

Theatre Quest End in Association with Tantalus
presents

MARCH 2—11 2023

WHAT ROUGH BEAST

Centaur Theatre's Brave New Looks
Selection for 2022-2023

Written by
Alice Abracen

Directed by
Jessica Abdallah

CENTAUR THEATRE COMPANY
Box Office: 514-288-3161

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centaurtheatre.com



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Author's Note

When I'm grappling with existential questions, I tend to write my way out. Some years ago, as elections revealed the depth of ideological polarization in our society and as new hate groups began to emerge from the woodwork, I found myself reconsidering the idea that compassion and diplomacy, virtues I'd held to be sacred, were the answer to the rising tides of white supremacy and far-right extremism. I grappled with the idea that empathy might be an act of dangerous moral compromise; that fostering dialogue across division, something I'd always considered to be a long-term goal of my work in theatre, might be antithetical to social justice. I felt the news cycle chipping away at my pillars of virtue until those pedestals began to give way beneath me. In that free-fall I wrote *What Rough Beast* – but I was not alone in taking the plunge. *What Rough Beast* owes itself to the generosity, curiosity, and compassion of the creative teams that took it from the page to the stage. I owe a special thanks to Nick Carpenter, Lelaina Vogel, and Eda Holmes for their role in this journey. I am thrilled and honoured to be working with this extraordinary group of artists and to see the *Beast* on the Centaur stage at last!

- Alice Abracen, Playwright

Director's Note

Three years ago – almost to the day – we had to shut down rehearsals for *What Rough Beast* because of the pandemic. At the time, we didn't know when – or if ever – we'd be able to bring this incredible show to life. So, to be here now, seems like such an incredible gift. The world has changed so much but the relevancy of this play has endured, and the questions it asks have become even more complex. Questions around the importance of communication, its limitations, and the struggle to find more impactful ways to be part of real change. To be honest, this play has always made me uncomfortable, but I've learned that being uncomfortable is an important part of evolving. If we can be open to having uncomfortable conversations with humility, and in the spirit of learning, then maybe we can grow as individuals and as a society.

I am so grateful to the creative team on this show who have brought so much love, insight, and bravery into this beast. Together we have laughed – deep, full belly laughs – because it allowed us to disengage from the darkness and reconnect as humans so we could go back into the discussion stronger. That has been the beauty of our process, which is so fitting because that is also the beauty of *What Rough Beast*.

As an audience, we hope to make you laugh, to make you feel, to make you uncomfortable and, most importantly, to make you leave this show wanting to engage more in the discussion. We hope you leave inspired to see what can happen on the other side of uncomfortable.

- Jessica Abdallah, Director

Theatre Ovest End



Launched in the spring of 2019, Théâtre Ovest End (TOE) was founded by Ann Lambert, Laura Mitchell, Alice Abracen, and Danielle Szydowski. These four women wanted to bring together an intergenerational community of experienced and emerging theatre artists who would bring timely and compelling work to people whose access to theatre

challenged by limited income, mobility, opportunity, and the perception that theatre is really about and for someone else. TOE is committed to making vital theatrical experiences more accessible to communities who traditionally cannot or do not participate and to mentoring young theatre professionals by giving them a place to begin practicing their craft and to encouraging new work. In late 2020, two wonderful women joined our TOE team: Anissah VanHorn and Ayesha Hassan. Since its inception, TOE has been running weekly writing workshops which are open and free to all participants, has hosted 5 evenings of staged readings of new work, has produced the exciting Digital Now Project: *Still Got Something to Say: Six Plays on Age*, and produced Alice Abracen's award-winning *The Covenant* at the Segal Centre in 2022. Our next project is a short film version of *Okay Boomer*, written by Ann Lambert, featuring Laura Mitchell and produced by TOE and Beanduck Productions.

Tantalus

Founded in the Summer of 2016 by Adrian MacDonald and Rahul Gandhi, Tantalus challenges and stretches the medium of theatre whenever possible, provides opportunities and connections for those who are searching, and examines humanity under the light of modern day. Adrian and Rahul share the sentiment of near-satisfaction in



their artistic endeavors, with excellence just out of reach, not unlike the elusive low hanging fruit or receding water in the tales around the mythological figure of Tantalus. Like Tantalus, Adrian and Rahul remain hungry for more, thirsty for more, yearning to be filled, and will always stretch to the limits and bounds of what is possible in its pursuit. Less dramatically, *Tantalus* was named after that travelling theatre troupe (of thieves) in *Final Fantasy IX*. After successful productions such as *Adoration* (2017), *Amuse Me* (2018), *Bad Indian/Spicecake* (reading, 2021), Tantalus is proud to be producing *What Rough Beast*. This may be *Tantalus'* final production, as Adrian sustained a Traumatic Brain Injury in 2020 in a car accident. To learn more or to help, tap [here](#). *There is no Tantalus without us.*

"As a company, we look to produce the works of budding playwrights and emerging artists as they take their first steps in the Montreal theatre world. While offering an environment that supports growth and learning, we aim to create bonds with established artists in the area to help build a network for all those like-minded."

Cast & Creative Team

Alice Abracen *Playwright / Producer*



Alice Abracen (she/her) is an award-winning playwright, librettist, and video game writer based in Montreal. Her work has been featured with McGill Opera's Beta Lab, Boca Del Lupo's Red Phone Project, Alumnae Theatre (Toronto) Underlings Theatre (Boston), the Harvard Radcliffe Dramatic Club, the Montreal Fringe, the New Words Festival of NTS, and two Women Playwrights International Conferences (Cape Town & Santiago). Her libretto *The Chair*, co-written with composer Maria Atallah, was a winner of the inaugural Mecenat Musica Prix Trois Femmes. *The Covenant*, winner of the 2017 Canadian Jewish Playwriting Competition, premiered at the Segal Centre's Studio Space in November 2022. She is thrilled that *What Rough Beast* will be featured as Centaur Theatre's Brave New Looks this spring. Alice is one of the founders of Theatre Ouest End.

Jessica Abdallah is a director, creator, educator, and arts administrator based in Tio'tia:ke/Montréal. For over 20 years, she has been bringing stories to life with a focus on collaboration and sparking dialogue. Jessica is a graduate of John Abbott College's Acting program, Concordia University's Theatre & Development program, and the MFA in Directing at the University of Alberta. Directing credits include *The One* (Hopegrown), *What Rough Beast* (stage reading - Centaur Theatre), the French and English versions of *TUMIT* (Akpik Theatre), *Sedna: Goddess of the Sea* (Tableau D'Hôte Theatre), and *Annie Mae's Movement* (UofA). Upcoming directing credits include *Other Worlds* (Geordie Theatre). Jessica is the Creative Director of Geordie Theatre School, and sits on both the Montreal English Theatre Awards and the PACT Membership Committees. She sends thanks to her family who are her biggest fans and fill her life with unwavering love and support

Jessica Abdallah *Director*



Kate Hagemeyer *Stage Manager*



Kate Hagemeyer is a Montreal-based stage manager. For the past decade she has largely focused on new theatre works while lending her expertise to dance, opera, film, and web broadcasting. Select recent productions include *Glam Mothers* (Pellegrini Productions 2020), *Crossing The Ocean* (Youtheatre 2021), *Lungs* (Kitbag Theatre 2022), and *Legacy* (MAGJUSJEN Entertainment 2022).

Cast & Creative Team

Adam Capriolo is an actor, writer, and director. He has appeared in numerous stage productions in Montreal, where he played characters like Mercutio in *Romeo & Juliet* and Sir Andrew in *Twelfth Night* for Repercussion Theatre. He was nominated for a Montreal English Theatre award for both performances. On screen, he played the role of Andrew for five seasons on the TV series *The Bold Type*, and most recently appeared in *Single All the Way* (dir. Michael Mayer, Netflix) and *Brad's Status* (dir. Mike White, Amazon). He has directed music videos for artists like Fleece, Aiza, and Maya Malkin. He is currently developing a comedy series with Play Management Media Inc.

Adam Capriolo "Thomas"



Aidan Cottreau "Johnny"

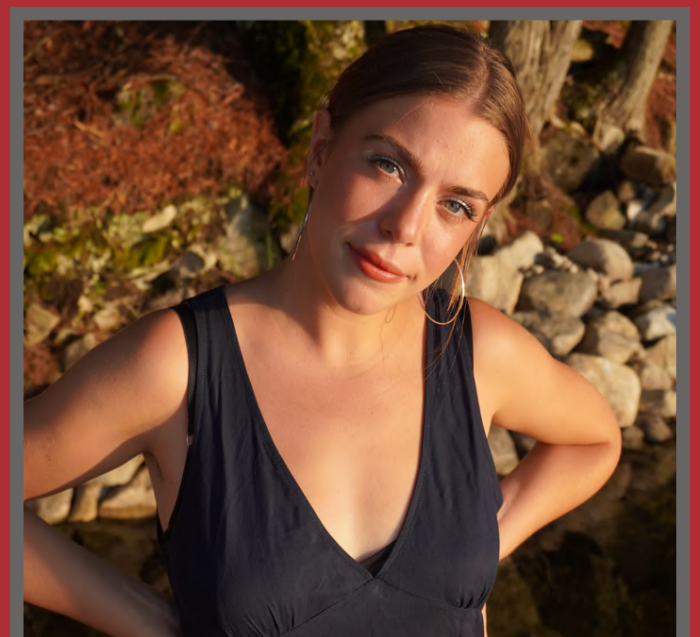


Aidan Cottreau is an actor and theatre artist based in Tiohtià:ke / Montreal. Co-founder of A Broke Theatre, he has written and performed original works such as *The Sandbox* (Art Matters Festival 2020), *BOGEYMAN* (OTC 2021), and *The Beinoni* (NOMAD 2022). Aidan currently plays the voice of Jonah in *Dreamers*, an audio drama podcast by Broken Crown Productions. Trained in acting at Concordia University. He also teaches drama and leadership skills at camps.

Charlotte is an actor and writer based out of Toronto. Most recently she worked with ARC on the Toronto debut of Marius von Mayenburg's *Martyr*. Other selected theatre credits include *A Christmas Carol* (Soulpepper), *Boston Marriage* (Headstrong Collective) and *Dimples* (Smock Alley Theatre, Dublin). Selected film credits include *Alex & Isla* with Mayday pictures and the award-nominated film *Lune* as production coordinator. Charlotte is a graduate of The National Theatre School of Canada.

"I am so happy to be back working on a play I've had the privilege of watching move through every stage of development. I'm so grateful to this team. Thank you!"

Charlotte Dennis "Alyssa"



Cast & Creative Team

Rahul Gandhi "Rafi" / Producer



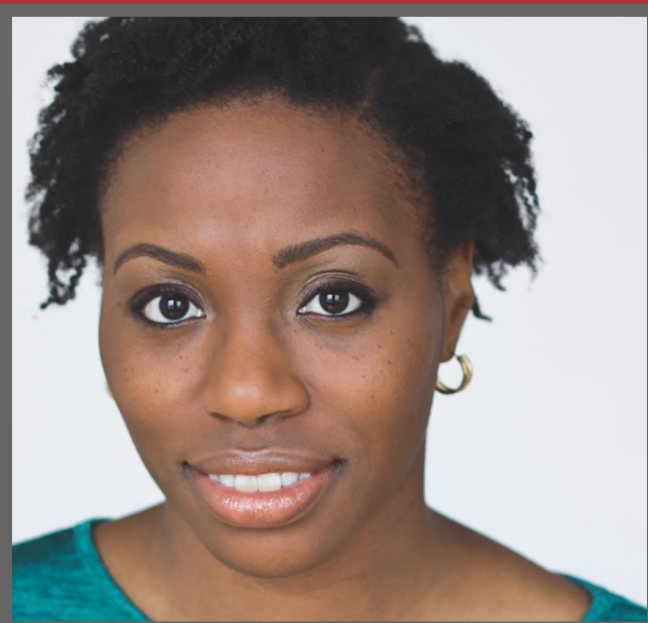
Rahul Gandhi is a bilingual actor, director, creator, and producer born, raised, and located in Montreal. Though his heart lies on stage, he wears a variety of hats in and around theatre, film, television, and arts administration. Co-Artistic Director of Tantalus. He holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts (with honors), and a Graduates Diploma in Communication studies, both from Concordia University. Recent film and TV credits include: *The Bold Type* (Freeform), *The Naughty Nine* (Disney+). Notable theatre credits include: Romeo in *Romeo & Juliet* (HPC), M in *Lungs* (Kitbag Theatre), and alumni of the Black Theatre Workshop AMP ensemble. Notable arts work includes a past as the Director of Operations for the Quebec Drama Federation, as well as a member of the PACT National Advocacy committee.

Born and raised in Montréal, Simon Pelletier is an emerging actor, playwright, and translator, as well as an avid consumer of pretentious coffee. Having graduated from the Concordia University Acting program in 2017, Simon has spent the past years pursuing acting as a form of empathy, perhaps the most intense kind of empathy. Past credits include the METAs - Montreal English Theatre Awards -nominated show *Smackhead* in 2018 and Persephone Productions *Bluestockings* in 2019. He has been a fan of *What Rough Beast* since its public reading in 2019 and is beyond excited and honoured to be part of this incredible play!

Simon Pelletier "Kevin"



Keren Roberts "Michelle"



A lifelong resident of Tiohtià:ke (Montreal) of Caribbean heritage, Keren's stage credits include *Serving Elizabeth* (Theatre Aquarius); *How Black Mothers Say I Love You* (Black Theatre Workshop); *Reaching for Starlight* (Geordie Theatre); *For Colored Girls* (Les 6 Productions/MAI); and *Binti's Journey* (Theatre Direct/Black Theatre Workshop). She is a graduate of Dawson College's Professional Theatre Program and is an alumna of Black Theatre Workshop's Artist Mentorship Program. Her acting experience has confirmed her belief that there is nothing better than when your passion meets your purpose. She aims to create works and characters that explore the full spectrum of the African diaspora. Follow her on Instagram @letmeklmythroat.

Cast & Creative Team

Jennifer Roberts *"Marlene"*

Jennifer is an actor who has worked with Black Theatre Workshop, Festival Antigonish Summer Theatre, Scapegoat Carnivale, Talisman Theatre, The Other Theatre, Geordie Theatre, Imago Theatre, National Theatre School, and Playwrights' Workshop Montréal, among others. She was awarded a Montréal English Theatre Award (Best Supporting Actress) for her role as Simon in Geordie Theatre's *Chloe's Choice*. Jennifer is currently developing *The Sound of Dogs*, a play which explores our society's preoccupation with assimilation through the lens of growing up in the Deaf community.



potatoCakes_digital

*Set, Projection,
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potatoCakes_digital is an award winning multimedia design and technical integration company started by Emily Soussana and Andrew Scriver, based out of Tiotia:ke (Montreal, Canada). Officially incorporated as a company in Canada and Quebec in 2021—named as a collective in 2018 with a video design at Osheaga Music Festival for John Jacob Magistry—potatoCakes_digital has been unofficially working together for the past six years, designing video, lighting, sound, set, and costumes, as well as production managing and technical directing together on numerous live performance productions for local companies and others across Canada. We do theatre, opera, dance, live music, visual and interactive installation art, and digital art. Nothing is beyond our vision.

Danna-Rae Evasiuk is a theatre artist from Fort McMurray, Alberta, now living in Montreal. An alumn of Red Deer College's Technical Theatre Production and Design program and a co-founder of Theatre; Just Because - a community and mentorship driven, locally grown and operated independent theatre company, she's currently an Associate Artist at Imago Theatre. Selected credits: *Strangers* (WildFireTheatre, Montreal Fringe, Sound Designer/Composer), *Eco-Anxiety* (Imago Theatre - Lighting Designer), *The Most Massive Woman Wins* (Theatre; Just Because - Lighting Designer, Sound Designer/Composer), and *Field Guide* (Bluemouth Inc, SummerWorks, Apprentice Stage Manager).

Danna-Rae Evasiuk *Sound Design*



Cast & Creative Team

Nick Carpenter

NTS Dramaturg



Nick is a playwright, composer, musician and teacher (NTS) based in Montreal. His plays, radio plays (CBC), short stories and librettos have been presented across Canada, the US and Germany. Most recently, his play *Arco* took 2nd place in Infnitheatre's 2021 Write-on-Q Competition. In 2020, he was nominated for two METAs (Montreal English Theatre Awards) for his work as a Musician and Supporting Actor. He is currently scoring a new musical.

Actress and writer/playwright Darragh Mondoux fell in love with this project instantly, and has put her skills in media relations, and social media curation towards its inevitable success. She has appeared on stage in *Blue Stockings* (Persephone Productions), *Twelfth Night* and *Julius Caesar* (Repercussion Theatre), and most recently in *Meet Me* (Teesri Duniya/Live Action Theatre Project). Darragh cut her teeth on media communications and publicity for theatre producing her own works, her most recent piece *SIRE: a father-daughter vampire story* garnering critical praise and a nomination for Best English Production from the Segal Centre at the 2022 St Ambroise Fringe Festival.

Darragh Mondoux

Publicist



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Cast & Creative Team

Jon Verrall

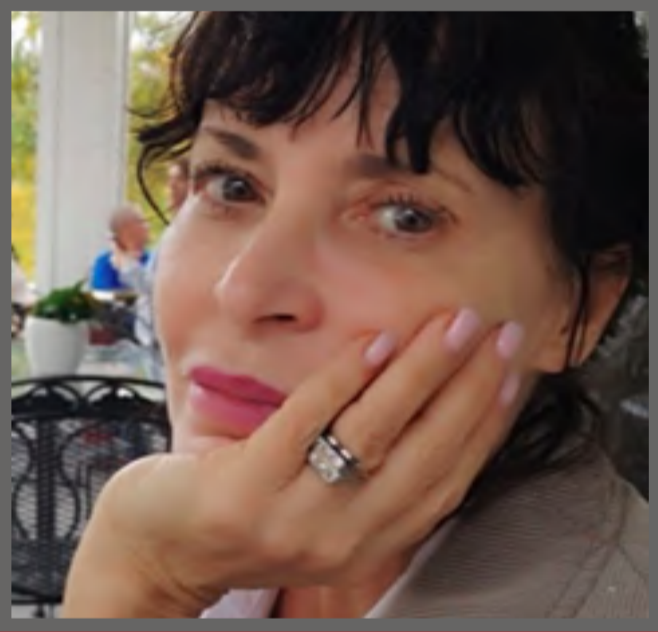
Fight Choreographer

When Jon isn't choreographing or performing, he works as a narrative designer for video games. Jon continues to research and develop tools to help keep performers and theatre professionals safe and supported, both physically and emotionally.



Laura Mitchell

Producer



Award winning actress, Laura Mitchell (UDA, CAEA, ACTRA), moved to Montreal after completing an MFA in acting. She worked many years with TACcom(theatre sur mesure) as a writer, actor, and animateur. A founding member of the comedy duo 'TITTERS', she performed in the Vancouver International Comedy Festival and in comedy clubs in and around Montreal, Seattle, and Vermont. She wrote and performed in four cabarets (with Janis Kirshner) *Female Bondage*, *Lashed But Not Leashed*, *Same Great Taste*, and *Put Another Monologue on the Fire*. She has also written one feature film, the dark comedy, *World Without Men*; one documentary film, *Unbuckling My Bible Belt*; three plays, *The Mary Project*, *Lissy Walker is Going Home*, and *From Dio to Dawn*, and adaptations of *The Bacchae*, *The Balcony*, and *Biederman and the Firebugs*. Laura recently retired from Dawson College where she taught English for 30 years, and directed The Showtime Troupe (20 plays). She performed in TOE's digital production, *Still Got Something To Say (OK Boomer)*, *The Covenant*, and as a story teller at Blue Metropolis. She continues to act in film, television and on stage. She lives in Montreal with jazz drummer, Eduardo Pipman and Kimba, the wonder dog.

Ann's first novel, *The Birds That Stay* was published in 2019 and was a finalist for the Concordia Best First Book Prize that same year. Her second book in the series, *The Dogs of Winter*, was a finalist for the Canadian Crime Writers Award of Excellence. She just released her third book in the Series, *Whale Fall*. All three books were released as audiobooks narrated by Ann herself. Ann has also written over 20 plays for the stage and radio over forty years in the theatre. Several of her plays, including *The Wall*, *Self Offense*, *Parallel Lines*, *Very Heaven*, *The Mary Project*, *Force of Circumstance* and *Two Short Women* have been performed in Canada, the United States, Europe and Australia. Ann is the former head of The Playwriting Program at the National Theatre School of Canada. Ann is retired from Dawson College in Montreal where she was a teacher of English literature for almost thirty years, and where for the last 13 years, she wrote, directed and produced shows with The Dawson Theatre Collective. Ann is also the vice-president of The Theresa Foundation, dedicated to supporting AIDS-orphaned children and their grandmothers, the education of Malawian girls, and alleviating food insecurity in several villages in Malawi.

Ann Lambert

Producer



Cast & Creative Team

Anissah Vanhorn *Producer*



Anissah Vanhorn is a Queer emerging actress and playwright. They started their journey in theatre by joining the Dawson Theatre Collective (DTC), founded by Ann Lambert at Dawson College. Anissah continued with the DTC for the rest of her studies at Dawson working as an actress, assistant stage manager, stage and costume designer, and playwright. Their first co-written play, whose production was put on pause by the pandemic, is *The Long Shot* directed by Jeff Gandell. Recent graduate of Dawson College in Community, Recreation, and Leadership Training and currently completing her B.Ed in Secondary English at McGill University, Anissah is a dedicated student and apprentice. For TOE, they have coordinated several online and in-person events, helped with administrative tasks and promotion, assisted in coordinating virtual writing sessions, and filled a variety of artistic positions in past and current TOE productions. Anissah hopes to soon facilitate writing workshops for at-risk youth through the TWC writing workshops.

Ayesha Hasan is a graduate of Concordia University's Journalism program and our newest addition to the TOE team! She worked for McGill University's School of Continuing Studies, coordinating linguistic and cultural immersion programs for students on language exchange programs. She currently works for Ubisoft Montreal as an Actor and Talent Management Specialist, a role which has her organizing recordings and shoots with actors in Montreal, and abroad. Ayesha is also part of the Montreal host committee for the upcoming Women Playwrights International Virtual Conference, bringing together theatre practitioners, scholars, and critics from all over the world.

Aysha Hasan *Producer*



Joan and Kevin Abdallah *Honorary Producers*

Theatre Quest End and Tantalus, alongside the entire cast and creative team, would like to offer a heartfelt THANK YOU to Joan and Kevin Abdallah. Their substantial donation to the production means the world, and has granted the title of "Honorary Producer". Thank you, Joan and Kevin.

Substantial Donors

The following donors have contributed a notable amount to What Rough Beast. Theatre Ovest End and Tantalus, alongside the entire cast and creative team would like to offer this special mention. Thank you to:

Samantha Abdallah

Paul Bachand

Marilyn McMillan

Our Sponsors

These contributors helped make this production possible, **please check out the next pages for advertisements from others in the community.** We hope you will engage with them the same way you've engaged with us.

Special Thank You

The *What Rough Beast* Team acknowledges that it would not have been possible to mount this *Beast* without the generous support of so many organisations and individuals.

A warm *Thank You* to organisations such as *Centaur Theatre, Geordie Theatre, Black Theatre Workshop, Infitheatre, The Segal Center, The National Theatre School of Canada* (students and staff instrumental to the development), *Cold Blue, Fast, and the Underlings Theatre Co.* who've contributed to making this all possible.

A fond *Thank You* to individuals such as *Adrian MacDonald, Paul Van Dyck / Rabbit in a Hat, Vanessa Rigaux, Solène Lautridou, Aurora Torok, Tristynn Duheme, Corey Weiser, Steve & Sly & Chris (Segal), Andrea Romaldi, Judy Wensel, and Lelaina Vogel* who have contributed their skills and expertise to this production.

A formal *Thank You* to our funders, *The Canada Council for the Arts, and the Conseil des Arts de Montréal.* Our reports will be on time, we swear.

A teary-eyed *Thank You* to everyone who donated to our fundraiser. Your contributions helped make this possible!

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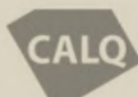
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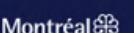
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CO-DIRECTED BY ANAHITA DEHBONEHIE & GUILLERMO VERDECCHIA

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A Final Thank You

Theatre is community action, and *What Rough Beast* has been no exception. From humble beginnings, to a graduating showcase, to an American premier, to a public staged reading, through a global pandemic, and finally now on stage in front of you. *What Rough Beast* has influenced the hearts and minds of an astonishing number of artists. From students, to educators, to professional actors, designers, producers, creatives, and more! We estimate this story has been worked on by over 100 people through its various iterations.

Thank you for being our audience.

Thank you for supporting us.

Thank you for supporting the arts.

Thank you for taking the time to listen.

Thank you for taking the time to discuss.

Please, enjoy the show!