

TORONTO
FRINGE

NEXT STAGE

WINTER OF 88

Presented by:
Nowadays Theatre Company

The Solitudes



photo: Tanja Tuziana

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



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Nightwood Theatre ●●●●

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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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lucy".

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Tory".

John Tory
Mayor of Toronto



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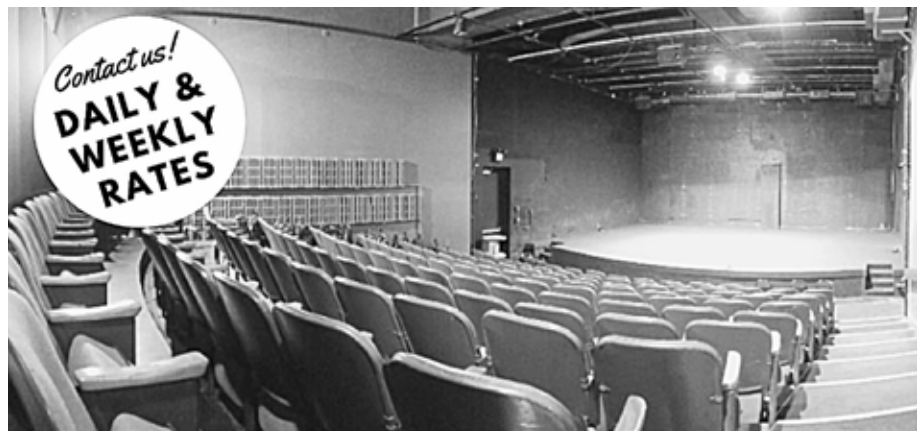
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NEXT STAGE

WINTER OF 88

Produced by
Nowadays Theatre Company

Supported by
Alma Matters Production

Creative Team

Playwright and Director	Mohammad Yaghoubi
Translation	Nazanin Malekan, Mohammad Yaghoubi
Edited by	Parmida Vand
French Section Translation	Jean Marchand
Featuring	Aida Keykhaii, Amir Zavosh, Armon Ghaeinizadeh, Jonathan Shaboo, Parmida Vand, Sarah Marchand
Lighting Designer	David DeGrow
Makeup Artist	Mina Ketabian
Music by	Behrang Baghaee
Stage Manager	Whitney Hewitt
Assistant Director	Mahsa Ershadifar
Poster	Saman Farzaneh
Promo Trailer	Ali Mostolizadeh

MOHAMMAD YAGHOUBI – PLAYWRIGHT AND DIRECTOR

Mohammad Yaghoubi is a playwright, director, theatre instructor, and co-artistic director of Nowadays Theatre Company. His plays have been translated and produced globally in countries such as Iran, Turkey, Iraq, Belgium, Sweden, Germany, Czech Republic, France, Australia, the United States and Canada. He recently staged his play *The Only Possible Way* in English at Canadian Stage in March 2019. Selected works include *A Moment of Silence*, *Writing in the Dark*, *Moon in the Water*, *Drought & Lies*, *Geraniums*, *Red and the Rest*, *Dance of Torn Papers*, and *The Pillowman* (Martin McDonagh). Selected Awards and Honours: The National Theatre Critics Society Award for Outstanding Play, *Drought & Lies*; First place winner of the Iranian Playwrights Society and third place winner of the New Play Contest in Toronto Fringe Festival 2016 for Outstanding Writing, *A Moment of Silence*; The National Theatre Critics Society Award for Outstanding Writing, *Geraniums*; The National Theatre Critics Society Award for Outstanding Direction, *Dance of Torn Papers*.

NAZANIN MALEKAN - TRANSLATOR

Nazanin is a graduate of English Translation from Iran, with some acting background in Farsi and French. She moved to Canada in 2005 and joined the NAGs – Nomads Acting Group until 2011 where she acted in minor roles and helped with props and stage management. She attended Aida Keykhai's acting workshop in 2016 and was cast in *Dance of Torn Papers* in Toronto. She joined NOWADAYS THEATRE shortly after and took on script translation, grant application and communication. Nazanin Joined Mohammad Yaghoubi's acting workshops between 2017 and 2018 and was cast in the production of *Angles in Iran* in Toronto and Waterloo. Nazanin has translated three plays by Mohammad Yaghoubi which were all produced by NOWADAYS THEATRE in Canada; *Dance of Torn Papers* (DanceMakers – 2018), *The Only Possible Way* (Canadian Stage – 2019), and *Winter of 88* at Next Stage Theatre Festival in January 2020.

AIDA KEYKHAI – “NASRIN (MOTHER)”

Aida Keykhai is an actress, director, producer, translator, theatre instructor, and the co-artistic director of NOWADAYS THEATRE company. She holds an M.A. in Play Directing, B.A. in Acting from the University of Tehran. With over a decade of experience in theatre, Aida moved to Canada in 2015. Selected works as an actor and director include *Drought and Lies*, *Proof*, *Dinner with Friends*, *Sleeping in an Empty Cup*, *The Pillowman*, *Iceland*, *Dance of Torn Papers*, *Swim Team* and *The Only Possible Way*. Selected awards and honours include The Iran Festival of University Theatre for Outstanding acting, *Olive*; The International Iran Festival of University Theatre Award for Outstanding Directing, *Goodbye*; Honourable Mention from Canadian Stage in Direction and NOW's annual list of the "Best of the Fest" for Outstanding Production, Ensemble, and Direction, *Swim Team*. Her recent work as an actor was in *The Only Possible Way* at Canadian Stage in March 2019. This was Aida's first time performing in English. She recently remounted *Swim Team* presented by NOWADAYS THEATRE at Theatre Center in November 2019. She is very excited to be performing in English for the second time in her new home, Canada.

AMIR ZAVOSH – “SOHEIL”

Born and raised in Iran, Amir Zavosh moved to Canada in 2018. He has started acting in school since 1998 in Iran. He received a Bachelor's degree in Dramatic Literature; and is a graduate of Azad University (MA Theatre), with over a decade background acting experience in Theatre, TV series and cinema, including *The Seventh Month*, *Farewell*, *Arash*, *A Passenger*, *We will Be Calm*, and *Golshifteh*. He has also experience in teaching children and young people how to play and write. After performing his first performance in English in *The Only Possible Way*, he is proud and very excited to perform his second performance in English in his new home, Canada. Thanks to NOWADAYS THEATRE company for collaborating on this beautifully challenging piece.

ARMON GHAENIZADEH – “MAHYAR”

Armon is a Toronto based actor, director, performer, choreographer, producer, and a recent graduate of the University of Toronto's Drama Centre. Most recently Armon directed and co-created *DEEP END* at the 2019 Toronto Fringe with New Story Productions. As an actor, he has played Simon Marwane in *Scorched*, directed by Djanet Sears, and starred as Ali Baba in *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves* at Globus Theatre. At the University of Toronto, Armon has performed in *DogFight*, *Evita*, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *The Miser*, to name a few. Armon also recently closed his run of *CINDERELLA the Pantomime* as Prince Charming with TYT and also choreographed the production. With NOWADAYS THEATRE, Armon was previously in *The Only Possible Way* and is ecstatic to be joining the team once again to play the role of Mahyar in *Winter of 88*.

JONATHAN SHABOO – “BABAK”

Jonathan is excited to once again be collaborating with NOWADAYS THEATRE and is grateful for the opportunity to tell Mohammad’s story. A recent graduate of *The School at Steppenwolf* at Steppenwolf Theatre in Chicago, Jonathan is happy to be back in his hometown, working with the talented and creative artists in it. Selected Credits: *We Will Rock You* (Starvox Ent.), *Greater Expectations* (The Second City Toronto), *Dance of Torn Papers* (NOWADAYS THEATRE), *Evil Dead: The Musical* (Starvox Ent.). Awards: Inaugural Council for Canadian American Relations Tuition Scholarship (CCAR 2019), Tim Sims Encouragement Fund Award (nominated), The Fred Thury Award & Bursary. See what he’s eating on Instagram @jonathanshaboo

PARMIDA VAND – “NAHID”

Parmida Vand is an Iranian-Canadian actor, writer and musician. This is her second production with NOWADAYS THEATRE and she is thrilled to be working with the company again. She would like to thank Aida, Mohammed, Sarah and the entire creative team for their dedicated efforts on this project. Instagram: @oneunderpar. Select Credits: *The New Canadian Curling Club* (Thousand Islands Playhouse, Blyth Festival); *A Moment of Silence* (Nowadays Theatre); *Taken* (Universal for NBC).

SARAH MARCHAND – “ZOE”

Sarah is a performer, producer, and founder of Alma Matters Productions. She studied at the University of Toronto (MA Theatre) and Concordia University (BFA Honours Acting and English Lit). Since 2018, Sarah has worked in partnership with Sheena’s Place to explore self-healing from eating disorders through comedy. Sarah is currently participating in Nightwood Theatre’s 2019-20 Young Innovator’s Program. Select Credits: *The Handmaid’s Tale* (Crave TV), *The Umbrella Academy* (Netflix), *Swim Team* (Producer, NOWADAYS THEATRE), *Ill Met by Moonlight* (Dameitrius, Pointed Cap Playhouse), *A Moment of Silence* (SummerWorks Festival). Awards: The Hnatyshyn Foundation’s Emerging Artist Grant in English Theatre, The Tim Sims Encouragement Fund Award (nominated), Carolyn and Richard Renaud Bursary for Theatre. Upcoming:...*And the Wardrobe* (Gladstone Theatre) @Sarahamarcshand @almattersprod

DAVID DEGROW – LIGHTING DESIGNER

David is a designer, production manager, and occasional thinker of great thoughts working in Toronto. He has been part of some 400 productions in Toronto and across Canada, and his designs have been nominated for three Dora awards. He is also in the final year of his PhD candidacy at the University of Toronto, where his research focuses on the complex relationships between theatre architecture, artistic mandate, audiences and the city.

WHITNEY HEWITT – STAGE MANAGER

A graduate of The School of the Toronto Dance Theatre's professional training program, Whitney's passion for creativity and artistic expression began in her hometown of Woodstock, Ontario. Taught from a young age to appreciate art and talent in all its forms, being a part of anything to do with live performance always fills her with joy. It could be happening in a theatre, on the street, in a parking lot or in the water and Whitney is happy to be there, be it out front or behind the scenes. Taking part in NOWADAYS THEATRE'S latest production has been a pleasure, an honour, and an eye-opening experience. A warm thank you to all the cast and crew for such a wonderful opportunity.

MAHSA ERSHADIFAR – ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Mahsa Ershadifar is a bilingual (English and Farsi) performer, assistant director, and stage manager. She has worked on several projects with NOWADAYS THEATRE including productions of *Dance of Torn Paper* (DanceMakers Studio) and *The Only Possible Way* (Canadian Stage Company in Residency Program) as an actor and assistant director. Her most recent acting role was as Katy, in the English remount of *Swim Team*, directed by Aida Keykhai and presented by NOWADAYS THEATRE at Theatre Center. Mahsa is currently an emcee at The Tirgan Festival, the world's largest event celebrating Persian culture.

@mahsaerf

SAMAN FARZANEH – GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Saman began his career as a graphic designer in 2002. He has collaborated with many publishing companies, magazines and advertising companies, such as Behnegar, Karnameye Ketab, Saghi, Roudaki, Hamshahri, Alef, and MAAT advertising company. He previously designed the poster for NOWADAYS THEATRE's productions of *Dance of Torn Papers*, *The Only Possible Way* and *Swim Team*.

MINA KETABIAN – MAKEUP ARTIST

Mina is a Toronto-based freelance makeup artist. She is certified in beauty, editorial, and comprehensive makeup from the school of George Brown College. Applying makeup and prosthetics on others for theatre, television, film, fashion, and other media sources is her passion and she feels very fortunate to have a career that she is always excited about. Her motivation and excitement come from a variety of inspirations and moments such as educating herself with new products, techniques, workshops, media, and many other talented artists. Every new face is an opportunity to create and nothing else is more enjoyable for her than making new faces.

About The Play: *Winter of 88* is an award-winning meta-theatrical and autobiographical piece based on the playwright's traumatic experiences during the Iran-Iraq war. During an interview, Mohammad Yaghoubi explains: "the fear and insecurity I felt in the winter of 1988 has followed me all through my life. I survived the Winter of 88 so I had to write about it."

Widely recognized in Iran, *Winter of 88* has been performed in Farsi by numerous Iranian Theatre companies. First directed by the playwright in 1997, the play won for Outstanding Writing, Direction and Acting at the 16th International Theatre Festival of Iran.

Notes on text: Below is a list of Farsi words used frequently throughout the play, for your convenience we have included an English translation:

Salaam: Hello	Khodahafez: Bye
Pesaram: My Son	Dadash Jaan: Brother Dear
Basheh: OK	Khob: So
Khanoom: Ma'am	Azizam: My Dear
Agha: Sir	Khodaro Shokr: Thank God

In Farsi, 'Jan' and 'Joon' are often attached to someone's name as a term of endearment.

Special Thanks to Lucy Eveleigh, Claire Wynveen and all the staff of the Next Stage Theatre Festival for their generous and tireless efforts.

TORONTO
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We also thank Tavo Diez de Bonilla, Omar Habib, Aylin Salahshoor, Roham Maher, Nightwood Theatre, Bad Dog Theatre, Assembly Theatre, White Mills Theatre Co., Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and the Iranian Association at the University of Toronto for their generous support.

NOWADAYS THEATRE

About Nowadays Theatre:

NOWADAYS THEATRE is a Toronto-based not-for-profit company founded in 2016, by Aida Keykhaii and Mohammad Yaghoubi. It is a highly acclaimed theatre company with over a decade background in Iran with its Farsi name: 'In-Rooz-ha' which means: 'Nowadays'.

NOWADAYS THEATRE prioritizes creative works that address socially relevant topics and has been producing performances that provoke public discourse and promote community engagement. In the interest of inspiring cross-cultural dialogue and supporting cultural diversity in Canada, NOWADAYS THEATRE translates English plays into Farsi, and Iranian plays into English. We have performed in many countries including Sweden, France, The Czech Republic, Germany, Belgium, Australia, USA, and Turkey.

The company was the 2018-19 RBC Emerging Company in Residence at Canadian Stage, where with the generous support of Toronto Arts Council and the Canada Council for the Arts, they developed and presented *The Only Possible Way*, an established Iranian play written and directed by Mohammad Yaghoubi. Our recent theatre project was *Swim Team*, directed by Aida Keykhaii which was performed at the Theatre Centre, with the generous support of the Toronto Arts Council, the Ontario Arts Council, and the Canada Council for the Arts.

Since 2016, We have held acting and writing workshops every year and have performed more than ten plays. Productions such as *Proof*, *The Pillowman*, *The Monsters*, *Sleeping in an Empty Cup*, *Iceland*, *Angels in Iran*, *A Moment of Silence* (with the generous support of TAC at SummerWorks Presentations 2016), *Dance of Torn Papers* (with the generous support of TAC and OAC), *The Only Possible Way*, and *Swim Team*. For more information, visit:

Website: www.Nowadaystheatre.org.

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July Black in CAROLINE, OR CHANGE. Photo by: Max Teizerow.