

— FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE —

ARTS CLUB WILL REOPEN THIS SUMMER WITH ON-SITE THEATRICAL SHOWS

LILI BEAUDOIN AND JEREMIAH SPARKS TO TAKE THE STAGE IN LIVE SOLO PERFORMANCES

CARMEN AGUIRRE TO STAR IN NEW AUDIO PLAY

VANCOUVER, B.C. (June 8, 2021)—Today the Arts Club Theatre Company announced that it will reopen its venues for live, on-site theatrical productions this summer, starting in July. This special programming features two riveting solo shows, along with a powerful new audio play:

I, Claudia

July 22–August 15, 2021

Beneath Springhill: The Maurice Ruddick Story

August 5–29, 2021

Mala

Audio play available September 1–28, 2021

Tickets for the shows will go on sale Wednesday, June 16, at artsclub.com.

Artistic Director **Ashlie Corcoran**, who revealed the Art Club’s summer lineup, said, “Once the province announced the plans to lift restrictions, which included allowing limited indoor gatherings, we celebrated the news. Then we got busy doing what we do best—creating live theatre! And all this will be done in the most stable, safe way possible.”

She added, “This is a very positive step toward our returning the Arts Club to normal, including programming for larger gatherings in the latter part of 2021. It is the most positive plan for the arts sector in B.C. that we have seen in the 15 months since the start of this pandemic. This summer, we will begin with a seating capacity of 50 patrons per venue and have the flexibility to increase that figure based on the latest guidance from the Ministry of Health.”

“As we resume live shows, we feel incredibly grateful for the unwavering commitment and patience that our patrons have shown,” said Executive Director **Peter Cathie White**. “We look forward to gathering with them to see and hear the stories that are essential to all of us.”

Corcoran described the summer programming as “solo shows that are inspiring, potent testaments to the power of theatre. These plays will be helmed by Vancouver talents **Marie Farsi**, **Bobby Garcia**, and **Sherry Yoon**, respectively, each of whom will be making their Arts Club directorial debut.”

The summer will kick off with **I, Claudia** at the Newmont Stage at the BMO Theatre Centre starting Thursday, July 22. **Lili Beaudoin** will star in **Kristen Thomson**’s acclaimed play of a young girl coming into her own. Performed with costume masks to signal character change, this show’s uncommon form will offer audiences a surprising, engaging experience. *I, Claudia*, which was published by Playwrights Canada Press, has been adapted into a film that was featured on the CBC and at the Toronto International Film Festival.

—MORE—



The second in-person show, ***Beneath Springhill: The Maurice Ruddick Story***, will start at the Granville Island Stage on Thursday, August 5. **Beau Dixon**'s work is a celebration of the real-life miner Maurice Ruddick's hopefulness, joyful spirit, and strength. His positivity and courage, which will be embodied by actor and singer **Jeremiah Sparks**, were a lifeline for himself and his colleagues during the 1958 mining disaster. This piece, and the music that is so integral to it, invites audiences to experience what it would take to live through an unimaginable event and shines with the resiliency of the human spirit.

For the third offering of the summer, the Arts Club is thrilled to release an audio version of the award-winning ***Mala***, by **Melinda Lopez**. Making this work available in an intimate manner through digital means ensures that a wide audience can experience **Carmen Aguirre**'s commanding, funny performance as a woman who faces competing demands on her time and emotional resources. The audio play will be available from Wednesday, September 1.

All shows will be staged and produced in adherence to safety guidelines established by the B.C. government, including a current indoor audience capacity of 50 people. The health and safety of all patrons, staff, and artists is the Arts Club's top priority.

SUMMER THEATRE LINEUP *(information subject to change)*

1)

I, CLAUDIA

By Kristen Thomson

Starring Lili Beaudoin

Director Marie Farsi

July 22–August 15, 2021

Newmont Stage at the BMO Theatre Centre

A tender journey through pre-teenhood

"Ever stare at yourself so hard that your eyes practically start bleeding? I do." Claudia is struggling to fit in. On the verge of thirteen, she is negotiating the wild and woolly terrain of puberty. At school, she hides out in the boiler room. Her "siblings" are goldfish. Her favourite days are Mondays, when she sees her dad, who's her best friend. But now he's getting remarried.

Winner of the Dora Mavor Moore Award for Outstanding New Play, *I, Claudia* is a refreshingly candid and delightful look into a young person's psyche, shared from multiple perspectives through mask work. Enter Claudia's world and recognize yourself reflected in her forthright honesty and humour.

"Blissfully funny and unexpectedly touching" —*Toronto Star*

2)

BENEATH SPRINGHILL: THE MAURICE RUDDICK STORY

Created by Beau Dixon

Music & lyrics by Rob Fortin & Susan Newman

Originally directed & developed by Linda Kash

Starring Jeremiah Sparks

Director Bobby Garcia

August 5–29, 2021

Granville Island Stage

An inspiring Canadian story told through song

Trapped. 4,000 feet underground. With no food, little air, and even less hope of survival. Remarkably and against all odds, the indomitable spirit and song of coal miner Maurice Ruddick served as a lifeline for his fellow miners over nine unimaginable days.

This is the inspiring true story of the African-Canadian "singing miner" that emerged from the 1958 Springhill, Nova Scotia, mining disaster. Journey with this award-winning one-person show that recalls the tense historic events and celebrates hope, courage, and community.

"A celebration of the human spirit" —*Calgary Sun*

3)

MALA

By Melinda Lopez

Starring Carmen Aguirre

Director Sherry J. Yoon

Audio play available September 1–28, 2021

What do we do for the ones we love?

“I’m not Mala,” says the narrator of this powerful and irreverent one-woman show. She is doing the best she can—raising her daughter, working, walking the dog, getting dinner on the table, caring for her increasingly frail and irascible mother—all while longing wistfully for one perfect clementine.

In this exquisitely resonant story, a child of immigrants grapples with the universal experience of supporting the people we love, questioning how far must we go, and for how long. What does it mean to be good? *Mala*’s candid and ultimately cathartic exploration of family bonds creates space for contemplation and provides a message of resilience and optimism.

“Piercingly honest and exquisitely moving” —*The Boston Globe*

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Carmen Aguirre, Core Artist at Vancouver’s Electric Company Theatre and Artistic Associate of New Play Development at the Stratford Festival, is an award-winning theatre artist and author. She has written and co-written over 25 plays, the #1 international bestseller *Something Fierce: Memoirs of a Revolutionary Daughter* (winner of CBC Canada Reads 2012), and its bestselling sequel, *Mexican Hooker #1 and My Other Roles Since the Revolution*. Aguirre is currently writing an adaptation of Euripides’ *Medea*; an adaptation of Moliere’s *The Learned Ladies*, for Toronto’s Factory Theatre; *Fire Never Dies: The Tina Modotti Project*, for Electric Company Theatre; and an adaptation of *The Multi-Headed Hydra*, for the Stratford Festival’s seed commission program. Her digital piece *Floating Life*, commissioned by Stratford, can be viewed on its website. Aguirre is a 2020 finalist for the Siminovitch Prize, Canada’s most prestigious theatre award. She is a graduate of Studio 58.

Lili Beaudoin is a Vancouver-born performer who has lived and worked in cities all over Canada. Some of her notable stage credits include *The Nutcracker* (Caravan Farm Theatre); *Blind Date* (Spontaneous Theatre); *The Humans* (Theatre Calgary); *Gracie* (ATP & Belfry); *Sister Judy* (Arts Club); and *The Tempest*, *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, and *Comedy of Errors* (Bard on the Beach). Elsewhere, Beaudoin’s voice can be heard in several animated TV shows, such as *Beat Bugs*, *Littlest Pet Shop*, *Rainbow Ruby*, *Max Steel*, and *My Little Pony*. Beaudoin is a two-time Leo Award nominee for her work in voice-over, as well as the recipient of a Betty Mitchell Award for her lead role in Joan MacLeod’s one-woman show *Gracie*.

Jeremiah Sparks will make his Arts Club debut starring and singing in *Beneath Springhill: The Maurice Ruddick Story*. His numerous theatre credits include roles in *Controlled Damage*, *The Color Purple*, and *Satchmo Suite* (Neptune Theatre); *Me and My Girl*, *Grand Hotel*, and *The Magicians Nephew* (Shaw); *The Lion King* (Mirvish); *The Odyssey* (Stratford, as actor and music composer); *Mother Courage* and *A Christmas Carol* (National Arts Centre); and *Cake* (International Arts Festival in Uganda). His film and TV credits are *Titans*, *Self Made: Inspired by the Life of Madam C.J. Walker*, *Across the Line*, *Daniel Tiger’s Neighborhood*, and *WiseGirls*. In addition to acting, Sparks is an accomplished pianist, vocal performer, and songwriter. His latest release, “Storms of Fear,” is available on iTunes.

ABOUT THE ARTS CLUB

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.

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