

— FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE—

ARTS CLUB THEATRE COMPANY ANNOUNCES SIX NEW SILVER COMMISSION SCRIPTS

APRIL 3, 2024, VANCOUVER, B.C. / Traditional territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tseil-Waututh) Nations – The Arts Club Theatre Company is pleased to announce six new commissioned scripts as part of their **Silver Commissions** program, celebrating the company’s 60th anniversary. Founded in 2006 to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the first world premiere of a Canadian play at the Arts Club, the [Silver Commissions](#) program is designed to foster the creation of new Canadian scripts.

Through this initiative, the Arts Club has commissioned, developed, and produced 20 new plays, including the critically acclaimed *Onegin*, *The Piano Teacher*, *Redbone Coonhound*, *Someone Like You*, and *Forgiveness*. Each year two new scripts are commissioned but, for the Arts Club’s 60th anniversary, the company is thrilled to commission six new projects.

Artistic Director **Ashlie Corcoran** said, “Commissioning and developing new plays is part of the Arts Club’s backbone. Every year we commission two new scripts with the aim of premiering them on our stages. The bold and exciting move of commissioning a whopping *six new scripts* this year speaks to the company’s ongoing commitment to new work and our ambitious spirit of adventure.”

This groundswell of new play activity exceeds even the launch of the Silver Commissions program in 2006, when the Arts Club commissioned five new scripts.

Stephen Drover, who oversees New Works & Professional Engagement at the Arts Club, added, “The playwrights creating these six new plays represent some of the most exciting and impactful theatre being made today—in BC and across Canada. The incubation for new scripts – from commission to production—is usually between 3 and 5 years so I’m thrilled to spend the next several years working with each of these playwrights as dramaturg and champion of their new work.”

2024–2025 SILVER COMMISSIONS

Beware the Glunkus: A Christmas Musical, by **Ben Elliott** and **Anton Lipovetsky**
An Enemy of the People, by **Colleen Murphy**
Fan Tan Alley, by **Jovanni Sy**
Florida Social, by **Bronwyn Carradine**
Little Darling, by **Amy Lee Lavoie** and **Omari Newton**
Murder on the Pacific Spirit Express, by **Frances Koncan**

MORE INFORMATION

BEWARE THE GLUNKUS: A CHRISTMAS MUSICAL

The story of the Glunkus is a legend that Joe’s dad used to tell him as a kid about a mischievous gnome that hates Christmas. Once a heartfelt artist, Joe now exclusively makes corporate jingles and generic reality TV



soundtracks. But when Joe's niece discovers his unproduced musical in a drawer and stages a reading with his neighbours in the living room, Joe's distaste for the holiday spirit goes big—and he starts to transform into a Glunkus (complete with pointy ears and an elf-like voice). With the help of Bella and his dad, he must open his heart before it's too late! *Beware the Glunkus: A Christmas Musical* is a new holiday musical comedy that puts family—and holiday spirit—first!

Ben Elliott is an award-winning multidisciplinary artist living in Vancouver. When not working in the theatre, Ben writes, records, and performs his own music, animates his own music videos, and composes for film, TV, and radio. **Anton Lipovetsky** is a songwriter, actor, musical director, sound designer, and educator based in Vancouver. He has performed on stages nationwide and his original musicals have been shortlisted three times for a Playwrights Guild of Canada Tom Hendry Award. Together, Elliott and Lipovetsky have written the musicals *The Park* (with Hannah Johnson) and *The Best Laid Plans* (with Vern Thiessen).

AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE

Henrik Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* is about Dr. Thomas Stockmann, a medical officer in a small Norwegian spa town. Upon learning the water used in the spa baths, a major town business, is contaminated, he publishes an article exposing the truth. But instead of receiving gratitude for protecting his fellow townsfolk, like he expects, he becomes the target of a campaign in the name of preserving the town's reputation and prosperity. This new adaptation by celebrated Canadian playwright Colleen Murphy will re-imagine this narrative through the lens of climate change.

Colleen Murphy is a two-time recipient of the Governor General's Literary Award for Drama, and the Carol Bolt Award for Outstanding Play, for both *Pig Girl* in 2016, and *The December Man / L'homme de décembre* in 2007. Other plays include *The Society For The Destitute Presents Titus Bouffonius*, *The Breathing Hole*, *I Hope My Heart Burns First*, *Armstrong's War*, *The Goodnight Bird*, *Beating Heart Cadaver*, and *The Piper*.

FAN TAN ALLEY

In 1900, Victoria's now famous Fan Tan Alley was a bustling hub. In addition to being the narrowest commercial street in North America, it was a hotbed of seedy activity: opium factories, brothels, and gambling made it a crime haven. In a single room of one of its flophouses, dozens of Chinese men live together, taking shifts sleeping, as they attempt to cut deals, have dalliances, hide from crime bosses, and try to find privacy in a setting where privacy is inherently impossible. *Fan Tan Alley* is a new farce with plenty of mistaken identities, narrow escapes, and crazy coincidences. The room has just one door and one window but they'll both get slammed quite a bit in this claustrophobic comedy.

Jovanni Sy is a playwright, director, performer, and the former artistic director of Gateway Theatre (Richmond) and Cahoots Theatre (Toronto). His plays include *Salesman in China* (co-written with Leanna Brodie), *A Taste of Empire*, *The Five Vengeances*, *Nine Dragons* (Jessie Richardson Award), *The Tao of the World* (PGC Comedy Award), and *Kowloon Bay* (PGC Drama Award). At the Arts Club he directed *The Orchard (After Chekhov)* and performed in *The Great Leap*, *It's a Wonderful Christmas-ish Holiday Miracle*, *Noises Off*, and *Forgiveness*.

FLORIDA SOCIAL

Loren's life has come to a screeching halt. A month ago, her days were filled with auditions, classes, newspaper interviews, and nights at the theatre. Now she's in the witness protection program, living with her estranged 80-year-old grandparents in their Venice Beach retirement complex, desperately trying to figure out where she belongs in this sudden new era of bridge tournaments and church luncheons. Based on a true story, this play sheds light on love, family, friendship, loss, and what the road to bouncing back really entails.

Bronwyn Carradine is an award-winning writer, director, and arts administrator. Her stage work has been workshopped, produced, and developed by theatre companies across Canada, including the Arts Club (*Unexpected*; Listen to This Series, 2021) where she was part of the inaugural Emerging Playwrights' Unit in 2019. She's a graduate of Studio 58, a member of the Playwright's Guild of Canada, and currently works as the Artistic Managing Producer for Zee Zee Theatre.

LITTLE DARLING

On her way to the airport, a stage and screen starlet stops at a tiny town to smoke a cigarette in front of a community building that serves as a school, gas pump, convenience store, and clinic—and accidentally burns it down. As part of her community service, she has to direct a “big splashy play” that will double as a fundraiser to rebuild the community centre. Leading a team of miscast (but super eager!) community actors in a homegrown play proves to be the exact tonic she needs to understand herself and what truly matters.

Amy Lee Lavoie is an award-winning playwright and graduate of the National Theatre School of Canada's Playwriting Program. Her plays include *Rabbit Rabbit*, *Stopheart*, *Genetic Drift*, *Doubletree*, and *C'mon, Angie!*
Omari Newton is an award-winning professional actor, writer, director and Head of the Acting Department at Vancouver Film School. His original hip-hop theatre piece *Sal Capone* has received critical acclaim and multiple productions, including a recent presentation at Canada's National Arts Centre. Together, Lee Lavoie and Newton have written *Redbone Coonhound* and *Black Fly*.

MURDER ON THE PACIFIC SPIRIT EXPRESS

Nestled in time between the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria and the beginning of World War I, *Murder on the Pacific Spirit Express* follows an unlikely group of characters from different geographical regions and cultural backgrounds who find themselves embroiled in a murder mystery on the luxury train the Pacific Spirit Express as it journeys across Canada from Montreal to Vancouver. *Murder on the Pacific Spirit Express* is a comedic investigation of both a (fictional) murder and the contentious history of a nation that was born on the back of a train.

Frances Koncan (she/they) is an Anishinaabe and Slovene playwright currently living in Vancouver. Originally from Couchiching First Nation, they grew up on Treaty 1 territory in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and attended the University of Manitoba (BA Psychology) and the City University of New York Brooklyn College (MFA Playwriting). They are currently Assistant Professor of Playwriting at the University of British Columbia. Select plays include *Women of the Fur Trade*, *Space Girl*, and *zahgidiwin/love*.

Season Sponsors:



ABOUT THE ARTS CLUB THEATRE COMPANY

The Arts Club Theatre Company acknowledges the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, the original stewards of this land on which we operate. We would like to ask those visiting or living here to share their thanks by supporting local Indigenous artists and communities. Acknowledging is always a start to supporting; as we step forward, we wish to be better partners, healers, and helpers to our Indigenous neighbours.

The Arts Club is one of the largest not-for-profit theatre organizations in the country and 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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