

— FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE—

ARTS CLUB THEATRE COMPANY ANNOUNCES CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM FOR [THE CULL](#)

By Michele Riml & Michael St. John Smith

January 26–February 26, 2023 (Media opening: February 1)

IN BRIEF The Arts Club Theatre Company's production of [The Cull](#) plays **January 26–February 26** at the [Granville Island Stage](#), 1585 Johnston Street, Vancouver. Tickets from \$29. More info at artsclub.com

VANCOUVER, B.C. (January 9, 2023)—Old friendships are tested and tensions are high in the World Premiere of **Michele Riml** and **Michael St. John Smith's** *The Cull*, playing January 26–February 26 at the Arts Club Theatre Company's Granville Island Stage.

Emily (**Dawn Petten**) and Lewis (**Stephen Lobo**) are celebrating their 25th wedding anniversary with their best friends: John (**John Cassini**), Lynne (**Jasmine Chen**), Paul (**Craig Erickson**), and Nicole (**Meghan Gardiner**). While a forest fire rages out of control in the local mountains, the conversation amongst the group turns many corners: catching up on family events, reminiscing about their teenage years, and debating what it means to be a "good person." But when an unexpected gift turns the seemingly civil conversation about the local wolf cull into a fierce personal argument, a secret is revealed that threatens the stability of the "pack," turning this particular party into a night of eat or be eaten. This riveting dissection of human relationships and the forces that control our deepest motivations will keep you on the edge of your seat.

The Cull was awarded a 2020 Arts Club [Silver Commission](#) during Bill Millerd's last season as the artistic director of the Arts Club. It was originally programmed for the stage in the 2020–2021 season but, due to the pandemic, pivoted into an audio play, released November 2021.

Arts Club Artistic Director **Ashlie Corcoran** said, "What I love about this play is its ability to reasonably pose various sides of an argument. I love seeing a good debate on stage, and this play has several of them! I also love seeing long-term friendships on stage, and seeing how as humans we can champion, encourage, and indulge those around us that we love most. I can't wait for **Mindy Parfitt**, a sensitive and intuitive director with a great eye to detail, to bring this script to life."

Playwrights and real-life couple Michele Riml and Michael St. John Smith said, "After workshopping and casting the play in 2020 and then having the production cancelled due to the pandemic, it is extra special to us that *The Cull* has found its feet with our original team of resilient artists. Having navigated this unsettling time together, the play's theme of community resonates more deeply now and validates the controlling principle that in some part inspired it—'For the strength of the pack is the wolf, and the strength of the wolf is the pack.' It reminds us again that theatre is always a collaborative endeavour, one that can only ever be realized together."

Parfitt echoed this and stated, "We've been thinking and exploring this play since before the pandemic. Through staging and script workshops, the designers, actors, playwrights, and I have been given time and space to understand how the



visual and aural world of the play can support the text. I'm excited by where we've landed and am thrilled to share this premiere with an audience."

The show's dramaturg, **Stephen Drover**, who also oversees New Works & Professional Engagement at the Arts Club, said, "When I read Michele's and Michael's first draft of *The Cull* in 2018, I was truly astonished by its sophisticated dialogue, its spirit of incisive argument, and its fearless confrontation of the dubious ways we endeavour to be 'good.' Since then, the play has deepened and developed—through a pandemic, an audio play, multiple workshops, drafts, and re-writes—into a remarkable and beautifully wrought piece of work that entertains while it challenges."

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHTS

Michele Riml is a critically acclaimed playwright from Vancouver. Her plays include *Under the Influence*, *Poster Boys*, *RAGE* (2005 Sydney Risk Award winner), *Souvenirs*, *On the Edge*, *The Amaryllis*, and *Miss Teen*. *Sexy Laundry* and *Henry and Alice: Into the Wild* have become international hits with ongoing productions worldwide. Her plays for young audiences have been widely produced and include *The Skinny Lie*, *The Invisible Girl*, and *Tree Boy*. She is currently working on a new musical, *SALT*, with British singer/songwriter David Ford.

Michael St. John Smith is a writer, film actor, and former advertising creative director. He has written several commissioned screenplays and three stage plays, including the Jessie Award–nominated *Slaying Dragons* and *The Bridge* for Pi Theatre and CBC (with Michele Riml). He also created and facilitates "The Ring," an interactive screenwriting workshop.

CAST

John Cassini (John), **Jasmine Chen** (Lynne), **Craig Erickson** (Paul), **Meghan Gardiner** (Nicole), **Stephen Lobo** (Lewis), **Dawn Petten** (Emily)

CREATIVE TEAM

Mindy Parfitt (Director), **Stephen Drover** (Dramaturg), **Amir Ofek** (Set Designer), **Alaia Hamer** (Costume Designer), **Ted Roberts** (Lighting Designer), **Owen Belton** (Sound Designer), **Phay Moores** (Intimacy Director), **Mike Kovac** (Fight Director), **Rebecca Mulvihill** (Stage Manager), **Marijka Asbeek Brusse** (Assistant Stage Manager)

SHOWTIMES + SPECIAL PERFORMANCES

Tue–Thu at 7:30 PM, Fri & Sat at 8 PM, Wed at 1:30 PM, and Sat & Sun at 2 PM

Talkback Tuesday: Tue, Feb 14, at 7:30 PM

VocalEye Performances: Tue, Feb 21, at 7:30 PM, and Fri, Feb 24, at 8 PM

SPONSORS

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ABOUT THE ARTS CLUB THEATRE COMPANY

The Arts Club, one of the largest not-for-profit theatre companies in the country, is the principal gathering place for the theatrical arts in British Columbia. Comprising three unique venues across Vancouver, the Arts Club welcomes more than a quarter million guests annually, tours provincially and nationally, and engages students and artists alike through educational and professional programs.

Above all, the Arts Club is dedicated to the advancement of local artists telling stories from around the globe and, in particular, those of our region. From this, we believe that culture expands, an understanding of differences is nurtured, and art bursts forth. The Arts Club was founded in 1964 and is currently led by Artistic Director Ashlie Corcoran and Executive Director Peter Cathie White.

The Arts Club Theatre Company is situated on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the Coast Salish Peoples, in particular the [xʷməθkʷəy̓əm](#) (Musqueam), [Skwxwú7mesh](#) (Squamish), and [Selilwitulh](#) (Tseil-Waututh) Nations. We are honoured to live, work, and create on this land together.

MEDIA CONTACT

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