



GREAT
CANADIAN
THEATRE
COMPANY

Dec 5 - 17, 2023

benevolence



23-24
season

Written By

Fanny Britt

Translated By

Leanna Brodie

Directed By

Eric Coates

Online
gctc.ca

Social
@gctclive

Box Office
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Land Acknowledgement

The GCTC staff, board and volunteers acknowledge that we are privileged to work, create, play, and live on the traditional unceded, unsurrendered territory of the Anishinaabe Algonquin peoples, who have been and continue to be the keepers and defenders of this land and these waters, from time immemorial.

We would like to take this time to show our gratitude and respect to them, and to the land and water for all that it provides us.

Artistic Director's Note



When I first read Leanna Brodie's sparkling translation of Fanny Britt's play *Benevolence*, I was struck by how it was simultaneously deeply compassionate while sharpening its comedy to a razor fine point, aimed straight at our everyday cowardice and selfishness. This play wrestles with the notion of how difficult it is to be good, while being completely entertaining. And, in a season built around relationships and ideas of what we mean to each other and owe to each other, this play confronts us with the big lie of

capitalism: the notion that we can be good or useful alone, outside of the context of relationships and community. We all need each other desperately. I think the last few years have made that starkly apparent.

Welcoming Eric Coates back to guide this funny and moving play, with a company of artists from the English and French theatre spheres, feels like widening the circle of community. Now you, the audience, are creating an even wider circle around this story. I hope you laugh and commune and feel provoked and enlarged, together.

Enjoy!

Sarah Kitz

Director's Note



Welcome to Benevolence—a rural Quebec town that takes its name from our collective desire to be good. Welcome also, to the liminal space where we find ourselves when that same desire leads to unexpected consequences. Since reading it for the first time, right through to the final days of rehearsal, in spite of its dark corners and uncomfortable

situations, this script has been an absolute pleasure. Leanna Brodie's translation rings with the intelligence and urgency embodied by playwright Fanny Britt whose writing provides us with all the essentials of a worthy play—crisis, fear, doubt, betrayal, love, grief, remorse, wit, and, my personal favorite, the unreliable narrator. It even has ghosts. One of the most enjoyable aspects of this script is the way in which Fanny leaves room for the creative team to make decisions about several actions in the play, some seemingly peripheral, and some which are absolutely central to the piece. Ultimately, we rely on our unreliable narrator, the beleaguered Gilles, whose version of events in the space between benevolence and consequence, is the only version available to us.

On a purely personal note, to everyone who asks me how it feels to be back at GCTC as a guest artist: It's an absolute joy to be here and to see my dear friends, Sarah and Hugh, lead the company with such heart as the world continues to stagger under the weight of so many catastrophes. Thank you for your compassion and uncompromising determination.

Eric Coates

Cast & Creative Team

Benevolence

by **Fanny Britt**

translated by **Leanna Brodie**

directed by **Eric Coates**

Cast:

Mélanie Beauchamp | Mom

Pierre Simpson | Gilles Jean

Puja Uppal | Isabelle Jacques

Sébastien Dijkstra | Marc Raymond / Hercule Jean / Philip
McWhirter

Will Somers | Bruno Green

Creative Team:

Ali Berkok | Sound Design and Composition

Brian Smith | Set Designer

Emilio Sebastio | Lighting Designer

Isabelle Bélisle | Costume Designer

Jane Vanstone Osborn | Stage Manager

Manon St-Jules | Assistant Director, Shannon Reynolds Recipient

Production Crew:

Kyle Ahluwalia | Technical Director

Stephanie Dahmer | Head of Props & Head Scenic Painter

Vanessa Imeson | Head of Wardrobe

Eric Neill | Assistant Technical Director, Head of Carpentry

Jason Beaudry | Interim Assistant Technical Director

IATSE Technicians | Rob Burgess - Sound Operator, George Hack-
Crew, Arthur Masters- Crew, Ian McKay- Crew

Please Note

- ***Benevolence*** is approximately 75 minutes long, with no intermission.
- The use of personal cameras or recording devices in the theatre is strictly prohibited.
- Cell phones and electronic devices must be turned off.
- Please don't walk in the performance area of the stage.

Enjoy the Show!

Acknowledgements

The Great Canadian Theatre Company engages members of the Local 471 of the International Alliance of Theatrical and Stage Employees.

GCTC acknowledges the support of the Ontario Arts Council (OAC), an agency of the Government of Ontario, which last year funded 1,737 individual artists and 1,095 organizations in 223 communities across Ontario for a total of \$52.1 million.

GCTC engages, under the terms of Canadian Theatre Agreement, professional artists who are members of the Canadian Actors' Equity Association.

Cast & Creative Team

Ali Berkok Sound Design



Ali Berkok is a pianist, composer and sound designer. Among his credits are *Unsafe* (Canadian Stage), *The Unplugging* (GCTC), and *Shorelines* (TACTICS). He has produced six albums as a leader, including two for electroacoustic outfit Aurochs, and a solo piano album, *Never Get Lost for Long*,

which features reinvented jazz standards such as “Cheek to Cheek,” and Coltrane's “Giant Steps,” as well as spontaneously extemporized compositions. Chief amongst his music research interests is polytemporality, the simultaneous presence of two or more asynchronous rhythmic layers. Berkok holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Toronto.

Brian Smith Set Design



Brian is extremely happy to be back working with the GCTC. Brian has designed for professional theatre companies across Canada including the NAC English Theatre; A Company of Fools; The Charlottetown Festival; Théâtre la Catapulte; Théâtre Français de Toronto; Odyssey Theatre; Centaur Theatre; Tarragon Theatre; The Grand Theatre; Théâtre du Nouvel-Ontario; and Le Théâtre du Trillium amongst others.

Brian is a recipient of the Council For the Arts Ottawa Mid-Career Artist Award. He has taught scenography at Bishop's University, the University of Ottawa and the National Theatre School of Canada, from where he is also a graduate.

Emilio Sebastiao **Lighting Design**



For more than ten years, Emilio has been designing projects and offering freelance technical services with a focus on lighting and set design. From January 2018 to the present, he has been the lighting and set Designer for W.I.S.E. Productions. Lighting design credits include: *Murs* (In Vivo); *Laurence* (Laboratory); *Toqaq Mecimi Puwiht* for Théâtre de la Vieille 17 et Productions Ondinnok; and many more.

Eric Coates **Director**



After serving as GCTC's artistic director from 2012-2021, Eric is delighted to return as a guest artist. Recently he has focused on new plays about Indigeneity, notably *Echoes of the Homesick Heart* (Western Canada Theatre, Kamloops), *The Comeback* (upcoming, Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre) and *Bentboy* (YPT) for

which he received the Dora Award for outstanding direction. Eric served as the artistic director of the Blyth Festival, 2003-2012, and chaired the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres for two terms. He lives in Stratford and often travels to the west coast where he serves as canoe skipper for the Samish Indian Nation.

Fanny Britt **Playwright**



FANNY BRITT is a writer and translator living in Montreal, Canada. She is the winner of the 2013 Governor General's Literary Award in Drama for her play *Bienveillance*.

Jane, the Fox and Me, her first graphic novel, was nominated for a GG Award in Children's Literature, won a Joe Shuster award and made the New York Times Best Illustrated Books list. Her first novel, *Les maisons* (published in English under the title *Hunting Houses*) was a finalist for the Prix France-Québec and the Prix littéraire des collégiens, and her second novel, *Faire les sucres*, won the Governor General's award in 2021. As a translator, she has adapted the works of Dennis Kelly, Martin McDonagh, Annabel Soutar and Lisa Moore, to name just a few.

Isabelle Bélisle Costume Design



As a multidisciplinary artist, Isabelle has been working in theatre for over thirty years, in Quebec and Ontario. As a costume designer, she designed more than 95 productions and was a finalist for the Virginia and Myrtle Cooper Costume Design Awards (Ontario Arts Council) in 2009 and 2010. She directed more than thirty plays and acted in forty productions. She is the recipient of the 2002 Théâtre Action's Excellence Award and the 2006 ATFC Foundation Prize for the Advancement of Theatre. She is also a

part-time professor at the University of Ottawa since 1995.

Jane Vanstone Osborn Stage Manager



For GCTC Jane has stage managed *Behaviour*, *Rock & Roll*, *The Net*, *Facts*, and *You Are Happy*, and was ASM on *Forever Young*, *Daisy 2021* and *The Gravitational Pull of Bernice Trimble*. Jane returned to The Shaw Festival 2023 as ASM on

The Amen Corner, and SM on *A Grand Night for Singing*. Other recent shows include, *Shorelines* (at Lab O), *The Tempest* (A Company of Fools), and *The Anniversary* (Theatre 4.669). Thanks for being here.

Leanna Brodie Translator



Leanna Brodie's plays include *The Vic, For Home and Country, Schoolhouse, The Book of Esther*, and *Salesman in China* (co-written with Jovanni Sy, premiering at the Stratford Festival in 2024). Brodie is also a leading translator of contemporary Québécois/Franco-Canadian playwrights. Recent premieres: David Paquet's *Wildfire* (Factory Theatre, Toronto – Dora Mavor Moore Award); Rébecca Déraspe's *I Am William* (Stratford Festival); and Fanny Britt's *Benevolence* (Ruby Slippers Theatre/Pacific Theatre, Vancouver). For GCTC: translated

Rébecca Déraspe's *You Are Happy*. www.leannabrodie.com

Manon St-Jules Assistant Director



Manon has lead a bilingual acting career since graduating from NTS. She's collaborated with big and small companies in Toronto, Montreal, Sudbury and Ottawa. Her work on-camera includes dramatic as well as comedic parts in film, television, commercials and various multimedia projects. Manon has also done extensive work in translating and writing for both theatre and television. Her translation of Claudia Dey's *Trout Stanley* will be produced in Quebec City in March of 2024. With a few years of teaching under her belt, Manon is now transitioning into

directing. Her current project will be seen at the TNO this winter.

Mélanie Beauchamp **Mom**



Mélanie has been performing for many years in Ottawa and Toronto. She is delighted to return to the GCTC, where she previously performed in *You Are Happy*, *Les Passants* and *Les Belles Soeurs*. Recent stage credits include *J'ai mon voyage*, *Peau d'ours* and *J'accuse* at Théâtre de l'Île. On the

small screen, she appeared in *Eaux turbulentes*, *Gang de hockey*, *Mehdi & Val*, *Meilleur Avant*, as well as the American series *Blood* and *Treasure* on CBS. Mélanie also lends her voice to many commercials and TV shows such as the children's animated series, *Interstellaire Ella*.

Pierre Simpson **Gilles Jean**



Pierre is thrilled to be performing at GCTC for the first time since *Strawberries in January*. A proud graduate of uOttawa's Theatre Department, Pierre has worked with the NAC, Odyssey, Company of Fools as well as Canadian Stage, Tarragon and 2b Theatre. French credits include Vox Théâtre, Catapulte, Vieille 17, Théâtre de l'île

and Théâtre français de Toronto. Check out his IMDb page for TV

and Film highlights, including *Three Pines*, *Transplant*, and *Rosie* as well as kids' TV, Christmas and true crime movies filmed in Ottawa. To my parents, in-laws, Michael and long time friends: "I should be going".

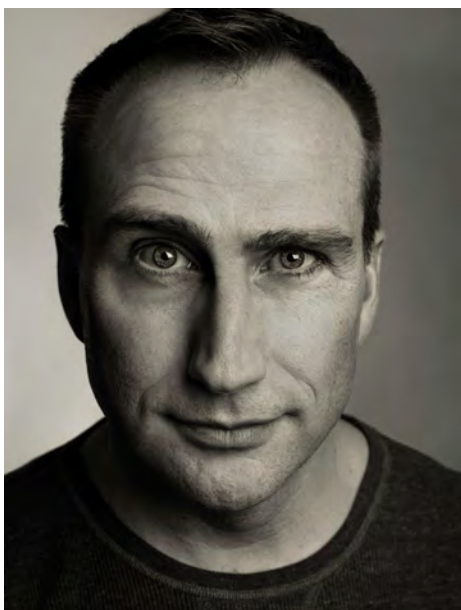
Puja Uppal
Isabelle Jacques



Puja Uppal is an Ottawa-based actor who has worked both in theatre and film & TV for many years. Her last two shows, *Constellations* and *The Anniversary* were both performed at Lab O. This year, she was busy with various theatre workshops, one of which was at GCTC. Her most notable

performances in film and TV are Netflix's *Fatherhood*, CBC's *SkyMed* and CTV's *Transplant*. Puja is thrilled to share the GCTC stage with such amazing talent.

Sébastien Dijkstra
Marc Raymond / Hercule Jean / Philip McWhirter



Based in Gatineau, Sébastien Dijkstra has, over the past five years, mainly performed in French across the river at the Théâtre de l'Île. This is the first time he is performing at the Great Canadian Theatre Company. Way back when, Sébastien graduated in Theatre Arts from the University of Ottawa. After graduation, he performed in various venues such as Théâtre du Trillium and The Gladstone Theatre (Toto Too Theatre).

Having drifted away from the stage, Sébastien missed it so much that when the grey hairs started to show and his duties as a family man became less demanding, he heard the call from the stage loud and clear. Fluently bilingual, Sébastien is currently expanding his voice-over work in the region.

Away from the stage and the microphone, Sébastien works as an elementary school teacher.

Will Somers **Bruno Green**



Raised and based in Ottawa, Will has been working as a performer, writer, musician, and designer for better than fifteen years. He has performed in bars, school gyms, parks, barns, beaches, one family restaurant, offices, basements, galleries, loading docks, and occasionally a theatre just to mix it up. Will has two cats and a small garden in the summer. He's a card-carrying cabinetmaker who can make you whatever you'd like out of wood. He's very happy to be here.

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Season Art by Trish Lindstrom



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Director's Circle

Director's Circle members enjoy a deeper connection with our creative process through social engagement with artists and other members of the GCTC family. For more information, please contact: Carolina Gallegos, Fundraising & Membership Manager, 613-236-5192 ext. 226 or carolina@gctc.ca.

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Up next from GCTC. Happening at the National Arts Centre.



GREAT
CANADIAN
THEATRE
COMPANY

Jan 17 - 27, 2024

Women OF THE fur trade



23-24
season

A co-production with:
National Arts Centre Indigenous Theatre & Native Earth Performing Arts

Written By
Frances Končan

Directed By
Renae Morriseau

Online
gctc.ca

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(613) 236-5196

