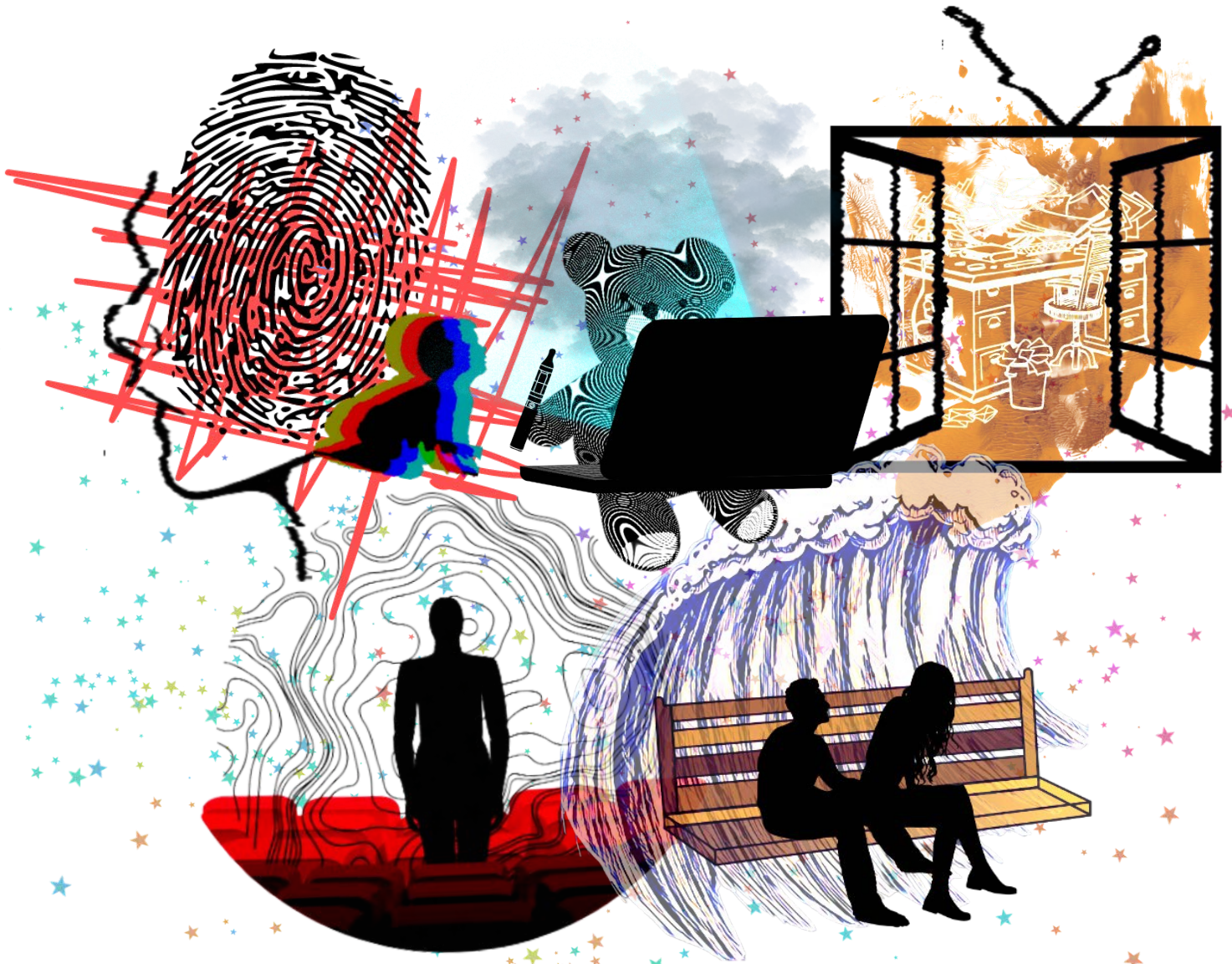




Centre for Drama, Theatre & Performance Studies  
**UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO**



# DIRECTORS' SHOWCASE



## **BAŅUTA RUBESS, COURSE INSTRUCTOR**

Dr. Baņuta Rubess pioneered feminist theatre, and contemporary opera to national renown in Canada and Latvia. She has lived in four countries and writes in two languages. In Canada, she created groundbreaking works for Nightwood Theatre, Theatre Direct, and Tapestry New Opera Works. As Associate Artist at Theatre Passe Muraille, she threw open the doors to a new generation of theatre creators. In 1998, she moved with her family to Riga, Latvia. She created productions across the

country, ranging from an immersive version of *La Ronde* to an adaptation of *The Trojan Women* performed on a beach. For many years she was a regular columnist in the national newspaper. Baņuta returned to Toronto in 2012. A Rhodes Scholar with a doctorate in history from the University of Oxford, she recently acquired an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of Guelph. She has been nominated for many awards and has won a few, including Best Play, Best Director, Best Short Story. She teaches theatre at the University of Toronto where she is lucky to mentor an amazing new wave of theatre makers.

## **SNEZANA PESIC, SET DESIGNER**

Snezana is a performance designer and educator. She has collaborated with companies such as the Canadian Opera Company, Canadian Stage, Confederation Centre of the Arts, Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre, Banff Centre, Theatre New Brunswick, *Against the Grain*, *Ghost River*, *Obsidian*, *Odyssey Theatre* and *Native Earth*, among others. Snezana's work has been presented in numerous international exhibitions, including *World Stage Design* in (2009, Seoul; 2013, Cardiff) and the *Prague Quadrennial* (2007, 2015). In 2019, she designed and curated the Canadian National Exhibition at the *Prague Quadrennial*, where designer Michael Levine received Canada's first-ever PQ Award for Excellence in Performance Design. Snezana won the Betty Mitchell Award for outstanding lighting design and production, was nominated for a Prix Rideau Award, and was shortlisted for the Pauline McGibbon Award.



# THE MARK ON THE WALL

WRITTEN BY VIRGINIA WOOLF



DIRECTED BY  
**LIAM PETER  
DONOVAN**

**DEC 3RD**  
7:30 PM

**DEC 4TH**  
2:00 PM

# Director's Note

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It's winter in Toronto. The sky darkens before the cafés close and by the tail end of rush hour, the pale hope of morning has all but dissolved into the ether. The nights that follow seem peaceful, at first. But they are unfailingly disrupted by harsh winds. After a few months of these jagged nights, life can begin to feel awfully black-and-white. Black-and-white like the 1939 film *Only Angels Have Wings*, in which Cary Grant plays the manager of an air freight company in a fictional South American port town that is in such a struggle to stay afloat (aflight?) that it must send pilots through the dangerous Andes Mountain to their death as Jean Arthur playing pianist-entertainer Bonnie Lee sulks through the building in strikingly masculine-for-the-period clothes not getting any attention from Grant's character until she does and we all laugh and then cry and then, yes, there's more death still: that's why the pilots sing such joyful songs.

But, no. I'm not in the Andes. I'm in a room in Toronto and it's cold out.

I'm allowed to go on like this because I'm writing a director's note for a piece of theatre made out of a short story by Virginia Woolf. A story about the short reprieves we find from numbness, and the way they end. While trying to block out the sound of the news playing in the other room, I escaped into Woolf alone. This semester, our team escaped into her together. Now, it's your turn to escape. But you won't be gone long.

# Cast Biographies



## **CHRISTINA GROSS, ACTOR**

Virginia Woolf once wrote, “I like to think of the tree itself: first the close dry sensation of being wood; then the grinding of the storm; then the slow, delicious ooze of sap.” I don’t have anything intellectual to say about this, other than that it is a fun sentence, and I unfortunately do not get to say it in the show, so I am giving it space here in the program.

Thank you, Liam, for trusting me with this project and for forcing me to read Virginia

Woolf in such painstaking detail. It was so much fun delving into her words, and building *this*, whatever *this* is, out of it. Thank you, Gaby and Major, for being awesome scene partners. Thank you to everyone who has worked on this alongside us. And thank YOU for being here! Yes! You! (I’m looking at you).

Last but not least, some might even say most importantly, you can find me on Instagram @cuddling\_myself.

## **GABRIELA CHANEN, ACTOR**

Gabriela is in her second year studying drama, English, and critical equity. She has always been passionate about how theatre can connect communities and tell stories that are important for creating change, by being both on and off the stage. This is her first performance in the University of Toronto community, and she enjoyed being part of the process.



# Creative Team Biographies

## **LIAM PETER DONOVAN, DIRECTOR**

Directing: Ibsen's *Rosmersholm* (SMC Troubadours), Michael Kras' *The Year and Two of Us Back Here* (UC Follies), Allan Stratton's *Bag Babies* (VCDS). Selected performance: *The Boy Who Cried* (Crème de la Crème/Toronto Fringe), *Anne of Green Gables* (Lower Ossington Theatre), Pinter's *Silence* (CDTPS), Edmund in *King Lear* (TCDS), *The Gray: A Wilde Audio Drama* (VCDS), *Be More Chill* (Bravo Academy - Canadian Premiere), *Oklahoma!* (Scarborough Music Theatre), Moscovitch's

*Essay* (UC Follies). Last year Liam was a creative lab assistant at the Digital Dramaturgy Lab. This year he is the artistic director of Victoria College Drama Society, *The Strand's* associate web editor, and an archival assistant at Poculi Ludique Societas. In March, he and Chrissie will be in the DRM403 Mainstage Show, *don't cry when constellations beg to burn* by Ho Ka Kei (Jeff Ho) – come watch!



## **SELINA JIA, COSTUME DESIGNER**

Selina is a costume designer originally from Vancouver who is studying theatre at the University of Toronto. Specialising in illustrations and dressmaking, Selina has been involved with the world of stage ever since a young age. She has experiences with dance, music, and graphic arts. Selina has worked with companies such as Theatre by the Bay, The Howland Company, and is one of the head dressers for Toronto Fashion Week. Selina will soon become an IATSE member and hopes to attend New York Fashion Week!



## **SABRINA WEINSTEIN, STAGE MANAGER**

Sabrina Beatrice Weinstein is a recent graduate of the CDTPS. She directed *The Shape of a Girl* for the 2020 DRM402 Directors' Showcase, and stage managed *Silence* for the 2021 showcase. Her work as a stage manager and producer led her to working at Canadian Stage in the summer of 2022 as an intern producer, event coordinator for the Festival of Ideas and Creation, and stage manager for the 2022 RBC Emerging Artists Program. This fall she had the

honour to production coordinate the October workshop of *Fall On Your Knees*, written by Hannah Moscovitch and directed by Alisa Palmer. Currently, Sabrina is working at Crow's Theatre as the front of house and box office supervisor. It is always a joy to work with Liam and she has vastly enjoyed the experience of working on *the mark on the wall*.