


Red Beti Theatre
— लाल बेटी —

DECOLONISE YOUR EARS NEW PLAY FESTIVAL 2024



OCT. 3 - 6, 2024
Theatre Aquarius Studio Space

Decolonise Your Ears New Play Festival Presents

Red Beti Theatre
लाल बेटी

HOW TO LOVE a DESI WOMAN in TEN EASY STEPS

Writer
Sheetala Bhat

Director
Carly Anna Billings

October 3rd 2024 7:00pm

Theatre Aquarius
190 King William St, Hamilton

<https://www.showpass.com/4th-annual-decolonise-your-ears-festival/>



Hamilton

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Decolonise Your Ears
7 pm Thursday October 3rd

How to Love a Desi Woman in Ten Easy Steps

Grappling with her desire, longing, and loss, a South-Indian woman in Canada re-narrates a Hindu mythological story in an effort to come out to her family. Her re narration upturns the lives of the goddesses who now seek understanding and revenge. As the mortal and immortal realms collide, both the goddesses and the humans are challenged to confront questions on culture, shame, diaspora, caste, and queerness together.

Decolonise Your Ears

How to Love a Desi Woman in Ten Easy Steps

Sheetala Bhat - Playwright



Sheetala Bhat is a theatre researcher, artist, and playwright. She is an Assistant Professor at the Department of English at York University in Toronto. Her research revolves around South Asian theatre and politics, South Asian diasporic theatre in Canada, and Indigenous theatre in Canada. She has also worked in professional, community, and protest theatre in the state of Karnataka in India.

Carly Anna Billings - Director



Carly Anna Billings (she/her) is a queer fat femme second-gen Italian and Ojibwe theatre-maker and storyteller born and based in her favourite city, Hamilton, ON, on the traditional lands of her people the Mississaugas of the Credit. Her performing career has brought her to live audiences from Prince Edward Island to the Okanagan Valley to New York City and back again. She premiered her critically acclaimed solo show Meat(less) Loaf at the 2022 Hamilton Fringe and her company Afterlife Theatre's newest work Uninvited Guests is currently in development. www.carlyannabillings.com

Sahiba Arora - Actor



"Born and raised in Bangkok, Thailand, Sahiba Arora was a student at the Mahidol University, College of Music in Bangkok, the top music school in Thailand majoring in Western Classical Performance (Voice). Her musical education began with her mom at the age of six, singing Indian Classical music. During her studies, the College provided her various opportunities to perform on stage in musicals, plays, showcases, recitals, and annual concerts, including Beethoven No. 9 with the Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra. Sahiba is also a recent graduate from the Musical Theatre Performance program at St. Clair College.

Nadeem Umar Khitab - Actor



Nadeem trained as an actor at Toronto Metropolitan University and as a Screenwriter at Toronto Film School. Noteworthy credits include the smash hit Beatles musical adaptation of Shakespeare's As You Like It, and the award-winning musical Onegin. While currently working in Film/Television (Global's Robyn Hood), Nadeem continues striving to add non-colonial content to the Canadian theatre milieu. Nadeem currently resides on land rightfully belonging to the Haudenosaunee, Huron-Wendat, and Anishnaabe.

Decolonise Your Ears

How to Love a Desi Woman in Ten Easy Steps

Aura Carcueva - Actor



A Filipino-Canadian artist with a BFA in theatre and dance from Simon Fraser University. She has performed and toured in Europe and across North America for various theatre companies. For the past 10 years she has shifted gears and focused on film/tv and plays in development through workshops and playreadings and is most often involved in interdisciplinary collaborative work. She was last seen in a theatre production of the world premiere of *Homecoming* produced by Urban Ink Productions in Vancouver this past spring. Aura is very grateful to be a part of Decolonise your Ears Festival this year and honoured to be able to share these voices.

Sanskruti Marathe- Actor



Sanskruti Marathe is an Indian Canadian multidisciplinary artist who holds a BFA from York University's Acting Conservatory. Her artistic journey began with dance, which later transformed into a deep exploration of classical Indian forms. Over the past sixteen years, she has dedicated herself to learning Indian Classical Dance forms in India and Canada, culminating in her Bharatnatyam Arangetram (Dance graduation) and her pursuit of Kathak Vishaarad (dance graduation).

Jaya Swaminathan - Actor



Jayalakshmi Swaminathan, known as Jaya, is an artist who has spent the last six years carving her unique path in acting, blending her deep roots in Indian theatre with the vibrancy of Canada's diverse entertainment scene. From her days in Tamil Film and Bollywood to her latest roles in Canadian student productions, Jaya's journey reflects a rich tapestry of cultural experiences, stories, and characters. Her early experiences in community and social justice theatre have infused her performances with an emotional depth that resonates with audiences.

DECOLONISE YOUR EARS NEW PLAY FESTIVAL PRESENTS

THE STORY OF



TITUBA

WRITTEN BY SHIANN CROFT

DIRECTED BY MAKAMBE K. SIMAMBA



Hamilton

OCTOBER 4TH 2024 7:00PM

THEATRE AQUARIUS

190 KING WILLIAM ST, HAMILTON

<https://www.showpass.com/4th-annual-decolonise-your-ears-festival/>

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Decolonise Your Ears!
7pm Friday October 4th

The Story of Tituba

The Story of Tituba is a powerful exploration of Black motherhood, womanhood, and healing, set against the backdrop of colonization and its impact on the Black female body and matriarchal lineage. Narrated through the voices of six generations of women, the play weaves poetic monologues with African drum, jazz, and ballet to tell the story of Tituba—the first woman accused of witchcraft during the 1692 Salem trials.

Tituba, an Afro-Caribbean woman, was kidnapped from the Guyana region and sold into slavery on a Barbados plantation before being transferred to Salem, Massachusetts. Accused of witchcraft after the death of her mixed-race newborn, Tituba's story is one of rebellion and reclamation. She used her knowledge of Ancient African spiritual traditions, voodoo, and herbalism to resist oppression, providing fertility management and herbal abortions for herself and other enslaved women.

The play captures the historical period of sugarcane slavery, highlighting the cultural nuances of being a Black Caribbean woman in a world that punished her for both her identity and her magic. The Story of Tituba delves into the legacy of racism and the enduring effects of slavery, drawing a line from the past to the present, where the impacts of these histories continue to shape the lives of Black women.

Decolonise Your Ears

The Story of Tituba



Shiann Croft - Playwright & Performer

Shiann Croft is a Toronto-based author, storyteller, playwright, and poet whose work explores themes of identity, resilience, and cultural connection. Her debut novel, *The Legend of Sincerely*, delves into the complexities of belonging and personal growth. In the theatrical realm, her recent play, *The Story of Tituba*, featured in the 4th Annual Decolonise Your Ears New Play Reading Festival, celebrates the resilience of Black Caribbean women while illuminating the historical journey of Tituba, the first woman accused of witchcraft during the 1692 Salem witch trials. As the founder and artistic director of *The Coven*, Shiann creates spaces that empower marginalized voices through artistic expression and community engagement. *The Coven* offers workshops, performances, and collaborative projects that encourage participants to explore their identities and share their stories. Through a multifaceted approach that blends storytelling, movement, and digital media, Shiann views art as an act of defiance, fostering deeper connections to self, community, and the earth.



Makambe K. Simamba - Director

Makambe K Simamba is a multiple award-winning playwright and actor, and a graduate of the University of Lethbridge. Select stage acting credits include *Three Sisters*, (*Soulpepper Theatre*, Dora Award-Winner for Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble and Outstanding Production), *The First Stone* (*New Harlem Productions*), *Serving Elizabeth* (*Thousand Islands Playhouse*), *GIANT* (*Ghost River Theatre*), *Winners and Losers* (*Chromatic Theatre*), *Bea* (*Sage Theatre*), *inVISIBLE* (*Handsome Alice Theatre*) and *SIA* (*Pyretic Productions*). On screen, she can be seen in projects such as *Star Trek: Strange New Worlds*, *Titans*, *True Dating Stories*, *Grand Army* and more. As a playwright, her solo work includes the multiple Dora Award-Winning *Our Fathers*, *Sons*, *Lovers* and *Little Brothers*, *A Chitenge Story* and *Makambe Speaks*. Her works in progress have been supported by *The Stratford Festival*, *Banff Playwright's Lab*, *Downstage Theatre*, *Alberta Theatre Projects*, *b current performing arts*, *Citadel theatre*, *Obsidian Theatre*, and *Green Thumb Theatre*. Makambe is *Zambian-born* and *Caribbean-raised*. Her intention is to be of service through her ability to tell stories.



Donna-Michelle St. Bernard - Dramaturg

Donna-Michelle St. Bernard aka *Belladonna the Blest* is an emcee, playwright and agitator. Her body of work includes the *54ology* (*The First Stone*, *Diggers*, *Cake*, *Sound of the Beast*, *A Man A Fish*, *Salome's Clothes*, *Gas Girls*, *Give It Up* and *The Smell of Horses*), opera libretti *Forbidden* (*Afarin Mansouri/Tapestry Opera*) and *Oubliette* (*Ivan Barbotin/Tapestry Opera*) works for young audiences (*Reaching For Starlight*, *Pirate and the Lone Voice*) and collaborations (*The Only Good Indian* with *Pandemic Theatre*, *501: Toronto in Transit* with *Theatre Passe Muraille*, *The House You Build* with *Gordon Tootoosis Nekaniwin Theatre*). She is co-editor with Yvette Nolan of the Playwrights Canada Press anthologies *Refractions: Solo* and *Refractions: Scenes*, as well as editor of *Indian Act: Residential School Plays*.

Red Beti Theatre

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DECOLONISE YOUR EARS NEW
PLAY FESTIVAL PRESENTS

LOST SCRIBE

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WRITTEN BY
SHAHARAH GAZNABBI

DIRECTED BY
NAVTEJ SANDHU

OCTOBER 5 TH 2024 7:00PM
THEATRE AQUARIUS
190 KING WILLIAM ST, HAMILTON



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Decolonise Your Ears
7pm Saturday October 5th

Lost Scribe

In a life of cosmically predetermined endings, who are we meant to blame for the way our lives have unfurled? Inspired by the story of Sheherazade from 1001 Arabian Nights, **Lost Scribe** is a Queer-Muslim exploration of what it means to create your own legacy. This quirky, poetic piece follows Imum, an intelligent, quick witted, whip smart Imam and Wazir who paints the narrative of Queenie, a young, spirited Sultana figuring out how to take on the reins of her life. She has so many stories buzzing around in her head, and therefore hires a series of Scribes to help her write them. Though, when none of these Male Sultans seem to understand the stories she wishes to tell, Imum offers her daughter, aptly named Scribe. This introverted writer who does not divulge much of herself must learn to work with this human embodiment of a Monster Energy drink of a Sultana.

Lost Scribe



Shaharah Gaznabbi - Playwright

ACTRA Actor, Playwright, and Comedian. They are pursuing a BFA in Playwriting & Devised Theatre in York University's Theatre program. Shaharah was part of this year's cohort for Nightwood Theatre's Innovators Program, as well as Tarragon Theatre's Young Playwrights Unit. They've graduated from Second City Training Centre's Conservatory Program, and they perform Sketch & Stand-up comedy around Toronto. Shaharah recently finished a full run of their solo-show "What Can Indian Look Like? Can It Look Caribbean?" at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, receiving The Neurodiverse Review's Birds of Paradise Theatre Emerging Talent Award.



Navtej Sandhu - Director

Toronto-based actor, born in the United States. Her most recent acting credits include Jin in The Caged Bird Sings directed by Rafeh Mahmud at the Aga Khan Museum and Karna in Mahabharata directed by Ravi Jain at the Barbican Centre in London, England. Navtej is also an experienced vocalist with credits including Devi Triptych by Red Beti Theatre and Jungle Book by Kidoons Productions. Navtej is currently an intermediate actor combatant and is now in the process of getting her advanced certification. She hopes to be able to tell her story and amplify the voices of communities that have had their voices stifled.



Mina Zaghari - Actor

Mina Zaghari (She/Her) is an Iranian-Canadian artist based in Toronto, blending acting, writing, devising, puppeteering, and contemporary dance. Despite holding a bachelor's degree in civil engineering, she followed her passion for acting, earning a graduate degree in art performance theatre from Humber College. Mina has collaborated with renowned companies such as Tarragon Theatre, Cahoots Theatre, Paprika Theatre, and Tirgan Theatre. She also directs and choreographs performances, championing physical theatre and the expressive power of the body's silent language.



Marium Masood - Actor

Marium is a self-taught multidisciplinary artist from Karachi, now residing in Toronto. She uses various mediums to delve deep into the chaos of being human. Marium's work ranges from performance art, contemporary dance, digital art, video production, music production, and DJ-ing. Marium has been awarded grants from the OAC & TAC to further her work and recently participated in Buddies in Bad Times Theatre's Emerging Creators Unit '22-23 and Tarragon Theatre's Greenhouse Residency and Festival '23-24. Marium is currently an artist in residence at Modern Times Theatre developing her one-woman show, Hot Girl Yoga.



Zorana Sadiq

Zorana is a Pakistani-Canadian actor, playwright, and classical musician whose work spans different types of performance from theatre, verbatim theatre, radio and television to chamber music, modern opera and new music. Zorana was Playwright-in-Residence at Crow's Theatre in 2020 where her first play MixTape premiered in 2021, subsequently performed at London's Grand Theatre, Here for Now in Stratford and most recently, at the National Arts Centre. The show received three Dora Mavor Moore Nominations. MixTape was also featured as an audio drama on CBC's PlayMe Podcast. During the pandemic, Zorana conducted extensive interviews and wrote the verbatim choral libretto, The Great Pause which was set to music by Suzy Wilde.

Red Beti Team

Radha S. Menon - Artistic Director & Dramaturg



Radha is a playwright, author and more; her plays, which have been produced at theatre festivals in Canada, the US, the UK and India. Red Beti Theatre, Hamilton's first feminist IBPOC theatre company, was founded by Menon in 2011. Menon is passionate about the representation of marginalised communities on stages and screens, believing that inclusion is imperative for all to feel valued within Canadian culture. Her current area of research focuses on the decolonisation of South Asian culture. She holds an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of Guelph and is based in Hamilton.

Alma Sarai Producer



Alma (she/her) is excited to be the Associate Producer for the Decolonise your Ears Festival this year. Other producing credits include Associate Producer and Executive Director for Tottering Biped Theatre's Shakespeare by Nature project. Alma is also an actor and arts advocate in the GTHA.

Manikham Marianne Vongboutdy - Stage Manager



Manikham (she/her) is a Laotian Canadian immigrant and artist from Laos. With an SHSM (Specialist High Skills Majors) in Arts and Cultures from St. Catharines Collegiate Institute and Vocational School and a student of Brock University's Honours Dramatic Arts program with a Concentration in Production and Designs, she has endeavoured to learn the ways of theatrical arts through the lens of backstage as a Stage Manager. She is excited and grateful to be able to join the Red Beti Theatre Company as a Stage Manager!

Ahla Arain - Media Intern



Ahla is an undergrad student at the University of Toronto, Double Majoring in Dramaturgy and Criminology with a Minor in Political Science. When she isn't writing papers, you can find her making posts for Red Beti Theatre! As the newest addition to the RBT Team, she's ecstatic to be part of it! She has worked for numerous clubs throughout high school and University, managing social media accounts, posts and websites, creating content, and more! She is happy to be able to use her eye for design to help RBT!

Zaheer-Abbas Janmohamed - Sound Designer



Zaheer-Abbas Janmohamed is Canadian musician who explores intersections of culture, identity, and community through sound. He is a classically trained tabla player and has performed solo and accompaniment sets across the country in a range of musical contexts, including classical, folk, and electronic. He has recorded and released music with several prominent artists and local bands, and is credited as a musical contributor in Mahabharata, which most recently toured to the Barbican Centre in London, UK in 2023.