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**Your place to eat,
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Tuesday - Friday 11AM - 4PM
Saturday 12PM - 6PM



The SPINSTERS

By Christine Lesiak & Tara Travis

*Presented by Small Matters Productions
Recommended for ages 14A
RUN TIME Approximately 75 minutes, with no intermission*

VÁSTÁDUS EANA THE ANSWER IS LAND

February 18, 2024 at 7:30PM



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Small Matters creates using an interdisciplinary, collaborative, and horizontal power structure. We acknowledge traditional theatrical crediting structure does not fully reflect the interdepartmental collaborative nature of our work.

Creative Team

Conceived, written and performed by Christine Lesiak & Tara Travis

Directed by Jan Selman

Movement and choreography by Ainsley Hillyard

Puppetry direction by Jeny Cassady

Dramaturgy by Suzie Martin

Production management, technical direction and stage management by Kat Evans

Assistant stage management by Andrea Handal Rivera*

Head concept and costume design by Adam Dickson with Ian Walker

Set and prop design by Ian Walker with Adam Dickson

Mechanical design and special effects by Ian Walker

Puppet and wig design by Dusty Hagerud with Steven Snider

Lighting design by Nico Weismiller, adapted for the Westbury by Kat Evans and Simon Wicks

Original composition and sound design by Michael Caron

Additional music by Lindsey Walker

Lighting Operator Simon Wicks

Sound/Video Operator Liv Bunge

Accessibility Consultant Brooke Leifso

ASL interpretation by Diane De Andrade, Lacey Hews, and Robyn Lavender



Costume Technical Team

Chanelle Picazo – Dye House Designer/Sewer

Kevin Kriesz – Mock-up Sewer/Corsetry

Martha Pandelo Salgado – Sewer

Valentine Valor – Sewer

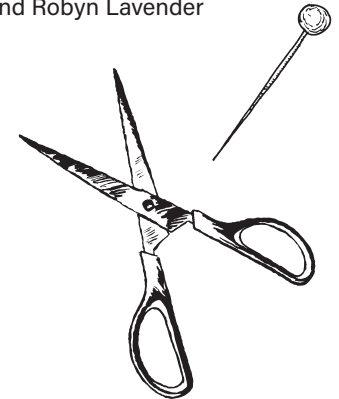
Renda Rico – Sewer

Daian Tang Le – Sewing Assistant

Nita Bowerman – Sewing Assistant

Anna Pan – Sewing Assistant

Graphic illustration by Kurt Firla



*The participation of these Artists are arranged by permission of Canadian Actors' Equity Association under the provisions of the Dance Opera Theatre Policy (DOT).

Additional Credits

We acknowledge the invaluable contributions of:

Creation workshop directors Suzie Martin and Jeny Cassady

Dramaturgy and mentorship support from: David van Belle, through the Alberta Playwrights

Network and RBC Playwrights Mentorship Program

Good Woman Dance Collective's Creative Incubator

Character development workshoping with Deanna Fleysher and Jan Henderson

Early movement consultation with Jake Hasteley

Puppet show production assistance by Carson Gervais

BASIC TRAINING

by Kahlil Ashanti

April 16 - 27, 2024

"ELECTRIFYING"

- DAILY MAIL

"KAHLIL IS A TERRIFIC, VERSATILE ACTOR"
- LONDON EVENING STANDARD

"A VERSATILE DYNAMO"
- VARIETY

"HILARIOUS AND
ENGAGING"
- NY TIMES CRITICS PICK

"FLAWLESS, DYNAMIC,
UTTERLY CAPTIVATING"
- EDINBURGH EVENING NEWS

"A MIND BLOWING
COMBINATION OF
AMAZING TALENT"
- MONTREAL GAZETTE

"HE MOVED ME FROM
TEARS TO LAUGHTER
IN SECONDS"
- BROADWAYBABY.COM



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About Small Matters Productions

Since 2008, the independent theatre collective Small Matters Productions has been captivating theatre audiences with their distinctive and imaginative productions. Based in Amiskwaciwâskahikan on Treaty 6 lands and Métis homelands of Métis Nation of Alberta region 4, colonially known as Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, they specialise in creating and performing original works of physical comedy and interactive theatre.

We have created 9 original full length shows including the touring hit interactive comedy, *For Science!* (2018-24). From radical adaptations of classic stories like *The Spinsters* (2023, The Shadbolt Centre for the Arts & Fringe Theatre) and *The Space Between Stars* (2023, SkirtsAfire Festival) to original works like *Over Her Dead Body* (2017, Fringe Theatre Season), and quirky interactive experiences (*900 Seconds*, Found Festival 2015 and *The Lost Sock Rescue Society*, 2022-24) we deliver ingenious, unforgettable experiences that reflect life in a funhouse mirror, and walk the knife-edge between laughter and tears.

www.smallmatters.ca | IG @smallmattersP | Facebook @smallmatters

Playwrights' Notes

The Spinsters: Birth of a Too Tall Tale

Christine and Tara here – dynamic duo and chosen sisters! Our story began on the summer Fringe Festival circuit back in 2010, and ever since, we've been fans of each other's work. Fast forward to a warm summer evening in 2017 when Ian Walker, the mastermind behind *The Spinsters'* mechanical designs, threw out a gem: "You two tall ladies together make a stunning visual impact. How about gliding around a stage in giant, magical dresses? I could totally build them!" Well, needless to say, we were all in. But, wait, what's the story?

That brilliant idea marinated in the back of our minds until... cue dramatic music... the fall of the-year-that-shall-not-be-named (2020 – shh!). Picture this: a cabin in the mountains, a weekend getaway, bonding over our awkward youths. Too tall, awkward, no clothes fit – feeling more like "stepsister" material than "Cinderella" material. And it hit us - we were the Ugly Stepsisters.

This idea of flipping the script and exploring Cinderella's tale from the Ugly Stepsisters' perspective intrigued us. Where are they now? What's their deal? Were they really evil, vain, and vindictive? How did they become that way? Imagine them as middle-aged ladies navigating life's twists and turns. The questions were endless, and the answers, well, they got our creative juices flowing.

Thanks to our funders and a long list of supporters, we assembled our dream team of designers from across Western Canada to join us on a three-year rollercoaster of creation, research, and development. We've cooked up new techniques and gadgets, sprinkled in some magical realism, added scoops of raw ugliness, thrown in a gallon of shadow puppetry, and, voila, the modern Fairy Tale is restored to its original status of Cautionary Tale, albeit with a timely contemporary twist.

It's been one wild ride, and we can't wait for the conversations to follow.

Enjoy the magic!
Christine Lesiak & Tara Travis



Christine Lesiak (she/her) - co-creator/writer/performer - is an Edmonton/ Treaty 6 Territory based theatre artist, and co-founder of Small Matters Productions (est. 2007). She specializes in clown, devising, interactive performance, and physical storytelling. Christine holds a Masters of Fine Arts in Drama from the University of Alberta, a BSc in Physics. She is co-creator of and performer in Small Matters' nine full-length shows, including the multimedia spectacle, *The Space Between Stars* (2023, SkirtsAfire Mainstage), the interactive comedy hit, *For Science!* (2018-23). She is a puppeteer on the shadow puppetry films *The Wish/Le Voeu* (2021, Flying Canoë Volant Festival) and *The Ride/Le Menege* (2022, Flying Canoë Volant Festival), and the Director of the Play the Fool, Western Canada's only festival of clown theatre and physical comedy. Watch for upcoming *The Lost Sock Rescue Society* at SkirtsAfire Festival 2024, and FOR SCIENCE! returns to the 2024 Edmonton Fringe. www.christinelesiak.com



Tara Travis ((she/her) - co-creator/writer/performer - is a third-generation settler on the unceded ancestral territory of the Coast Salish peoples, in particular the *Sḵw̓xwú7mesh* (Squamish), *Səlilwətaʔ/Selilwitulh* (Tsilil-Waututh) and *xʷməθkʷəy̓əm* (Musqueam) Nations, colonially known as Vancouver. She is a theatre maker-actor-writer-puppeteer known for her prowess as a solo performer. Throughout her career, she has co-created and performed in over 30 original plays. She may be remembered for her work with Monster Theatre, notably *Til Death: The Six Wives of Henry VIII* and *Who Killed Gertrude Crump?* (nominated for 4 Jessie Richardson Theatre Awards, including Best Actor, Female, also an audio play available at Monster Theatre: The Podcast). Her solo works include *Fluffy 10th Street: Confessions of a Dirty Puppet*, *Lavinia: A Modern Fairy Tale of Gigantic Proportions*, *Searching for Dick: A Paranormal Comedy*, and *The Unfortunate Ruth*. She's stoked to be returning to Edmonton Fringe this Summer with a ridiculous new Monster Theatre show, *Erika the Red*. www.taratras.com



Jan Selman - (she/her) - director - is a theatre director, community arts animator, and professor at University of Alberta. She was the first Artistic Director of Catalyst Theatre and during those years the company grew from a part time, project-based organization to a year-round professional company creating 15 productions and community-based theatre projects per year. Recent work includes co-directing *This is Canada* (Ribbon Rouge ArtSpace Theatre, 2023) and *Lwanda Magere*, an award-winning adaptation of a traditional story with 25 Kenyan performers. Other recent work includes premieres of *Meg Braem's Chrysothemis* and *Colleen Murphy's Bright Burning*. Most recently she directed a creation process with ArtSpace Theatre of the Nigerian tale *Ogboingba Tries to Change Her Fate*, which will premiere at KinFest, a new festival of African, Caribbean and Black artists in May 2024.



Ainsley Hillyard - choreographer - is an Amiskwaciwāskahikan (Edmonton)-based artist of settler descent. She is a choreographer, performer and educator who works in contemporary dance and theatre. Her work is immersed in the curiosities and connections between these two forms. As an independent artist, Ainsley has worked with many theatre companies and received numerous Sterling nominations and awards for her performances and choreographies. Select choreography credits include; *The Sound of Music* (Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre/Citadel Theatre) *Deafy* by Chris Dodd (Citadel Theatre), *Almost a Full Moon* (Citadel Theatre), Movement Director for *Jane Eyre* adapted by Erin Shields (Citadel Theatre), *Mr. Burns: A post electric play*, (You are Here theatre and Blarney Productions), *Cardiac Shadow*, (Northern Light Theatre/Good Women Dance Collective) and assistant choreographer for *Hadestown* and *Peter Pan Goes Wrong* (Citadel Theatre).



Jeny Cassady - director of puppetry - Jeny received her classical theatre training at the University of Victoria and has worked in live theatre in Victoria, Calgary, and Vancouver. She has trained and experienced great success as a puppeteer in the film and television industry. Her work has been featured on stage at Axis Theatre, Chemainus Theatre, Bard on the Beach, and The Arts Club Theatre where she won a Jessie Theatre Award for her puppet direction in *Hand To God*, as well as on the web for *Nokia*, and in numerous independent films including the award winning feature hit *Sunflower Hour*. Jeny's puppet performances span many styles of puppetry, and can be seen on film and television productions including *The Barbarian and the Troll*, *Muppets Wizard of Oz*, *The Haunting Hour*, *Alien vs. Predator 2*, *Turner and Hooch*, *The Hole*, *Marmaduke*, *Fringe*, *Stargate SG-1*, and *Falling Skies* among others.



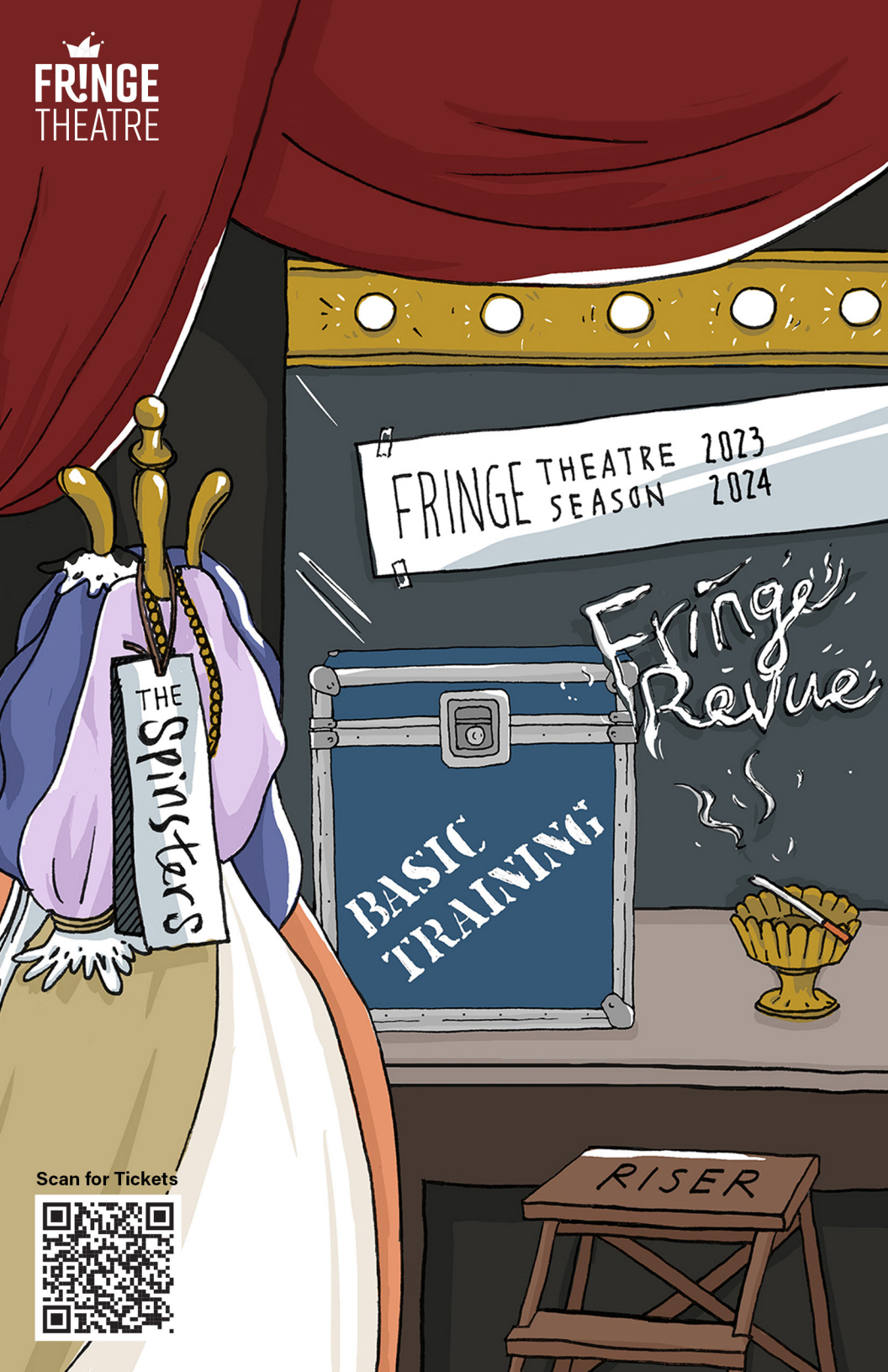
Suzie Martin - dramaturg - Suzie Martin is the Artistic Director of Theatre Projects Manitoba. She is a member artist of Small Matters Productions, and director/dramaturg of their shows *Over Her Dead Body* and *The Object of Constellations*. She has been creating, directing, and teaching theatre for over a decade. She holds an MFA in Directing from the University of Alberta and a BA-Honours in Acting from the University of Winnipeg. Suzie directs and develops new work in a variety of styles including physical comedy without words, site-specific interactive installation, workshops and premieres of new scripted plays, and collaborative devising processes. She also has a passion for interpreting pre-existing texts through production whether that be through adapting non-theatrical source material for the stage or an iconoclastic interpretation of a classic. She was nominated for a Sterling Award for Outstanding Direction for *Fetch* and holds a teaching award from the University of Alberta.



Kat Evans (she/her) - production manager/technical director/stage manager/lighting design adaptation - is an industry award nominated freelance professional Artist, Designer, Creator, Producer, PM/TD, Technician and Stage Manager based in Amiskwaciwāskahikan (Edmonton, Alberta) on Treaty 6 Territory, Metis Regional Council 4. She holds a BFA in Theatre Design from the University of Alberta, and is the Co-Founder of The October People Productions. She specializes in practical SFX and immersive design for theatre, film, and escape room experiences. Recent credits include: PM/TD & Mentor for RISER Edmonton (Common Ground Arts Society, annual), PM/TD and Lighting Designer for *Freaky Green Eyes* (Screaming Mantis in assoc. with Punctuate! Theatre and Fringe Theatre), Costume and Props Associate for *Nevermore* (Catalyst Theatre, Vertigo Theatre), PM/TD & Lighting/Costume/Makeup/Set/Props/SFX Design for *Dead Centre of Town* (Catch the Keys Production, annual). 2023 Elizabeth Sterling Haynes Award nominee: Outstanding Lighting Design (*Freaky Green Eyes*) and Outstanding Individual Achievement in Production (Production Manager).



Andrea Handal Rivera (she/they | ella/e) - assistant stage manager - is a queer Salvadoran stage manager currently based in Amiskwaciwāskahikan in Treaty 6 Territory. They are passionate about facilitating the creation of live performance art as a medium to connect cultures, voices, and lived experiences. They are delighted to be part of the amazing team of Spinsters! Select credits: *A Christmas Carol*, *Peter Pan Goes Wrong*, *The Garneau Block* (Citadel Theatre); *The Hooves Belonged to the Deer* (In Arms Theatre Collective), *El Funeral* (Diaspora Diaries Collective), *Boy Trouble* (Amoris Projects); ASMR, *Convergence* (Good Women Dance Collective); *Grand Ghosts* (Grand Theatre); *I Don't Even Miss You* (Tiny Bear Jaws).



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Adam Dickson - (he/him) - head concept/costume designer - creates on the unceded territories of the x̱w̱məθḵw̱əy̱əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səiḻwətaʔṯ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. He has a degree in Stagecraft from Douglas College and a Bachelor of Fashion Design from Kwantlen University. A Fashion Designer with 15 years experience as a Senior Technical Designer for Aritzia and Oak+Fort and now as the Director of Technical Design at Aritzia where he is able to mentor at both the professional and University levels. He specialises in Theatrical Costume, Drag Reveals, Character Creation, Wardrobe Styling and Creative Direction. He has been privileged to work in Dance, Theatre and Film; most notably Ballet BC, Tony n' Tina's Wedding, Leo Awarding Winning "Looking Back" and as the personal Costume Designer for Tara Travis. He wishes to thank his brilliant Costume team who created these magical costumes and this inspiring team of collaborative Artists.



Ian Walker - mechanical and structural designer/set & props/special effects - is an innovative theatre collaborator, problem solver, and professional engineer and mechanical designer with over 30 years experience in metal and structural design. He was part of the small team who redesigned and maintained the automation of the chandelier used in Phantom of the Opera at the Pantages Theatre in Toronto. Since relocating to Edmonton in 2015, Ian has designed and built innovative theatre effects, mechanical props, and installations including: The Spinsters' spinning dresses and practical lighting effects (2021-23); a casket that transforms into a fully set tea-table (Over Her Dead Body, 2017, Edmonton Fringe Theatre Presentation Series), actor levitation mechanisms (Dead Centre of Town, 2015-19, Catch the Keys Productions). He is co-creator and performer in Small Matters' For Science! (2018-24), and a designer and filmmaker in the shadow puppetry work The Wish/Le Voeu (2021, Flying Canoë Volant Festival) and The Ride/Le Menege (2022, Flying Canoë Volant Festival). He is a filmmaker and film editor.



Dusty Hagerud - lead puppet, wig and make-up designer and builder - Dusty Hagerud originates from Fernie, B.C. and is a member of the Ktunaxa/Kinbasket people of the Lower East Kootenays. Creative Director and founder of Color Sound Lab Puppet Makers, Dusty has been performing and designing in Puppetry for 20 years in Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver working with the Red Smarteez, Carnival Sized Cinnamon Hearts Marionette Troupe, Moth Orbit Object Theatre, Flying Pig Puppet Co., Skelemo Productions, The Odd-Lot Puppet Company, Axis Theatre, Monster Theatre, Anachronism Pictures, The Field Productions, Joi Productions, Blatant Studios, Serscha Studios/Oats Productions, Dim Mak Records, UBC Medical - Education Media, Artaban Productions, Spotted Fawn Productions, CBC, Telus Communications, and Nickelodeon TV.



Steven Snider (he/him) - puppet designer and builder - Steven is an Arts programmer & activator. He works with Color Sound Lab, assisting in puppet design & fabrication for theatre, film, television & video. His passion for the Arts has led to 14 years with the West Vancouver Community Arts Council, connecting community through the Arts. A lifetime lover of the fantastical & absurd, Steven is at home in the exciting world of puppetry.



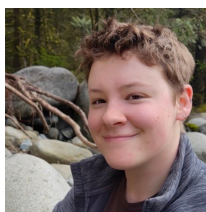
Nico Weismiller - (he/they) - lighting designer - is a Vancouver based designer and technical wizard. Painting with light, Nico tends to combine the surreal and the realistic to create engaging environments for each new show. There's always at least one hidden aspect used in a show to uplift the story, even if you don't notice it at the forefront of your mind while watching. After the last couple years with theatre being locked down, it's been tricky to create art. As a result it's extremely exciting to be a part of the creation process of a show again and to be working with a wonderful team. Recent credits for Nico include: Men Express Their Feelings; Dissection of a Mixed Heritage Woman; The Wolves; Love/Sick; Deep Into Darkness; and Dry Land.



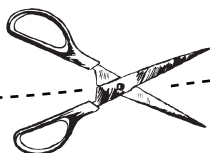
Michael Caron - composer/sound designer - has been working as a sound designer, audio engineer and composer for theatre, art installation and live performance since 1995. With a passion for collaborative theatre, he has a focus on site specific work and the use of interactive audio and sensor technology to activate non-traditional performance spaces. He is a Graduate of the University of Alberta BFA in Technical Theatre program. THEATRE CREDITS (Selected): Sound designer and composer "The Object of Constellations" (University of Alberta); Sound designer and composer "Dracula" (Studio Theatre); Live mixer "STRIKE! The Musical" and "Cinderella"(Rainbow Stage); Live mixer "Vigilante" (Catalyst Theatre); Associate sound designer and live mixer "The Invisible: Agents of Ungentlemanly Warfare" (Catalyst Theatre); Sound designer, composer and operator "Dead Center of Town" (Catch the Keys Productions, annual).



Simon Wicks - lighting operator/lighting design adaptation - Wicksey graduated from the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama in 1998 with a BA in Stage Management, and has continued to travel the World as a survival instructor, nightclub bouncer, bodyguard, stage manager, show control engineer, live event technician, photographer, operations manager, lighting designer and artist. He currently has the great pleasure being resident technician at the Arts Barns as well as Site Technical Director for the Edmonton Fringe Festival every Summer where he continues to solve puzzles and fail better.



Liv Bunge (she/they) - sound/video operator - is an emerging Albertan Freelance Production Manager and Technical Director with a love for new works. They are passionate about creating anti-oppressive and accessible workspaces. The abundance of the amiskwaciwâskahikan (Edmonton) Theatre community has allowed her to explore many of the local spaces and has kept them engaged all year long. She is looking forward to continuing to learn, work and grow in this industry.



The Funders and Partners that made The Spinsters possible:



Conseil des arts du Canada Canada Council for the Arts

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