

## 2022 Next Stage Theatre Festival Extended to February 13, 2022

(January 31, 2022) **Toronto Fringe** is pleased to announce the 2022 **Next Stage Theatre Festival** has been extended to February 13, 2022 to allow audiences to enjoy all seven productions after a quick pivot to digital theatre.

Now available on-demand as part of Next Stage Theatre Festival is *Heart of a Dog* from **Nowadays Theatre**, *Stand Up Comedy* from **Comedy Records Live**, *Stories of a Dish* from **Nautanki Bazaar**, *The Sunglasses Monologue* by **Vivian Chong**, *Tango in the Dark* by **PointeTango**, and *Ursa: A Folk Musical* created by **The Uncommon Folk Collective**. *She's Not Special* created by **Fatuma Adar** will premiere February 7, 2022.

Previously planned as a hybrid in-person and digital festival January 19-30, 2022, the **Next Stage Theatre Festival** moved completely online in compliance with the Government of Ontario's Step Two of the Roadmap to Reopen announcement on January 3, 2022.

*The Complex*, and *Saving Wonderland*, closed January 30 after eight successful live digital performances each. **Next Stage** now features gorgeous, high quality digital theatre presentations for on-demand viewing. *Heart of a Dog*, *She's Not Special*, *Stand-Up Comedy*, and *Ursa: A Folk Musical* were recorded live on a COVID safe set at Ada Slaight Hall at Daniels Spectrum, where they were originally set to perform live.

### The current 2022 Next Stage Theatre Festival Line-Up:

In Alphabetical Order

#### **Heart of a Dog**

Written by Mohammad Yaghoubi  
From Nowadays Theatre Company

*Heart of a Dog* is a comical adaptation by Iranian playwright **Mohammad Yaghoubi**, based on a novel of the same name by the classic Russian writer Mikhail Bulgakov. In this English premiere, the main character (the dog) will be performed by a woman, which would not be possible in Iran, where a woman's body is a political matter. Previous productions in Iran struggled with censorship, but now living in Canada far from the harassment of the censorship bureaus, Yaghoubi can pursue his creative vision and direct this piece any way he sees fit.

#### **She's Not Special**

Created by Fatuma Adar  
From HomeMadelT Productions

*She's Not Special* combines musical theatre and comedic storytelling to explore the pressures of Black Excellence. As a Black Muslim Woman (a triple threat!), creator Fatuma Adar is on a mission to free you

from the clutches of exceptionalism and teach you how to relish in the joys of mediocrity. Co-directed by Adar and Graham Isador.

### **Stand Up Comedy**

Created by Nick Reynoldson, Dena Jackson, Adrienne Fish, Monty Scott, Todd Graham, and Efthimios Nasiopoulos  
From Comedy Records

Comedy Records, Canada's first record label dedicated to releasing stand up and sketch comedy albums, presents an evening of hilarious stand-up comedy featuring hometown comics. Hosted by **Faisal Butt**, audiences will share laughs with notable comedians with a wide range of styles including **Nick Reynoldson, Dena Jackson, Adrienne Fish, Monty Scott, Todd Graham** and **Efthimios Nasiopoulos**.

### **Stories of a Dish**

Created by Himanshu Sitlani  
From Nautanki Bazaar

A global pandemic may have struck, but here is a person who's just stuck! He wants to win the world over with his cooking, but will he be able to? He's got to face isolation, earn acceptance and, most importantly, get groceries delivered. Will he find the secret recipe to happiness? A culinary theatrical journey awaits, in this innovative solo show inspired by the popular *Stories of a Dish* video series on Instagram.

### **The Sunglasses Monologue**

Created by Vivian Chong

*The Sunglasses Monologue* is a play about being seen and embracing life every step of the way. Through humour, original songs, storytelling, and refreshing perspectives, this intimate one-woman-show from Blind artist and writer **Vivian Chong** takes audiences through an emotional journey of finding bravery, vulnerability, and optimism in the face of uncertainty.

### **Tango in the Dark**

Directed by Alexander Richardson  
From PointeTango

Award-winning dance company PointeTango heats up the screen with *Tango in the Dark*, an original hour-long dance film created during the COVID-19 pandemic. Previously part of the Next Stage Theatre Series, PointeTango's sultry duo will wow audiences with fantastic lifts, exciting spins and the passion of Argentine tango with a unique twist: tango on pointe! Using original music composed by the Payadora Tango Ensemble, as well as contemporary and traditional themes, senses will be delighted by an award-winning show that lights the way through the shadows and mysteries of Buenos Aires and tells a story of two dancers moving to the rhythms of the city night.

### **Ursa: A Folk Musical**

Created by Jake Schindler and Sam Boer  
From Ursa Productions

What happens when a small-town Ontario teenager runs off into the forest in search of adventure? Why, she meets an anxious bear in the midst of an identity crisis, of course! Combining the joys of a folk concert with the timeless wisdom of a folktale, *Ursa: A Folk Musical* weaves a whimsical story of star-crossed friendship. This unforgettable exploration of the anxieties and euphoria of young adulthood is full of fresh and surprising folk tunes performed by a live band.

The Next Stage Theatre Festival is generously supported by Ontario's Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism, and Culture.

Toronto Fringe is a grassroots, charitable organization that runs the Toronto Fringe Festival each July, the Next Stage Theatre Festival each January, and various year-round programs that benefit youth, emerging artists, BIPOC artists, artists with disabilities, and the performing arts community at large. Embedded in Fringe's operations are the values of Access, Accountability, Creativity, Exploration, and Support.

**Next Stage Theatre Festival**  
**January 19-February 13, 2022**

Tickets at \$15 plus fees

More information available at

<https://fringetoronto.com/next-stage/about>

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