

|Soulpepper|



# THE PARLIAMENT OF THE BIRDS

**GUILLERMO VERDECCHIA**

FREELY ADAPTED FROM FARID UD-DIN ATTAR'S  
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The artists and staff of Soulpepper and the Young Centre for the Performing Arts acknowledge the original caretakers and storytellers of this land – the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and Wendat First Nation, and The Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation who are part of the Anishinaabe Nation. We commit to honouring and celebrating their past, present and future.



“All around the world and throughout history, humans have acted out the stories that are significant to them, the stories that are central to their sense of who they are, the stories that have defined their communities, and shaped their societies. When we talk about classical theatre we want to explore what that means from the many perspectives of this city. This is a celebration of our global canon.”

– **Weyni Mengesha**, Soulpepper’s Artistic Director

photo by Emma Mcintyre

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**Cast**

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**Raoul Bhaneja**

Hermit, Old One, Traveller, Border  
Patrol, Herald, Nightingale

**Liz Peterson**

Bat, Walker, Astrologer,  
Moth

**Beatriz Pizano**

Cardinal

**Augusto Bitter**

Sparrow

**Arsinée Khanjian**

Duck

**Bahareh Yaraghi**

Pigeon

**Oliver Dennis**

Crow

**Jani Lauzon**

Hoopoe

**Christef Desir**

Parrot

**John Ng**

Falcon

**Creative Team**

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**Soheil Parsa**

Director

**Weyni Mengesha**

Artistic Director

**Megan Woods**

Associate Production Manager

**Guillermo Verdecchia**

Playwright

**Emma Stenning**

Executive Director

**Corey MacVicar**

Associate Technical Director

**Thomas Ryder Payne**

Sound Designer

**Tania Senewiratne**

Executive Producer

**Nik Murillo**

Marketer

**Gregory Sinclair**

Audio Producer

**Mimi Warshaw**

Producer

**Matt Rideout**

Lead Audio Engineer

**Maricris Rivera**

Producing Assistant

**Thank You To**

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Dr. Marjan Moosavi, vAngelika Betzold, Yoland Lambert, Andrea Lundy,  
and Caroline Turcot at NTS



**RAOUL BHANEJA** was born in Manchester, U.K. and raised in Canada and Germany.

**SOULPEPPER 2021:** *The Parliament of the Birds*. **FOR SOULPEPPER:** *A School For Wives* (2000). **OTHER THEATRE:** *Disgraced* (Mirvish/Citadel/Hope and Hell Theatre Co.); *Life, Death and The Blues* (Theatre Passe Muraille/Hope and Hell Theatre Co.); *Hamlet* (solo) (Hope and Hell Theatre Co.). Shakespeare's Globe (UK),

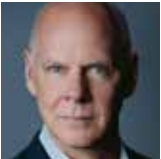
Tarragon, Canadian Stage, Stratford Festival, Blyth Festival etc. **FILM & TELEVISION:** Over 120 productions in Canada and US. **OTHER:** Lead singer of Maple Blues Award winning band Raoul and The Big Time and jazz duo Blue Standard. Gemini, Dora, Canadian Comedy Award nominee.



**AUGUSTO BITTER** was born in Punto Fijo, on the Northwestern coast of Venezuela.

**SOULPEPPER 2021:** *The Walls, A Parliament of Birds*. **FOR SOULPEPPER:** City Youth Academy (2014); Artist Educator (2016-Present). **OTHER THEATRE:** *CHICHO* (Pencil Kit Productions/TPM/Aluna); *Anywhere But Here* (Electric Company Theatre); *The Election* (Common Boots Theatre/Varioues); *Iphigenia and the Furies* (On Taurian Land) (Saga Collectif); *The Monument* (Factory Theatre); *Lear* (Groundling Theatre Co.).

**OTHER:** Augusto received a 2019 Dora Award for Outstanding Performance of an Individual, and a nomination for Outstanding New Play for *CHICHO*.



**OLIVER DENNIS** was born in Montréal, QC and raised in Southern Illinois.

**SOULPEPPER 2021:** *The Seagull, The Parliament of the Birds*. **FOR SOULPEPPER:** 100 shows over 20 Seasons. *A Streetcar Named Desire, Art, August: Osage County, Rose, A Delicate Balance, Waiting for Godot, Of Human Bondage, Spoon River, The Chairs, Exit the King, Father Comes Home from the Wars, Eurydice,*

*Jitters, Home, High Life, A Christmas Carol, Twelfth Night, Parfumerie,* to name just a few. **OTHER THEATRE:** Many theatres across the city and country. **FILM & TELEVISION:** *American Hangman, Don't Get Killed in Alaska, Slings and Arrows* (2 seasons), *Murdoch Mysteries*.



**CHRISTEF DESIR** was born in Port-Au-Prince, Haiti. He currently resides in Toronto, ON.

**SOULPEPPER 2021:** *The Parliament of The Birds*. **FOR SOULPEPPER:** *The Royale, Innonce Lost, It's a Wonderful Life*. **OTHER THEATRE:** *Dry Powder* (Evermore Theatre); *The Story* (Common Boots); *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot* (Unit 102). **FILM & TELEVISION:** *Ransom*(CBS), *Haus, Wasteland*. **OTHER:** He was Nominated for Dora

Mavor Moore Award for this role in *The Royale*. He was a Participant in the Soulpepper Academy.



**LIZ PETERSON** was born in Manchester, GB and raised in St. John's, NFLD.

**SOULPEPPER:** *The Parliament of the Birds*. **OTHER THEATRE:** *Other Jesus* (FTA); *Declarations* (Canadian Stage); *Millennial Malcontent* (Tarragon Theatre); *Flashing Lights* (Bad New Days/Ahuri Theatre); *Blood Wedding* (Modern Times/Aluna Theatre); *Lear* (Harbourfront Centre). **FILM & TELEVISION:** *Bugs*. **OTHER:** Liz is currently pursuing an MFA in theatre directing at Columbia University under mentorship of Anne Bogart.



**ARSINÉE KHANJIAN** is from Armenian heritage, and came to Canada in 1975 from Lebanon. **SOULPEPPER 2021:** *The Parliament of the Birds*. **OTHER THEATRE:** *The Cherry Orchard* (Modern Times); Actor/Writer/Director: *Auction of Souls* (Maxim Gorky Theater); *The Palace of The End, Cruel and Tender* (Canadian Stage); *Andromache* (Necessary Angel/Luminato); *Home is My Road* (Factory Theatre); *Counterfeit Secrets* (Pleiades Theatre); *Stella* (Theatre de Bobigny, Paris); *Dancing at Lughnasa* (Theatre de Vidy, Lausanne). **FILM & TELEVISION:** *Exotica, Ararat, Fat Girl, Foolish Heart, Foreign Objects*. **OTHER:** Genie (2005) and Gemini (1999) Awards. Crystal Award for Creative Excellence Women in Film & Television/ Toronto, 2005.



**JANI LAUZON** is a multidisciplinary artist of Métis ancestry. She is a nine-time Dora nominated actor/director/writer, a three time Juno-nominated singer/songwriter, an award-winning screen actress, a Gemini Award winning puppeteer and a Toronto Theatre Critics award-winning director. In 2021, ACTRA Toronto named Jani its Award of Excellence recipient. She has fond memories of playing Grannie on the Mr. Dress-Up show and Pa Foley on the Big Comfy Couch. Memorable theatre appearances include: Cordelia/Fool in the NAC Aboriginal production of King Lear, Shylock in Merchant of Venice (SITR) and the COC's production of Louis Riel (directed by Peter Hinton). Her company Paper Canoe Projects produces her own work including the award-winning Prophecy Fog as well as I Call myself Princess and A Side of Dreams. Television guest appearances include Saving Hope, Hard Rock Medical and Conspiracy of Silence. Recent directing credits include Almighty Voice and his Wife (Soulpepper), Rope (The Shaw Festival) and The Monument (Factory Theatre). Jani began her career as an artist educator at the Claude Watson School for the Arts: Junior campus in the 1980s. She honed her skills as AD/Principal of The Centre for Indigenous Theatre and has worked extensively developing a pedagogy of actors training based on interdisciplinary training and circular communication.



**JOHN NG** was born in Hong Kong and is currently based in Ottawa, ON. **SOULPEPPER 2021:** *The Parliament of the Birds*. **OTHER THEATRE:** *Kuroko* (Vancouver Asian Canadian Theatre); *Antigone* (Young People's Theatre); *The Full Light Of Day* (Electric Theatre Company); *Nine Dragons* (Vertigo/Gateway/Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre). **FILM & TELEVISION:** *Kim's Convenience; The Swan; Rising Suns*.



**SOHEIL PARSA** is an award-winning director, writer, dramaturg and teacher, whose professional theatre career spans forty years and two continents. In his native Iran, Soheil completed studies in Theatre Performance at the University of Tehran. Arriving in Canada with his family in 1984, Soheil completed a second Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Studies at York University and then went on to establish Modern Times Stage Company, one of the most innovating theatre companies in Canada. He has directed over forty productions for Modern Times since its inception in 1989.



**THOMAS RYDER PAYNE** is a Sound Designer. **SOULPEPPER 2019:** Sound Designer: *The Brothers Size, Little Menace: Pinter Plays*. **FOR SOULPEPPER:** Sound Designer & Composer: *The Royale, Oratorio: A Theatrical Mixtape, Orlando, Picture This, The Goat or, Who is Sylvia?, The Anger in Ernest and Ernestine, Incident at Vichy, Father Comes Home From the Wars (Parts I, II, III), La Ronde, Kim's Convenience, Ghosts*. **OTHER THEATRE:** Designs for Stratford, Shaw, Mirvish, Canadian Stage, NAC, Theatre Calgary, GCTC, Tarragon, BIBT, TPM, Factory, Volcano, Aluna, Modern Times and many others. **OTHER:** Thomas has received 2 Dora awards and 19 nominations.



**BEATRIZ PIZANO** was born in Colombia and immigrated to Canada in 1979. She is the founder and Artistic Director of Aluna Theatre, a company recognized for its unique approach to creation and its daring political work. Most recently Beatriz has performed in: *Alien Creature* (TPM), *Dividing Lines* (Aluna), *Four Sisters* (Paradigm/Luminato). She is the first Latinx actress to win a Toronto Critics award and a Dora for her performance in *Blood Wedding*. In 2019 she was named one of TD's 10 Most Influential Hispanic Canadians.



**MATT RIDEOUT** with over a decade in the professional audio and music industry, Matt brings a wealth of technical knowledge and artistic insight into his work. As a producer/engineer/mixer and livestream specialist, Matt is dedicated to innovating the professional audio space, and building an inclusive and open creative environment for his clients and colleagues. Matt studied Music & Composition at the University of Windsor and is a graduate of the Ontario Institute of Audio Recording Technology (OIART). He is also the co-owner/operator of A&B Studios and StreamTuneUp.



**GREGORY J. SINCLAIR** is an award-winning producer, director, educator and program innovator based in Toronto. His work in all media disciplines has earned more than 20 international prizes and distinctions, and he has consulted widely on approaches to digital distribution of live performance programming and live-stream multiple-platform interactive programming. As Executive Producer with CBC Radio/cbc.ca, he developed produced and directed multiple scripted audio series and specials, including the celebrated series *Afghanada*, and the interactive *Trust, Inc*. Recent credits include development of scripted and unscripted podcast series (Audible Canada), producing and directing multi-camera live stream musical performances (Luminato, 2019-2020), musical and scripted audio programs for Soulpepper Theatre (Gold Medal New York Festival 2020), and award-winning films, presented on international broadcast and online platforms.



**GUILLERMO VERDECCHIA** DIRECTOR OF PLAY DEVELOPMENT, ACADEMY FACULTY, SOULPEPPER 2019: Dramaturg: *Wedding at Aulis*, *Fool For Love*. **FOR SOULPEPPER:** Director: *The Royale*. Actor: *Animal Farm*. **OTHER THEATRE:** *The Orchard* (Shaw Festival); *Flashing Lights* (Bad New Days/Theatre Centre). **OTHER:** Recipient of the Governor-General's Award for Drama; 4 time recipient of Chalmers Canadian Play Award, and numerous film festival awards. Instructor at the University of Toronto.



**BAHAREH YARAGHI** was born in Iran, raised in Vancouver, BC. **SOULPEPPER 2021:** *The Parliament of the Birds*. **FOR SOULPEPPER:** *Winter Solstice*. **OTHER THEATRE:** *An Ideal Husband*, *Julius Caesar*, *The Aeneid* (Stratford); *A Doll's House, Part 2* (Mirvish/RMTC); *Cost of Living* (Arts Club/Citadel); *Shakespeare in Love* (Citadel/RMTC); *Salt-Water Moon* (Why Not/Factory); *Death of the King*, *Blood Wedding*, *Hallaj* (Modern Times); *Le Placard*, *Les Zinspirés 2* (Théâtre Français); *Unholy*, *HER2* (Nightwood); *Kiss* (Canadian Stage/Theatre Smash/ARC); *Oil*, *Pomona*, *Moment*, *Bea* (ARC); *Minotaur* (YPT); *The Kite Runner* (Theatre Calgary/Citadel). **OTHER:** Bahareh is a six-time Dora Award nominee and two-time Sterling Award nominee.

*Soulpepper gratefully acknowledges the support of the following:*

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