

Red Beti Theatre Company Presents....

DEVI TRIPTYCH

By: Radha Menon



A STAGED WORKSHOP SHARING
AT MARILYN I. WALKER SCHOOL ARTS
Friday August 30th @ 6:00 pm - 10:00 pm



Canada Council
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du Canada

Red Beti Theatre
लाल बेटी
DIVERSE TALES | WOMEN'S VOICES



Hamilton

About The Plays

Devi Triptych is a reclamation of Goddess Culture brought to audiences in a suite of devised plays premiering in Ontario in the fall of 2025 that has been in development since 2019. India has an unbroken tradition of the Devi (Mother Goddess culture for over 5000 years. While the Olympian gods dislodged the ancient Minoan earth goddess, the tradition of Devi, celebrated in many forms (Durga, Kali, Saraswati) remains intact. Patriarchal social framework invested men with superiority and voice but the maternal feminine identification remains the psychic bedrock of Indian society although it's often not apparent on the surface.

Sita's Revenge is a devised, feminist adaptation of Ramayana through Sita's eyes and offers the eclectic experience of revisiting a culturally embedded figure while offering an alternate narrative for Sita so that all South Asian women can reclaim agency and identity.

Brick Lane Bargain is a love story with a feminist lens through the eyes of goddess Radha. This adaptation of 12th century Gitagovinda turns the narrative on its head while examining Krishna's questionable antics with a critical humanist lens.

A Pot Made of Sand is a dark musical celebrating India's most marginalised communities. In this retelling of a myth drenched in devastating gender-based violence, Parasuram finds his humanity.

These feminist adaptations of traditional Indian mythology will provide new narratives for the South Asian diaspora worldwide.



Playwright's Notes

400 years of British occupation changed the trajectory of India, which has culminated in the degradation of a rich, all-encompassing and tolerant Hindu culture.

Motivated by prudish Victorian morality and rigid patriarchy, foreign norms were imposed in India through sweeping legislation that also stripped all agency and power from women, while reinforcing India's own brand of patriarchy. This almost completely destroyed Devi culture.

When the British began the Colonisation of India:

There were eight types of marriage acceptable in Hindu tradition; only one of them still exists; heterosexual monogamy. The British outlawed the rest in the 1855 Hindu Marriage Act.

There was gender fluidity. 3rd gender communities were accepted, auspicious and a normal part of society. Today they live in poverty and must turn to sexwork or begging to survive.

Matrilineal and Matriarchal communities were the majority all over India. Today very few remain.

Sex wasn't taboo. Sex was seen as a way to connect with the Divine. Sex manuals Karma Sutra were commonplace. Same sex love was accepted and even celebrated as in the case of famous poets like that of Jamali-Kamali's tomb which is also known as the gay Taj Mahal. Traditional Hindu myths such as the intense erotic desire between Shiva and Vishnu/Mohini (Vishnu's female identity) and the birth of their son Ayyappan, the son of two men. Ayyappan can be described as the god of non-reproductive and non-normative desire. He used to be prominent in temples across the country until British disapproval. He is the only Hindu god whose temple is open to everyone regardless of caste, religion or belief.

Reproduction actually finds no relation to sexual pleasure in either ancient Hindu or mediaeval Islamic text. The injunction to reproduce does not exist in Kamasutra's treatise on erotics, which specifically uncouples desire from reproduction. The majority of Hindu goddesses don't have children because it means you plan to die and need one's own replacement. The emphasis on sex for reproduction that exists in the bible, which asks us to 'be fruitful and multiply' is absent from Vedic marriage rites that don't even mention procreation.

Dowries were paid to the bride's family. Colonisation changed this to the European mode and the Indian female foetus is aborted based on sex to avoid crippling dowries (\$100,000+) that became mandatory to marry a daughter. The Sex ratio is skewed with 12 million girls missing.

British colonists wrote the Indian Penal Code in 1833 relegated educational texts like Kamasutra while uplifting a 3rd century CE book Manusmriti filled with repressive laws that codified the caste system and gendered hierarchy where females are inferior and a sexual hierarchy in which sex is only for reproduction. This same text is still used today by right wing political leaders to further subjugate Dalits, women and 3rd gender folk. Today, the land that birthed the Kama Sutra has no sex education, coupled with free porn online while extreme gender-based violence and bride-selling is rampant

Hindu, Buddhist & Jain temples stood on the same shores with Christian churches and Islamic mosques in peace for more than a thousand years. Hinduism was an all encompassing, accepting of all philosophy and dogma, now India rages with its own brand of facism espousing Hindu fundamentalist view, this oxymoron is the current norm.

It was a loose allyship between various kingdoms but when the overlords were ousted by the independence movement in 1947, they carved up the nation in typical British style, creating bloody carnage and a history of sectarian war between India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Devi Triptych was developed to spark dialogue and to put Hindu culture back on its right path. Reclaiming Devi culture is the natural first step to oppose the regime of toxic heterosexual masculine culture that now dominates and mimics Western examples of populist propaganda.

Sita's Revenge

Cast & Crew

Goddess Laxmi.....Shreya Patel
Goddess Saraswati.....Navtej Sandhu
Goddess Durga.....Shaharah Ganzabbi

Sita.....Shreya Patel
Ram.....Anand Rajaram
Laxman.....Mirza Sarhan
Ravana.....Shaharah Ganzabbi
Surpanakha.....Navtej Sandhu

Pundit.....Shaharah Ganzabbi
Cop.....Mirza Sarhan
Draupadi.....Shaharah Ganzabbi

Director.....Dienye Waboso Amajor
Assistant Director.....Hayley King
Assistant Director.....Anand Rajaram
Dramaturg.....Anand Rajaram

Stage Manager.....Manikham Marianne Vongboutdy
Assistant Stage Manager.....Emma Marcy

Lighting Designer.....Zakk Milne
Sound Designer.....Zakk Milne
Costume Designer.....Nav Brar

Musician.....Hasheel Lodhia
Musician.....Zaheer Abbas
Dance Captain.....Navtej Sandhu
Choreographer.....Hayley King

Warning: Gender Based Violence, Mature Themes and Language.

Brick Lane Bargain

Cast & Crew

Goddess Laxmi.....Shreya Patel
Goddess Saraswati.....Navtej Sandhu
Goddess Durga.....Shaharah Ganzabbi

Radha.....Navtej Sandhu
Krishna.....Mirza Sarhan

Anita.....Shreya Patel
Yaz.....Shaharah Ganzabbi
Bobby Singh.....Anand Rajaram

Rukmini.....Shreya Patel
Masi.....Shaharah Ganzabbi
Mohini.....Mirza Sarhan

Director.....Priya Thomas
Assistant Director.....Hayley King
Assistant Director.....Anand Rajaram
Dramaturg.....Anand Rajaram

Stage Manager.....Manikham Marianne Vongboutdy
Assistant Stage Manager.....Emma Marcy

Lighting Designer.....Zakk Milne
Sound Designer.....Zakk Milne
Costume Designer.....Nav Brar

Musician.....Hasheel Lodhia
Musician.....Zaheer Abbas
Dance Captain.....Navtej Sandhu
Choreographer.....Hayley King
Choreographer.....Priya Thomas

Warning: Gender Based Violence, Mature Themes and Language.

SCHEDULE FOR THE NIGHT

(Approximately)

6:00 - 7:30 Sita's Revenge

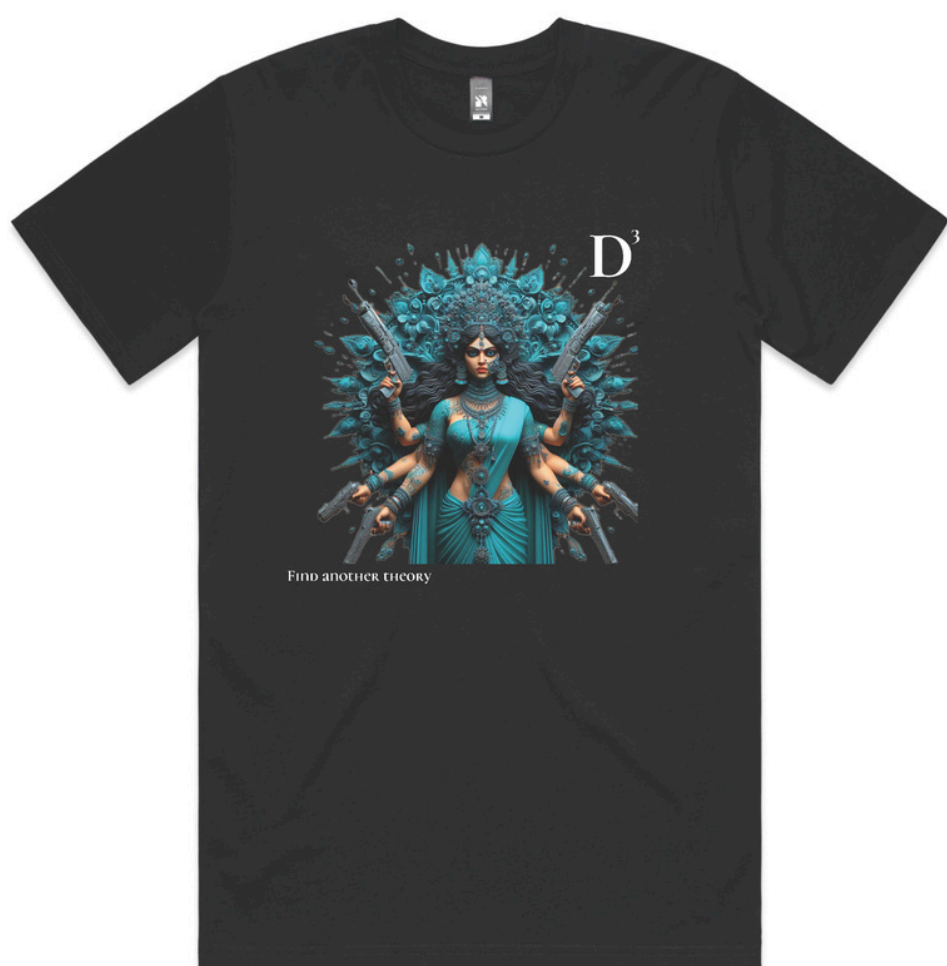
7:30 - 7:45 Intermission

7:45 - 8:45 Brick Lane Bargain

8:45 - 9:00 Intermission

9:00 - 10:00 A Pot Made of Sand

Run Time of All Shows: 3 hrs 30 mins



Buy A T-SHIRT HERE

A Pot Made of Sand

Cast & Crew

Goddess Laxmi.....Shreya Patel
Goddess Saraswati.....Navtej Sandhu
Goddess Durga.....Shaharah Ganzabbi

Persent Renuka.....Shaharah Ganzabbi
Past Renuka.....Shreya Patel

Parasuram.....Mirza Sarhan

Vetala.....Navtej Sandhu
Sanke & Dead.....Mirza Sarhan & Shreya Patel
Begger/Maha Rudra.....Navtej Sandhu

Director.....Anand Rajaram
Dramaturg.....Anand Rajaram

Stage Manager.....Manikham Marianne Vongboutdy
Assistant Stage Manager.....Emma Marcy

Lighting Designer.....Zakk Milne
Sound Designer.....Zakk Milne
Costume Designer.....Nav Brar

Musician.....Hasheel Lodhia
Musician.....Zaheer Abbas
Dance Captain.....Navtej Sandhu
Choreographer.....Hayley King

Warning: Flashing Lights, Gender Based Violence, Mature Themes and Language.

Artist Bios



Stateless in the UK until age seventeen, **Radha S. Menon** emigrated to Regina, Saskatchewan in 1995 where her singing and acting performance career abruptly ended, and her writing career began. Her plays, which have been produced at theatre festivals in Canada, the US, UK and India, include *Blackberry*, *Ganga's Ganja*, *Rukmini's Gold*, *Rise of the Prickly Pear*, *The Circus & The Washing Machine*. *Red Beti Theatre (RBT)*, 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. As such, Menon, a founding member of the *Coalition of Black and Racialised Artists (COBRA)*, also served on the board of directors for three years. Menon's area of expertise is women's rights, Dalit's rights and the decolonisation of theatre, its practices and spaces. Her current area of research focuses on the decolonisation of South Asian culture.

Winner of Toronto Fringe New Play Contest 2015, Hamilton Fringe Critics Choice Award 2015, 2020 *Sanhita Manch* National Playwriting Contest, Sultan Padamsee Playwriting contest 2020 & Herman Voaden Playwriting award 2021 Finalist, *Rukmini's Gold* was published by Scirocco Press in 2022. In addition, Menon is a filmmaker and celebrated production designer for art house films. She holds an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of Guelph and is based in Hamilton.

Sodienye Waboso Amajor is a Dora Nominated, Nigerian Actor, writer and performer who lives and works in Ontario. Previous acting credits include Puck in Shakespeare in Action's adaptation of "A Midsummer Night's Dream", Memory in Theatre Directs "Binti's Journey"* , Gigi in New Harlem's production, "Gas girls"* , Beka in Volcano Theatre's Africa Trilogy "Shine your Eye"* Luminato, June 2010 reprising her role as Beka in a Canstage/ Volcano theatre's production of "Another Africa" Canstage 2011 and Harriet Tubman in "The Power Of Harriet T" YPT 2013. Sodienye holds a Master's degree in Theatre and Performance studies from York University with a keen interest in African Performance Theories and their Development. Sodienye is currently pursuing a PhD in Theatre Dance and Performance studies at York U and is the Arts Mentorship Program Director at Suitcase in Point Multi Arts company.





Priya A. Thomas, PhD., is a dance/theatre historian, musician, and dancer/choreographer with a multidisciplinary critical practice that spans dance, music, performance, theatre, digital media, public art, and community-based projects. Her archival research on kinetic performances of the nonhuman/monster in transatlantic contexts of the long nineteenth century (1750-1913), has been recognized through publications in leading peer-reviewed journals, book chapters, international conferences, research awards, grants, and fellowships. Her catalog of artistic output is polyvocal and culturally diverse, spanning a range of practices within dance (Bharata Natyam, flamenco, modern/contemporary), work as a musician/songwriter, output includes academic chapters and public talks, cinematic essays, video/film documentary projects, choreography for stage and screen, songwriting projects (six full-length recordings released through recording labels in Canada and internationally), compositions for theatre/film, performance art projects and experimental sound art. She is currently working on her first book, (a SSHRC-funded scholarly monograph on monsters in theatrical performance), a Canada-Council funded fictohistorical performance project entitled, *The Last of the Rhinestone Cowboys: Expo 67's Sunset Years*, and a new, full-length recording as a musician/songwriter. Until June 2021, she served as a tenure- stream assistant professor in the BA, MA, MFA, and PhD programs in the department of dance at Texas Woman's University, and until July 2024, as Book Review Editor of the peer-reviewed theatre journal, *Theatre Research in Canada* (University of Toronto Press). She is Assistant Professor in the Department of Dramatic Arts at Brock University.

Anand Rajaram is an improviser, actor, playwright, director, musician, teacher & puppeteer. Recently, he was in *A Public Reading Of An Unproduced Screenplay About The Death Of Walt Disney* (Outside The March/Soulpepper), *Mahabharata* (Shaw Festival), *Uncle Vanya* (Crow's/Mirvish), *Buffoon* by Anosh Irani & *Mustard* by Kat Sandler (Tarragon, Dora award for both), adapted/performed Rohinton Mistry's *The Scream*, (SummerWorks, Best Production), and has performed at Second City, Stratford, VideoCabaret, and others. He's an accomplished film & tv performer, with notable roles in *I Like Movies*, *Suits*, *Men With Broome* (TV series), and others, as well as a voiceover artist for video games & cartoons. He directed *As You Like It* (Canadian Stage's Dream in High Park), *Low Pay Don't Pay* (George Brown theatre school), and 3 Penguin Audiobooks (*Swimming in the Monsoon Sea* & *Mansions of the Moon* by Shyam Selvadurai, *Tell Me Pleasant Things About Immortality* by Lindsay Wong), and narrated novels, including *Kill The Mall* by Pasha Malla and *Tell It To The Trees* by Anita Rau Badami. He is artistic director of @N@f@N@ (theatre) and Cardboard Dreams (digital media). Social media: HRH Anand Rajaram.





Shaharah Gaznabbi (they/them) is an 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. They've recently finished a 5 city tour of Kidoons' "Jungle Book", and made their television debut playing the character of Noor in Season 3 of CBC's Run the Burbs. Shaharah is so grateful to be part of the 4th Annual DYE Festival!!

Mirza Sarhan is a multilingual emerging actor/filmmaker currently based between Toronto and Abu Dhabi. He is a graduate of the Acting program at The National Theatre School of Canada. Mirza refers to himself as a 'Third Culture Kid' having been born in India, and raised in Saudi Arabia before moving to Croatia. He is a part of the Research and Creation Lab with the Centre of Arts & Social Innovation; Mirza, with South-Asian and Middle-Eastern heritage, is passionate about telling stories that challenge Islamophobia and Xenophobia while fostering collaborative spaces for his community. He has worked in film, theatre, and dance across Asia, Europe, and the Middle East.



Navtej Sandhu is a 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/Satyavati 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. Navtej's goal is to continue to create and be a part of projects that she believes in, and that speak to those communities.

"Any form of art is a form of power; it has impact, it can affect change - it can not only move us, it makes us move."- Ossie Davis



Shreya Patel is a model-turned actress, filmmaker, writer, and a mental health advocate. She's the graduate of the Second City Conservatory and can be seen perform improv and sketch comedy around the City of Toronto. Shreya has appeared in lead roles in numerous films and theatre productions. Her first film role in "Vivid" helped garner the film multiple award nominations, while her feature film "Strangers In A Room" achieved acclaim by winning the Audience Choice Award at the prestigious 23rd Reelworld International Film Festival. Her directorial debut, the documentary "Girl Up", about domestic human trafficking, was partnered with Toronto International Film Festival and Civic Action Summit. During this pandemic, she has gathered 66 countries on 6 continents and made a documentary called "Unity" showcasing the plight of the human spirit. It was the closing film at Munich International Film Festival. Following the release of "Unity", Shreya remotely directed a music video called Freedom Dance by Faynyx with got over 1.2 million views on YouTube. Rolling Stone India reported about it. Acknowledged by Global Affairs Canada for her mental health advocacy, she's been part of the Canadian Screen Award winning "Bell Let's Talk" campaign, elevating conversations around mental illness. She is an honoree of Forbes 30 Under 30, Top 100 Most Powerful Women of Canada, RBC's Top 25 Canadian Immigrant Awards, and Women's Achiever Award. DissDash named her "Top 50 Coolest South Asians of 2021" along with Priyanka Chopra, Kamala Harris, and Hasan Minaj.

Hayley King is a Canadian Trinidadian emerging actor, director, choreographer and playwright based in Ontario. She is a recent Graduate of the Brock Dramatic arts program with a concentration in performance. Some of Hayley Brock's credits include, Molly (M) in the Mysterious Mind of Molly McGuillicuddy, Ella in A Vampire Story, St. Monica/ pestilence in the Last Days of Judas Iscariot. Co-director / Choreographer along side Gyllian Raby in the production of Stupid Fucking bird. Director/ Choreographer of a One Act Play Festival adaptation of Vitals by Rosamond. Hayley aims to display, act, and experience stories beyond her own understanding in hopes of dismantling the single story narrative. Through play, ongoing exploration, and curiosity, she aims to create a space where audiences can engage with and understand the people whom they share the world with.



There's no greater agony than bearing an untold story
- Maya Angelou

- P.s Me and agony don't really vibe

Zakk Milne is a recent graduate of Brock University's Dramatic Arts Program, becoming one of the first to complete a concentration in Performance as well as Production and Design. Some of Zakk's credits at Brock include: Bailiff/Mathias of Galilee in *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot* (2021), Lighting Operator for *Red Bike* (2022), Henry in *Bound to Happen* (2022), Darvell/Band in *A Vampire Story* (2023), Loo in *People in a Graveyard Among Others At 3:00 AM* (2023), Conrad Understudy/Assistant Sound Designer for *Stupid F*cking Bird* (2023), Gramps/Sound Designer/Composer in *All That Makes Us* (2023), Jer/Physio in *The Mysterious Mind of Molly McGuillicuddy* (2024), and Knorowix/Sound Designer/Composer in *Truth and Other Things: A Journey Through Alitheia* (2024). Some of Zakk's credits outside of Brock University include Carpenter/Sound Operator/Lighting Technician for *1812* (The Foster Festival, 2022), Sound Operator for *The Foursome* (The Foster Festival, 2022), Sound Operator/Lighting Operator for *Danny and Delilah* (The Foster Festival, 2023), Sound Designer/Sound Operator/Lighting Operator/Head Carpenter for *Outlaw* (The Foster Festival, 2023), and Sound Designer/Sound Operator/Lighting Operator/Head Carpenter for *Jenny's House Of Joy* (The Foster Festival, 2023), Technical Director for *From Ship to Shore* (The Foster Festival, 2024), Technical Director for *Those Movies* (The Foster Festival, 2024), Technical Director for *Whit's End* (The Foster Festival, 2024), Technical Director for *The Melville Boys* (The Foster Festival, 2024). Zakk is currently the Technical Director at The Foster Festival. Outside of theatre, Zakk makes music with his band *Almost Through April*.



Nav Brar. Born in Burlington, but I am currently a Brock University student studying in the Dramatic Arts Program, focusing on creating and organizing wardrobes and props for theatre. I started in theatre in high school and found my current love of props and wardrobe at Brock by helping with shows presented there and at other companies like the Foster Festival.



Manikham Marianne Vongboutdy (she/her) is a Laotian Canadian immigrant and artist from a small, yet magnificent country from Southeast Asia called Laos. With an SHSM (Specialist High Skills Majors) in Arts and Cultures from St. Catharines Collegiate Institute and Vocational School and being a student of Brock University's Honours Dramatic Arts program with a Concentration in Production and Designs, Marianne has endeavoured herself to learn the ways of theatrical arts through the lens of backstage as a Stage Manager. Over the years, she has stage managed award winning productions such as *Unwritten*, *Nothing Left Undead*, *Surviving Molly Morgan* (2016-2022). She has also stage managed the Canada Summer Games Opening & Closing Ceremonies (2023), the DSBN NTS (National Theatre School) Drama Festival twice (2020-2022) and *Piece of Me* at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in Scotland (2024). During her time at Brock University, she has managed; *Bound To Happen* (2023), *All That Makes Us* (2023), *The Mysterious Mind of Molly McGillicuddy* (2024) & *Truth and Other Things: A Journey Through Alitheia* (2024). She has also worked with local theatre companies in St. Catharines like *Carousel Players* as an; Marketing Assistant, Production Assistant and Assistant Stage Manager and *Suitcase In Point* as a Production Assistant. Manikham is excited and grateful to be able to join the Red Beti Theatre Company as a Stage Manager and work on the *Devi Triptych* shows this summer.

To her, art is more than just entertainment. It is education. A way to preserve our culture and contribute to who we are.

Emma Marcy is delighted to be working with Red Beti Theatre for the first time on *The Devi Triptych*. Her past Assistant Stage Management credits include *Nobody's Children* (Yellow Door Theatre Project 2022) and *Liars at a Funeral* (Blyth Festival 2023). Stage Management: *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown* (Yellow Door Theatre Project 2023), *Girls and Boys*, *The Pomegranate Project*, *Spit* (Here For Now Theatre Company 2022). Emma has also worked as an actor, starring in a series of videos for the educational platform *Brightspace* (2022). As a current student of Brock University's Dramatic Arts program, she looks forward to the upcoming year, where she will be Assistant Stage Managing *Scorched* (Fall 2024) and performing in *Metamorphosis* (Winter 2025) at the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts.



Special Thanks



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