

VOLCANO



CENTURY SONG

PROJECT OVERVIEW



"Brilliant...An unforgettable multimedia journey"
-NOW Magazine, Toronto

"An incredible feat of dance, music and theatricality"
-Vancouver Presents

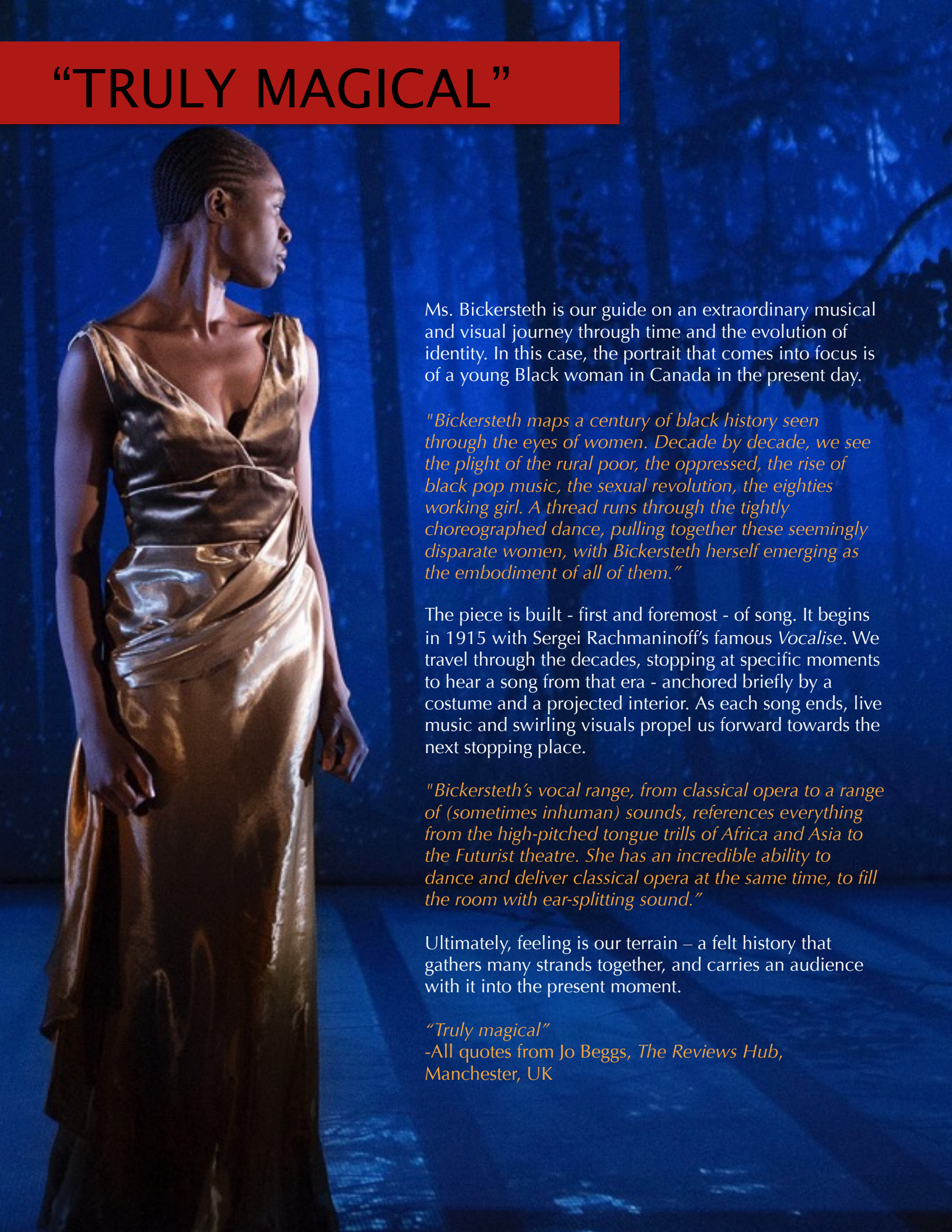
Century Song is a live performance hybrid created by powerful Canadian soprano Neema Bickersteth, and award-winning collaborators Ross Manson (direction) and Kate Alton (choreography).

Loosely inspired by Alice Walker's *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens* and Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*, the show imagines a different way to negotiate history. Through the eyes and voice of our soprano protagonist – a modern day "everywoman" – we move through the past century, carried forward by music, dance and animated visual art. In the words of Ottawa reviewer Brie Mcfarlane, *Century Song* goes "beyond what mere words could encompass."

This unique show features music by some of the most significant composers of the past 100 years: Sergei Rachmaninoff, Olivier Messiaen, John Cage and Georges Aperghis, along with an original vocalise by Canadian Reza Jacobs. The projections by Germany's fettFilm bring to life major art movements of the 20th century. Both whimsical and riveting, *Century Song* is a wordless chronicle of the age, built from art.

We invite you to view the production [trailer](#), [photographs](#), [reviews](#) and [interactive audience guide](#).
Century Song runs 1 hour with no interval.

"TRULY MAGICAL"

A woman with short, braided hair is shown in profile, looking towards the right. She is wearing a long, sleeveless, shimmering gold dress that drapes elegantly. The background is a dark, blue-toned forest at night, with trees and foliage visible in the shadows. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the dress and the woman's features.

Ms. Bickersteth is our guide on an extraordinary musical and visual journey through time and the evolution of identity. In this case, the portrait that comes into focus is of a young Black woman in Canada in the present day.

"Bickersteth maps a century of black history seen through the eyes of women. Decade by decade, we see the plight of the rural poor, the oppressed, the rise of black pop music, the sexual revolution, the eighties working girl. A thread runs through the tightly choreographed dance, pulling together these seemingly disparate women, with Bickersteth herself emerging as the embodiment of all of them."

The piece is built - first and foremost - of song. It begins in 1915 with Sergei Rachmaninoff's famous *Vocalise*. We travel through the decades, stopping at specific moments to hear a song from that era - anchored briefly by a costume and a projected interior. As each song ends, live music and swirling visuals propel us forward towards the next stopping place.

"Bickersteth's vocal range, from classical opera to a range of (sometimes inhuman) sounds, references everything from the high-pitched tongue trills of Africa and Asia to the Futurist theatre. She has an incredible ability to dance and deliver classical opera at the same time, to fill the room with ear-splitting sound."

Ultimately, feeling is our terrain – a felt history that gathers many strands together, and carries an audience with it into the present moment.

"Truly magical"

-All quotes from Jo Beggs, *The Reviews Hub*, Manchester, UK

COMPOSERS & VISUAL ARTISTS



1912: Sergei Rachmaninoff (Russia)

1935: Olivier Messiaen (France)

1950: John Cage (USA)

1978: Georges Aperghis (Greece)

2014: Reza Jacobs (Canada)



Cubism: Kathleen Munn (Canada)

German Expressionism: Kathe Kollwitz (Germany)

Quebec Automatism: Marcel Barbeau (Canada)

Pop Art: fettFilm (after Warhol) (USA/Germany)

Video Art: fettFilm (Germany)

ARTISTIC TEAM



Created by:

Neema Bickersteth: soprano

Kate Alton: choreographer

Ross Manson: director

Artistic Team:

Cameron Davis: Associate video designer

Charlotte Dean: costume designer

fettFilm, Germany: projection design

Kaitlin Hickey: Associate video designer

Reza Jacobs: composer

Camellia Koo: set designer

Jeremy Mimmagh: Associate video designer

Gregory Oh: pianist

Rebecca Picherack: lighting designer

Debashis Sinha: percussions & computer

ABOUT VOLCANO



Top L to R: *Peggy Pickit Sees the Face of God*, *Shine Your Eye*, *The Four Horsemen Project*.
Bottom L to R: *Infinity*, *A Synonym for Love*, *Goodness*.

Volcano is an international award-winning theatre company based in Toronto. Our main focus is the building of experimentally crafted yet highly accessible live performance works.

Volcano creates art by bringing together styles and skills from across art forms, genres, and geographic boundaries, assembling local, national, and international artists to craft compelling stories for many different kinds of spaces. The work is uniquely Canadian, stylistically modern, predominantly intercultural, and focuses on exploring identity, politics, and history in compelling ways.

The company has been widely recognized at home and on its many tours abroad, having either won or been nominated for over 60 awards at local, national, and international levels.

“One of those companies that every great theatre city needs – bold, experimental, and bubbling with ideas.” – Toronto Star

“The explosive company from Canada.” – The Independent, UK

“The best independent theatre company in Toronto.” – NOW Magazine

ARTISTS' BIOGRAPHIES



Co-Creator & Soprano

Neema Bickersteth was born and raised in Alberta to a family from Sierra Leone, and is now based in Toronto. Bickersteth is a Canadian soprano known for her skills as a singer, an actor and a maker of multi-disciplinary performance.

She has performed many operatic roles in both Canada and Europe, including Pamina from Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, the title role of L  har's *The Merry Widow* and the soprano lead in *Dark Star Requiem* for the Luminato Festival and Tapestry New Opera. Outside of opera, Neema has been honoured to perform for the XIVth Dalai Lama, Shirin Ebadi and the Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

She has received both Bachelor and Master of Music degrees (Opera) from the University of British Columbia and has been nominated for two Dora Mavor Moore awards for Outstanding Performance in Musical Theatre.



Co-Creator & Director

Ross Manson is an award-winning director, and the founding artistic director of Volcano, an internationally acclaimed theatre company based in Toronto. Over the past 20 years, Ross has directed and or co-created many shows for Volcano, which have toured around the world, and won or been nominated for over fifty local, national and international awards (including Dora awards for Ross as a director, a play-maker and a co-producer), a KM Hunter Award for his body of work as a theatre artist, a Harold award for arts community service, and the Best of Edinburgh award for his production of *Goodness*, by Michael Redhill).

He has also directed for various companies across Canada, as well as in Helsinki (Svenska Theatre) and in Munich (BeMe). Ross trained in England at the University of London (MA in Theatre, specialty in Directing), in Germany (Directing apprenticeship, Stadttheater Freiburg), and in Canada (Banff School of Fine Arts and Mount Allison University).



Co-creator & Choreographer

Kate Alton is an award-winning Canadian dancer and choreographer who has performed on stages around the globe. She is a former member of Toronto Dance Theatre and is Artistic Director of Crooked Figure Dances in Toronto. Kate creates thought provoking, emotionally engaging theatrical dances that are as much explorations of the mind as of the body, working with writers, directors and vocal coaches to develop inter-disciplinary performance works that pack an intellectual and emotional punch. Her work has been presented across Canada

and in Europe. Highlights from the recent past include Associate Direction and Choreography for The Exchange Rate Collective's Dora award winning *Appetite*, performing James Kudelka's works In *Paradisum* and *15 Heterosexual Duets* for Coleman Lemieux & Compagnie in China, Mongolia, the USA and Canada, and firstthingsfirst productions' sold-out shows *Namesake* and *Namesake:Three*. Kate is choreographer and co-creator/director, with Ross Manson, of the dance and sound poetry production *The Four Horsemen Project*, which garnered four Dora Mavor Moore awards including Best Direction by Kate and Ross Manson and has toured nationally and internationally. NOW Magazine named Kate as one of the best Toronto dance artists of the past twenty years.



Composition

Reza Jacobs is an award winning composer, lyricist, sound designer and music director, known for his versatility in style and genre. His credits include sound design and composition for the Shaw Festival, Factory Theatre, Volcano Theatre, Cahoots Theatre, Acting Up Stage Theatre, the Luminato Festival, & Harbourfront's World Stage Festival. As Music Director, he has won Dora Mavor Moore Awards for *Caroline, or Change* (Acting Up Stage, Best Music Direction & Best Musical 2012), *Assassins* (TIFT, Birdland Theatre, Award for Best Musical, 2010) and *London Road* (Canadian Stage Co.). He is also the resident Canadian Music Director for Andrea Martin's one-woman show, *Everything Must Go*.



Percussion & Computer

Debashis Sinha's creative output spans a broad range of genres and media, from solo audiovisual performance projects on the concert stage to the rich sonic space between your headphones. Driven by a deep commitment to the primacy of sound in his creative practice, Sinha has developed his artistic voice by weaving together his own experience as a 2nd generation south Asian Canadian, his training with master drummers from various world music traditions, a love of electronic and electroacoustic music and technology, and a desire to transcend the traditional expectations of how these streams might intersect and interact. He has appeared as a solo artist at the Sound Symposium, ORF Kunstradio, Deutschlandradio Kultur, the Art Gallery of Ontario, Madrid Abierto, MUTEK, the Guelph Jazz Festival, Radio National España, and the International Symposium on Electronic Art, to name a few, and as a member of various musical ensembles across the country and internationally. Parallel to his solo sound work, Sinha

maintains a robust presence in the theatre world, winning 2 Dora awards for Sound Design for his work on *Crash* (Theatre Passe Muraille) and *We are Proud to Present...* (The Theatre Centre/Why Not Theatre), alongside nominations for other Toronto area theatre works. Companies Sinha has worked with include Soulpepper Theatre Company, Peggy Baker, The Stratford Festival, inDance, Tribal Crackling Wind, Volcano Theatre, and others. <http://debsinha.com>



Pianist

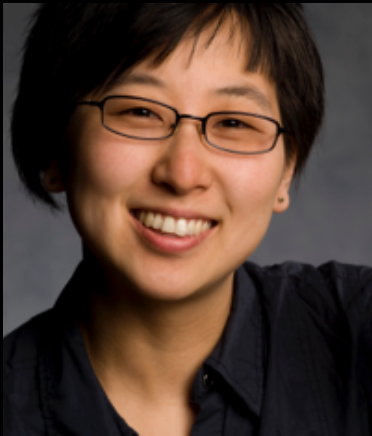
Gregory Oh gained his notoriety as a "new music revolutionary", but he is equally at home in opera, theatre and indie rock. Holding graduate degrees from the Universities of Toronto and Michigan, Gregory is an acclaimed classical pianist whose repertoire spans five centuries. His recent work has carried him to performances in venues as diverse as the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, to the legendary techno club Berghain in Berlin, to the Festival International de Musique Actuelle de Victoriaville, to the Wordless Music Series at the Lincoln Centre in New York. Gregory was contemporary music curator at Toronto's Music Gallery for many years and is now the artistic director of the Open Ears Festival in Ontario, Canada and the acclaimed new music group Toca Loca. He has worked at San Diego Opera, the Canadian Opera Company and the Banff Opera Program. He teaches at the University of Toronto, is on faculty at the National Youth Orchestra of Canada, and is a resident artist at Soulpepper Theatre, Toronto.



Costume Design

Charlotte Dean is a Canadian set and costume designer who has an extensive list of design credits from theatres across the country. She is at home with new works and classics alike. Stages where her work has been seen include the Stratford Festival, the Shaw Festival, Canadian Stage, the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre, Citadel Theatre, Tarragon Theatre, Neptune Theatre, Theatre Calgary, the Grand Theatre, and the Charlottetown Festival. She is a 5 time Dora Award winner with numerous nominations for the Toronto theatre prize, and she has multiple nominations for Edmonton's Sterling Award, and Calgary's Betty Mitchell award.

Charlotte is the 2009 recipient of the Virginia and Myrtle Cooper Award in Costume Design. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from York University.



Set Design

Camellia Koo is a Toronto based set and costume designer for theatre, opera, dance and site-specific performance installations.

Recent designs for opera include *Maria Stuarda* (Pacific Opera Victoria), *The Lighthouse* (Boston Lyric Opera), *Dido and Aeneas* (Opera Avalon), *Turn of the Screw* and *La Bohème* (Against the Grain), *Giiwedín* (Native Earth), and *The Shadow* (Tapestry New Opera) and Associate Designer on productions of *The Magic Flute* (Budapest State Opera) and *Candide* (Châtelet/Hyogo PAC, Japan).

She is a graduate of Ryerson Theatre School (technical production), and completed her M.A. in Scenography at Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design (UK) and the Hogeschool voor de Kunsten (Utrecht, The Netherlands).

She has received five Dora Mavor Moore Awards (Toronto), a Sterling Award (Edmonton), a Chalmers Award Grant, and shared the 2006 Siminovitch Protégé Prize.



Lighting Design

Rebecca Picherack is an award-winning Toronto-based lighting designer who has created lighting for dance and theatre projects across three continents. Dance Designs include *Falling to Grace* (Tanya Crowder/Julia Sasso), *Art Fag* (Daryl Hoskins), *She's Gone Away*, *Still*, *Waking En Dessous*, *Love/Loathing* (HUM), *Aflutter featuring At Last*, *aRound2* (FourChambers /Heidi Struass), *Namesake* (Crooked Figure Dances and first things first productions), *Signs* (Princess Productions), and *No Man's Land* (Michael DuMaresq). Theatres include: Blyth Festival, Buddies in Bad Times, DNA, Crow's Theatre, Factory Theatre, Mammalian Diving Reflex, Mirvish Productions, Native Earth, Nightwood, Nightswimming, Obsidian, Tarragon, Theatre Centre, Theatre Passe Muraille and Volcano. Rebecca has 12 nominations and 2 Dora Awards for her work.



Projection Design

fettFilm combines video with other media the video artists Momme Hinrichs and Torge Møller primarily want to create multifaceted works of art which do not merely decorate the stage or coexist with it but instead blend various artistic levels to achieve a synthesized whole. In addition to the Salzburg, Bregenz, Vienna and Bayreuth Festivals, the two artists have worked with the State Opera Unter den Linden Berlin; Akademie der Kunst, Berlin; Deutsch Oper, Berlin; the Vienna State Opera; Theatre an der Wien, Vienna; La Monnaie in Brussels; the Bavarian State Opera, Munich; the Semperoper Dresden; L'Opera nationale de Paris; the Komische Opera Berlin; the State Opera Hamburg; Susanne Linke; the Hungarian State Opera, Budapest; and many other small and large European theatres. They have also successfully realized projects in North America and India to great critical acclaim. In Toronto, they have worked with director Ross Manson, and his company, Volcano, on *The Africa Trilogy / Another Africa*.



Associate Video Design

Jeremy Mimmagh works as a photographer, filmmaker, and projection & sound designer for performance. He has collaborated on sound and/or projection design with some of the most provocative and thoughtful creators in the country. His still collections have been exhibited across Canada and internationally. Film credits include the short film: *girl in mourning & a settling haze* (co-created with Heidi Strauss), *From Gentle Ashes* and a short film for Bravo! entitled *Floating Construct* (co-created with Peter Chin), a feature dance documentary titled *Jamaican* (co-created with Peter Chin) and a series of short films created around the dance work elsewhere (in collaboration with Strauss and Laura Taler/Grimm Pictures). www.mimmagh.ca



Associate Video Design

Kaitlin Hickey's recent theatre credits include Associate Projection Design, *R-E-B-E-C-C-A* (Theatre Passe Muraille), Production Designer, *Chapel Arm* (Mindless Theatrics), Technical Director & Associate Lighting Designer *NIGHT* (Human Cargo), Production Manager & Lighting Designer, *The Book of Judith* (Selfconscious Theatre), Associate Video Designer, *Beatrice and Virgil* (Factory Theatre), Production Manager *Weather the Weather* (Theatre Columbus). She is a graduate of the National Theatre School of Canada.



Associate Video Design

Cameron Davis is a projection designer who has worked on projection designer: *Ultrasound* (Cahoots Theatre); *Britten's A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Pacific Opera Victoria); *Up The Garden Path* (Obsidian Theatre); *Domesticated* (Company Theatre); *Sweet Charity, You Never Can Tell* (Shaw Festival); *Life, Death, and the Blues, CRASH* (Theatre Passe Muraille); *Watching Glory Die* (Canadian Rep Theatre); *Six Essential Questions, Every Letter Counts* (Factory Theatre); *The Gay Heritage Project* (Buddies in Bad Times); *Yukonstyle, Cruel and Tender* (Canadian Stage); *Beyond the Farm Show, The Book of Esther* (Blyth Festival); *Feng Yi Ting* (Spoleto Festival USA/Lincoln Center Festival/Luminato Festival); *Chile con Carne* (Alameda Theatre); *Card Table Artifice, Natural Magick* (Magicana/Luminato); *Swimmer (68)* (Hopscotch Collective); *Rock 'n' Roll* (Canadian Stage/Citadel); video designer: *Dance Marathon* (bluemouth inc - various international festivals); lighting designer: *How Do I Love Thee?* (Canadian Rep Theatre); *They Say he Fell, BIRTH, Tjorvi the Flaccid* (Pandemic Theatre). Cameron also teaches and mentors projection design at the National Theatre School of Canada.

PRODUCTION TEAM



Meredith Potter: General Manager & Producer, Volcano

Since graduating from the Western Australian Academy for Performing Arts with a B.A. (Arts Management) in 1994 Meredith has worked in cultural organizations and performing arts companies in both Canada and Australia. She was awarded the 1995 Andrew Noblett Arts Marketing Fellowship at the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust, during which she was seconded to the 1996 Adelaide Festival of Arts. She was General Manager of Patch Theatre Company, a professional theatre for young people, for three years before moving to Toronto in 1999. After working as the Administrator of Artists' Services for two years at the Dance Umbrella of Ontario, Meredith joined CORPUS as General Manager from 2001 – 2004 and produced the Dusk Dances festival from 2002 – 2008. She is currently director of her own company, Meredith Potter Arts Management, where her clients include Peggy Baker Dance Projects and, since September 2005, Volcano.



Richard Jordan Productions: International Producer

Richard Jordan Productions is a Laurence Olivier and TONY Award-winning production company based in London, England, under the artistic leadership of producer Richard Jordan. Founded in 1998, his company has produced over 200 productions in the UK as well as 24 other countries, including 70 world premieres and 81 European, Australian or US premieres enjoying associations with many of the world's leading theatres and arts organization. He has enjoyed a long relationship with Canada's Volcano theatre company and previously produced together *Goodness* in Edinburgh, New York and on tour winning a number of awards. Described by the *Stage* newspaper as "one of the UK's most prolific theatre producers", Richard has been at the forefront of developing and presenting works by a diverse range of established and emerging writers and artists. His productions have won a number of awards including: the TONY Award for Best Play; the Laurence Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement at an Affiliate Theatre; The EMMY Award for Best Feature Section; fourteen

Scotsman Fringe First Awards; two Herald Angel Awards; six Total Theatre Awards; The Spirit of the Fringe Award; Drama Desk; Drama League; New York Critics, Broadway.com; Outer Critic Circle Best Play Awards; three Helen Hayes Awards; the Adelaide Festival Award; the US Black Alliance Award; Obie Award; Jeff Award; the Lucille Lortel Award and the John Gassner Award for Best New American Play. Richard's past productions in Canada include: *Once and For All We're Gonna Tell You Who We Are So Shut Up and Listen*; *A Reason To Talk*; *Nine Parts of Desire*; *Die Roten Punkte*; Miriam Margolyes' *Dickens' Women*; *Kafka and Son*; *Basic Training*; *Hirsch*; *Looking for Paul*; *BigMouth*; *Falstaff*; *Internal* and *Fight Night*. He has also transferred Canadian productions worldwide including: Rick Miller's *Bigger Than Jesus* and *MacHomer: The Simpsons Do Macbeth* which played sell-out seasons at Sydney Theatre Company; *Alphonse*; *A Suicide Site Guide to the City*; *A Brimful of Asha*; *Breath(e)*; *Kafka and Son*; *Hirsch*; *Goodness*; *Century Song* and *Hamlet(solo)*. In Canada his productions have been recognized through several nominations for Dora Awards - Toronto's annual theatre awards.



Patrick Lavender: Production Manager

Patrick works as a production manager for Necessary Angel Theatre Company, Acting Up Stage Company, The Company Theatre, Obsidian Theatre, and Soundstreams. He is also an award-winning set and lighting designer. Recent credits include; Late Company (Why Not surface/underground theatre), Crawlspace (Videofag), It Comes in Waves (Necessary Angel/Bluemouth), Birth of Frankenstein (Litmus Theatre).