to classical repertoire. Tram has been an active performer at concerts in Vietnam, Japan, and North America. Her repertoires have extreme ranges in different styles. As a composer, she has attended workshops and recorded her music with numerous solos and ensembles, to name a few, the Berrow duo, ensemble Quatrix, the Blue Rider Ensemble, Concordia's Clork Ensemble (conducted by Eldad Tsabary), the Contemporary Music Ensemble of Atlantic Music Festival and Orchestre de l'Isle (conducted by Cristian Gort). In 2021, she is honoured to be a recipient for the SSHRC CGS-Masters award for her orchestral work *La*

vermilleuse, for groups of professional and amateur musicians. Tram's music is poetically charged imagination. Her scores require a unique blend of detailed synchronization and micro-timing expression. She is now in her second year of Master of Music composition, under Professor Brian Cherney at McGill University. She is currently a composer in residence for the McGill's Woodwind Symphony Orchestra (2023). Apart from her studies in composition, Tram runs her own private music studio in Montreal.



Benjamin Sigerson, composer

Benjamin (Lee) Sigerson is a composer and jazz pianist from Vancouver, B.C., currently pursuing his undergraduate degree in composition at McGill University under Brian Cherney. He has also studied with composers Rodney Sharman, Christine Jensen, and Katerina Gimon. Sigerson has won awards for his compositions including the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir's Composition

Competition in 2021, 3rd prize in the choral category in the 2021 edition of the SOCAN Awards, twice the Vancouver Chamber Choir's young composer competition, and the Barbara Pentland Award from the Canadian Music Centre. His pieces have been performed by the Vancouver Youth Choir, the Hard Rubber Orchestra, the Vancouver Intercultural Orchestra, and in recording studios and jazz clubs around Vancouver and Montreal. His pieces can be found on multiple recording projects, most recently on his own record titled *Dogs of Orion* featuring JUNO-winner Caity Gyorgy, and on the indie band Sellout Club's debut album *Vacant 236*. As a jazz pianist, Sigerson has shared the stage with Kevin Dean, Jodi Proznick, Campbell Ryga, Ira Coleman, and many more. Currently, he is writing for and leading his vocal octet Intertidal Choral Ensemble, and his experimental contemporary trio Plum Rain.



Darren Xu, composer

Darren Xu is a Canadian-born composer who is based in Vancouver. He enjoys writing music for acoustic instruments, films, and cross-disciplinary collaborations. He has had the opportunity to work with various ensembles including Standing Wave, Piano-Erhu Project (PEP), Trio Immersio, and Rose Geller String Quartet. His first orchestral composition, *To Liberate*, was premiered by

the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra at the Winnipeg New Music Festival in January 2022. Darren's collaborations with the Musqueam artist Debra Sparrow culminated in performances of his music as parts of installations and showcases of Debra's Salish weavings, which took place at venues across Vancouver, such as the Museum of Anthropology at UBC, Christ Church Cathedral, and the Vancouver International Airport. His film score, *Stargazer*, was awarded Best Score by New York Film Awards in November 2018. Darren began studying the piano at age 5

and began composing at the age of 19. Having spent his childhood in Guangzhou, China, Darren is inspired by the melodious language of Cantonese. He received a Bachelor of Commerce and a Bachelor of Music from UBC, and is currently pursuing his Master of Music at UBC, where he continues to study composition and research the relationship between Cantonese and music.



Julia (JB) Beaulieu, stage manager

Julia (JB) Beaulieu is a Dora nominated actor, and Harold award winner. They have worked on various award-winning shows as a stage/production manager and are a celebrated Toronto based drag king (Rick Rydes on Instagram). They co-founded Theatre Georgian Bay, and were Technical Director for a time at Solar Stage, and this summer with Theatre by the Bay. Selected

Stage Management credits include *Unity 1918*, *Peter and the Starcatcher*, *The Government Inspector* (Randolph), *Sol, Luna and Stella* (Aluna), *Between the Sheets* (Theatre Georgian Bay), *the Scream* (SummerWorks) *Clotheswap* (Ladybois), *a Number* (Lunar Stage), *The Garden of Alla* (Minmar Productions) and many more. They have a passion for all things theatre, technical and celebrating the tradition of storytelling through different art forms. JB is ecstatic to be a part of this production. ●

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St. Andrew's Church

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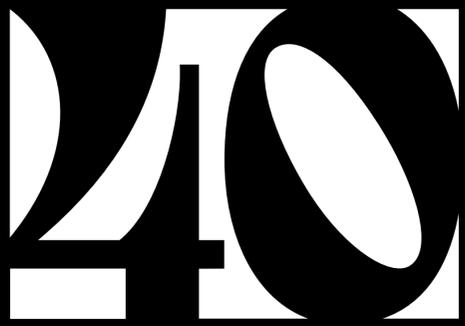
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