

TORONTO  
**FRINGE**

# NEXT STAGE



# TITA JOKES

Presented by:  
**Tita Collective**

# The Solitudes



photo: Tanja Tuziana

*eight recipes for transforming our solitudes,  
and an invitation to sit at the table*



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# HAPPY 2020!

Our little theatre festival is now a teenager. In this 13th year of Next Stage, we are presenting a clearer vision than ever before. This line-up offers you personal stories, incredible writing, a full musical, and a Fringe-fave clown duo.



I am so honoured to be able to share this work with you from this passionate group of artists who have worked so hard to bring you their shows. I hope you can pack in as much theatre as possible over the next 12 days and join us for our Fringe Fundraiser, a one-night-only event with Tallboyz, another #StartedAtTheFringe success story, on Saturday Jan 11th at 7:30pm. We will also have treats for everyone in the heated Steam Whistle Festival Tent and a late night party in the Studio theatre so come by then or any other night to say hi to myself and the Next Stage crew.

May this be the start of a 2020 filled with theatre and joy.

All the best,

Lucy Eveleigh  
Executive Director



It gives me great pleasure to extend greetings and a warm welcome to everyone attending the Next Stage Theatre Festival hosted by Toronto Fringe.



Now in its 13th year, the Next Stage Theatre Festival features 11 visionary shows that showcase a vision of innovative styles and formats and represent a vanguard of indie theatre makers in Toronto. These shows range from staged readings to fully realized productions that offer an enriching program while keeping the indie spirit alive.

I am delighted that wonderful events like yours are taking place in Toronto. Events like this festival promote and encourage residents to participate in their community, connect with each other and contribute to the community's strength.

On behalf of Toronto City Council, I wish everyone an enjoyable and memorable event. Please accept my best wishes for continued success.

Yours truly,

John Tory  
Mayor of Toronto



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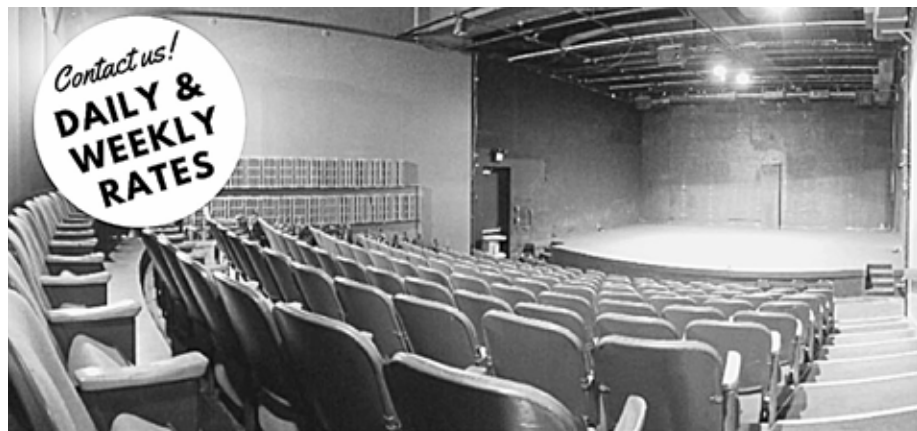
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# NEXT STAGE

## **TITA JOKES**

Presented by  
**Tita Collective**

Created by	<b>The Tita Collective</b>
Director	<b>Tricia Hagoriles</b>
Music Director	<b>Ayaka Kinugawa</b>
Stage Manager & Lighting Designer	<b>Justine Cargo</b>
Choreographer	<b>Chantelle Mostacho</b>
Animation	<b>Solis Animation</b>
Accessibility Consultant	<b>Ophira Calof</b>
Publicist	<b>Damien Nelson</b>

Featuring

**Ann Paula Bautista**  
**Belinda Corpuz**  
**Isabel Kanaan**  
**Ellie Posadas**  
**Alia Rasul**  
**Maricris Rivera**



### **TITA COLLECTIVE, Creators**

Tita Collective are an all-Filipina collective composed of award-winning playwrights, comedians, musicians, dancers, theatre makers and actors. Individually, they are: Ann Paula Bautista (*Peter Pan*), Belinda Corpuz (*Hilot Means Healer*), Isabel Kanaan (CBC's *Air Farce*), Ellie Posadas (*Wexford Plaza*), Alia Rasul (*Generally Hospital*), and Maricris Rivera (*Short Dances*). Tita Collective won the Steam Whistle Producers' Pick (2019 Toronto Sketch Comedy Festival), Best Newcomer (2019 Montreal Sketch Comedy Festival), Second City Outstanding New Comedy Award, and Tarragon Theatre's Mainspace Patrons' Pick (2019 Toronto Fringe Festival). They were featured as part of the "19 Asian Millennial Women You Should Know" listing by Cold Tea Collective.

"We aim to create work that engages, connects and entertains community. Through theatre, comedy, music, and movement, we aspire to tell stories that:

- Thoughtfully honour and celebrate our roots and history
- Explore our identities as Filipinas
- Represent the narratives of the Philippine diaspora in an inclusive and respectful way
- Nurture and unites community through joy and laughter"



**ANN PAULA BAUTISTA, Co-Creator & Performer**

Ann Paula is an actor, singer, and writer born and raised in Toronto. A graduate of Randolph Academy's College program, she has performed on stages all around Canada and the US. Ann Paula is a founding member of the multi-award winning Filipina-Canadian ensemble, the Tita Collective.

She was most recently seen in the Soulpepper and Bad Hats Theatre's production of *Peter Pan* and will be in *Grow* at Grand Theatre in London this Spring. Other select credits include: *Aqsarniit* (Charlottetown Fest Young Company), *Disenchanted 1st National tour* (Starvox), *We Will Rock You*, *Avenue Q* (Stephenville Fest), and *In the Heights* (We Are Here Prod).



**BELINDA CORPUZ, Co-Creator & Performer**

Belinda Corpuz is a Toronto-based, Filipina-Canadian actor, musician, singer/songwriter and composer. Her EP, *All I Am*, has garnered national radio-play, including an exclusive feature on CBC Radio's Fresh Air. Belinda is a member of award-winning group, the Tita Collective. This past year she worked as the assistant sound designer for multi-Dora

nominated production, *Eraser*. Belinda holds a BMus in Performance - Jazz Voice from the University of Toronto Faculty of Music. [www.belindacorpuz.com](http://www.belindacorpuz.com)

Selected Theatre: *Hilot Means Healer* (Cahoots/bcurrent), *Tita Jokes* (Tita Collective, 2019 Toronto Fringe), *Prairie Nurse* (Factory Theatre/TIP), *Lighters in the Air* (2018 Toronto Fringe) Upcoming: *Lady Sunrise* (Factory Theatre), *All the Little Animals I Have Eaten* (Nightwood). Film: *Lola's Wake* (CFC), *Jezebel* (Reel Asian International Film Festival), *Clown Killer* (Wattpad/Cinecoup, featured in the Toronto After Dark Festival).



**ISABEL KANAAN, Co-Creator & Performer**

Isabel is an actor, comedian, and writer best known for CBC's *Air Farce*, the Canadian Comedy Award winning troupe The Sketchersons, the lead in the award-winning series *Haunted or Hoax*, the multi-award winning group Tita Collective, and the multi-award winning toured sketch revue *Hey 90s' Kids, You're Old*. She garnered rave reviews

on her performance in Factory Theatre's *Prairie Nurse* and as the lead in *Ponytail* during the Reel Asian International Film Festival.

She was awarded the NBC Universal Bob Curry Fellowship, the RBC Top 25 Canadian Immigrant Award, one of NOW Toronto's breakthrough stage artists, one of Torontoist's Mirthful Mx. In *The 6ix* (previously "Local Ladies Who Make Us Laugh"), and was nominated for a Premier's Award for her expeditious achievements in comedy, theatre, and film/TV. Selected TV Credits: *TallBoyz* (CBC), *Hudson & Rex* (City TV), *Good Witch* (Hallmark), *Nurses* (Global TV).



### **ELLIE POSADAS, Co-Creator & Performer**

Ellie Posadas is a Filipina-Canadian multi-disciplinary performer from Toronto. She is featured in the 34th TFF Official Selection film, *Wexford Plaza* (CAAMfest, Slamdance) and is also featured in the short film *The Morning After* written and directed by Tita Jokes Director, Tricia Hagoriles. The film had its Canadian premiere in the 2018 Toronto Inside Out Festival, and had its US premiere in the Los Angeles 2019 OUT fest. Ellie is currently working on the film *Scarborough* based on the award-winning novel by Catherine Hernandez. This show is dedicated to her Mama Irene, the real Tita Ginger. Other credits include: *The Penelopiad* (Hart House), *Emily and EV* (Nota Collective) *SILENCED* (HERstory Counts), *It's (Kind Of) A Love Story* (Tree of Life Theatre), *Avenue Q* (The LOT), *Monsters By Nature* (Kindling Collective).



### **ALIA RASUL, Co-Creator & Performer**

Alia is a Canadian Comedy Award nominated writer/performer. She received rave reviews for her performance in *Generally Hospital* whose "outstanding ensemble" won Patrons' Pick and the David Séguin Memorial Award at the 2018 Toronto Fringe Festival. She understudied for 2 seasons of Second City's Mainstage award-winning show, *She The People*. She is a NBC Universal Bob Curry Fellowship alumni and holds a BA from McGill University. She made her directorial debut with *Kwento*, an improvised Filipino folktale. She is currently inclusion director at Bad Dog Theatre. I love you, Mom!



### **MARICRIS RIVERA, Co-Creator & Performer**

Maricris is a performer, creator, stage manager, producer and educator. She produces *Short Dances* and has collaborated with many dance companies, including Gadfly, Rock Bottom Movement, TOES FOR DANCE and TranscenDance Project. She is currently in Generator's 2019/20 Artist Producer Training Program cohort. She also plays with her band, Understudy, and plans on releasing a solo EP. Previous credits include: *Tale of a Town* (FIXT Point), *The Renaissance Woman* (BOSS Dance Company), *Lily* (In'Trinzik Dance Project). Maraming salamat, Mama! @maricrisriv. This show is dedicated to the memory of Danielle Moore, a trailblazer Tita who was chosen to attend the UN Environment Assembly as a youth delegate in Nairobi.



### **TRICIA HAGORILES, Director**

Tricia Hagoriles is an award-winning, Toronto-based filmmaker. Her first short film, *Beat*, garnered her the RBC Emerging Canadian Artist Award at the 2015 Inside Out Toronto LGBTQ Film Festival and her second short, *The Morning After*, has played in festivals internationally. Her directorial stage work includes *Boiband the Boyband* which premiered in the 39th Rhubarb Theatre Festival and the multiple award-winning 2019 Toronto Fringe Festival show, *Tita Jokes*. Most recently, Tricia was a resident of the 2019 Director's Lab at the Canadian Film Centre and is one of the recipients of the inaugural Inside Out + OUTtv Outspoken Documentary Fund for her upcoming work: *The Archivist*.



### **AYAKA KINUGAWA, Musical Director**

Ayaka holds a Bachelor of Music in Jazz as well as a Diploma in Classical Music, and she composes music for YouTubers, podcasts, and a hip-hop project called *Kokophonix*. Ayaka is a musical director at The Second City and her credits include *Unelectable You* (U.S. Tour/The Kennedy Center), *She The People* (Original Composition, Chicago/Toronto/Washington D.C.) and *Improv Showdown* (Toronto). When she is not putting her musician hat on, Ayaka also performs improv and sketch comedy on stage, such as *Sunday Night Live* with The Sketchersons and Bad Dog Theatre Featured Players. Ayaka loves tomatoes. @ayaka.kinugawa



### **JUSTINE CARGO, Stage Manager & Lighting Design**

Justine is delighted to be back working with The Tita Collective once again after 3 sold out shows at Second City in honor of their Outstanding Comedy Award received at the 2019 Toronto Fringe Festival. Recently Justine was the SM and Lighting Designer for *Urinetown* with Toronto Musical Concerts and *A Whole New World- The Musical Magic of Alan Menken* Tour. Other Credits Include: *Beauty and The Beast*, Dora Award winning show *Tough Jews*, *Parade*, *Merrily We Roll Along*, *Company*, *Welcome To The Bunker* (Nominated for Best New Work My Entertainment World), *Mockingbird Close* (Listed as Top 10 Theatre shows to see 2017), Christopher Wilson's *Two Kittens* and *A Kid* (NYC, Edinburgh, Toronto), and *Confessions of a Redheaded Coffee Shop Girl* (UK Tour). Justine also produces a monthly show at Comedy Bar about all your nostalgia entitled, *Blast From The Past*. Thank You for supporting Indie Theatre!



### **CHANTELLE MOSTACHO, Choreographer**

Chantelle is a Toronto-based dancer, choreographer, instructor, and adjudicator. She graduated from Ryerson University's BFA Theatre Performance Dance program and also trains in street dance styles such as waacking, locking, house, and hip hop. She is an active dancer in the battling scene in Canada and primarily represents waacking. Chantelle teaches both contemporary and waacking in the GTA and is regularly found at The Underground Dance Centre. Film credits include: *High Rise* (Cadence Weapon, Pique Toronto), *Freestyle Visuals* (Bassnectar, Black Lake Media), *Monument* (RiaToss). Choreography credits include: *Fever After Dark*, *MiCha Entertainment*, *Movement For Memories*. Chantelle and her partner Caden Mackinnon have also been recognized as a reputable and impactful duo in contact improv, performing for 2U4U, Lost Is Found, Gadfly, UNITY Charity.



### **SOLIS ANIMATION, Animation**

SOLIS ANIMATION is an independently-owned and family-run boutique studio specializing in 2D design and animation for film, television, SVOD, advertising and digital media. Since 2010, Solis Animation has provided directing and visual services for a wide selection of works including shows like Comedy Central's *Ugly Americans* and *Moonbeam City*. The studio was honoured to work on Gord Downie's *The Secret Path* and was also heavily involved in the development of *Gary and His Demons*, which they co-directed and fully animated.



### **OPHIRA CALOF, Accessibility Consultant**

Ophira Calof is a disabled writer, performer, and producer based in Toronto, Canada. She co-created the award-winning sketch revue *Generally Hospital* and curated the 2019 Reelabilities Film Festival Comedy Programming, along with consulting on accessibility across the comedy community and beyond. Ophira graduated from Second City's Writing and Sketch Conservatory programs, was featured in the Second City 2018 Toronto Diversity Fellowship Showcase, and is the 2018 recipient of the Tim Sims Encouragement Award. Her solo show, *Literally Titanium*, was developed through the Buddies in Bad Times Emerging Creator's Unit, premiered at their 2019 Queer Pride Festival Showcase, and is currently also playing at the Next Stage Theatre Festival. Additionally, Ophira has spoken in a variety of settings as a health educator and patient ambassador, including on behalf of the ILC Ehlers Danlos Foundation, through the University of Toronto's IPE events, and as the 2019 Keynote speaker for the Jacalyn Duffin Health and Humanities Conference at Queen's University.



**NOTES ON THE SHOW:** Our show is rooted in family and community. Growing up as Filipinas, we were surrounded by dancing, singing, acting, and making jokes with our loved ones. These disciplines are rich in our culture, especially in the way we share stories and spend time with our family and community. The culmination of these different disciplines are most evident in typical Filipin\* family gatherings, also known as “FamJams.” These get-togethers usually consist of coming around the buffet table set up by our parents, exchanging stories filled with laughter and often chismis (which means “gossip” in English), the younger cousins joining the Titas in an impromptu line-dancing battle, with the not-so-distant sound of relatives singing along to Tito’s acoustic rendition of “My Way.” The celebration of life shown through these heart-filled moments is what we as the Tita Collective wanted to honour through *Tita Jokes*. By sharing these stories, we share our people’s affection for music, humour, and storytelling. By sharing these stories, we share with everyone else how our Titas and Titos show us their love.

**THANK YOU:** Maraming salamat, po! We are so grateful for the generosity of the Toronto Arts Council for funding our show.

We thank our previous sponsors, who have helped us develop our show over the past year: Tinuno, Atin Ito, The Filipino Channel (ABS-CBN), Filipino Heritage Month Committee, DGA, PATAC (Philippine Advocacy Through Arts and Culture), Toronto Sketch Comedy Festival, and the Pat and Tony Freedom Fund for the Arts.

Special thanks to all our parents and families, Toronto Fringe Festival, Cathleen Jayne Calica, Martin Jacob Nicolas, Tanja-Tiziana, and Sex T-Rex. This is dedicated to our families and our community. Isang bagsak.

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The Toronto Fringe is a platform for everyone to access, discover, and experiment with the arts. By valuing creative experiences, we contribute to a healthy arts economy and, ultimately, a thriving society.

## OUR VALUES

**Access** – in every sense of the word

**Accountability** – we work with integrity and respect

**Creativity** – freedom of expression permeates everything we do

**Exploration** – we let curiosity be our guide

**Support** – empowering you to take a chance

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WRITTEN + PERFORMED BY

**Vivek Shraya**

**FEB 18 - MAR 1**



photo: Heather Satz



## af

CREATED + DIRECTED BY

**Sandra Laronde  
+ Neil Coppen**

A Red Sky Performance production  
presented by Canadian Stage

**FEB 18 - MAR 1**

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