TIFT
TALK IS FREE THEATRE

25TH SEASON!

ALL THE COWS ARE DEAD

BOOK, MUSIC AND LYRICS BY BEN PAGE

DIRECTED BY WILLIAM DAO



November 5-18, 2026



Based in Barrie, Talk Is Free Theatre's office is situated on the traditional lands of the Anishnaabe people, including the Odawa, Ojibwe and Potawatomi Nations, collectively known as the Three Fires Confederacy.

Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

We acknowledge the land we are meeting on is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit. It has been a site of human activity for at least 15,000 years.

This is Dish With One Spoon Territory. Dish With One Spoon is a treaty between the Anishinaabe, Mississaugas and Haudenosaunee to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes.

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ALL THE COWS ARE DEAD

BOOK, MUSIC AND LYRICS BY BENJAMIN PAGE

ANTON	**MIKE NADAJEWSKI**
LOUIS	**TAYLOR GARWOOD**
CELLO	**KYRA CRILLY**
DIRECTOR	**WILL DAO**
MUSIC DIRECTOR	**BEN PAGE**
SET, COSTUME & PROPS DESIGN	**ALESSIA URBANI**
OBSERVER	**NAOMI KAPLAN**
FIGHT DIRECTION	**CHRISTINA FOX**
STAGE MANAGER	**SABRINA WEINSTEIN**
PRODUCTION MANAGER/ FRONT OF HOUSE MANAGER	**LAUREN CULLY**

Cover photo by Dahlia Katz

TIFT

AT

25

A NOTE FROM THE ARTISTIC PRODUCER

When I look back through my new bifocals at 25 years of TIFT, I am amazed by what we have done and by how far we have come.

This anniversary season is called “F*#% The System”, not just for the running theme through everything we have chosen to produce this year, but to celebrate the 25 years of putting artists ahead of reason, of choosing absurdity over safety, of dreaming up the preposterous; and through some alchemy of collective ingenuity, community loyalty and, well, pure theatre magic, our achievements have been diverse and truly countless.

For all your support: thank you, from the bottom of our livers. We look forward to seeing you for 25 more.

ARKADY SPIVAK

TALK IS FREE THEATRE

Talk Is Free Theatre has enjoyed over twenty years of developing and producing theatre in Barrie, Toronto, across Canada and around the world. Our mission, both in our home seasons and through our many touring endeavours, is to produce a range of cutting edge theatre works and to connect them with as wide an array of people as possible–especially with new, non-urban audiences. As for our home operations in Barrie, TIFT is Central Ontario's only professional theatre company with a full, traditional autumn-through-spring season.

Our diversity of repertoire has included over 170 immersive experiences, off-centre musicals, reinterpretations of classics, and new works large and small–from a one-person show on a city bus to a major musical at the Winter Garden Theatre in Toronto–striving every day to put artists first.

TIFT has been included multiple times on the lists of 10 Best theatre in the national media and has won several top theatre honours, including the Dora Mavor Moore Awards.

Photo by Dahlia Katz

TALK IS FREE THEATRE

STAFF

ARKADY SPIVAK	Artistic Producer
CARA MCRAE	Administrator
KYLE BROWN	Apprentice Artistic Producer
MICHAEL TORONTOW	Communications Associate
CRYSTAL LEE	Production Consultant
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Talk Is Free Theatre engages professional artists who are members of the Canadian Actors' Equity Association, under the terms of the Independent Theatre Agreement.

Talk Is Free Theatre is an active member of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres.

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COMPANY



MIKE NADAJEWSKI

ANTON

For TIFT (Selected): Valere in *La Bête* (Barrie and Toronto), *Sweeney Todd* (UK), *Herringbone/The Yalta Game, Sunday in the Park with George.*

Elsewhere: Nine seasons with the Stratford Festival, including Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, Jesus Christ Superstar* (also on Broadway), *Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris;* Nine seasons with the Shaw Festival, including Aubrey in *Tons of Money, Gnit, Damn Yankees, Charley's Aunt;* Dave in *Vinyl Cafe: The Musical* (Citadel & NAC); Baker in *Into the Woods* (RCM Koerner Hall); several productions across the country with Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre, Drayton Entertainment, Canadian Stage Company, Charlottetown Festival, and others.

Film/TV: *Screech Owls*, *Let's Go, Bananas* (Sphere Animation & 9 Story/CBC Kids); *A Dangerous Life* (Suede Productions); *The Understudy, Northern Tracks* (StratFest@HOME); *Murdoch Mysteries* (CBC/Shaftesbury Films).

Other: Mike returns to the Stratford Festival in 2027 in *Wolf Hall/Bring Up the Bodies* and *Present Laughter*.



TAYLOR GARWOOD

LOUIS

For TIFT: *All The Cows Are Dead, The Frogs, Into The Woods, Outheis, Written In Blood*

Elsewhere: *Anne of Green Gables* (Charlottetown); *White Christmas* (Shaw Festival); *A Christmas Carol* (Tweed & Co.); *Mamma Mia!* (Thousand Islands Playhouse); *UnCovered: Fleetwood Mac & The Eagles, Putting It Together: In Concert, Get A Life: A Banks Prize Cabaret* (The Musical Stage Company).

NEXT UP IN TORONTO







Check out **www.tift.ca** for details!



BEN PAGE

BOOK, MUSIC AND LYRICS; MUSICAL DIRECTOR

For TIFT: *The Frogs* (Musical Director)

Elsewhere: Jack in *Into the Woods* (Koerner Hall); Young Henry in *The Inheritance* (Canadian Stage—Dora nomination for outstanding performance by an ensemble); Caterpillar in *Alice* (Soulpepper/Bad Hats); *The Man That Got Away* (Buddies in Bad Times); Bear in *Ursa: A Folk Musical* (Tweed & Co). Associate Music Direction: *Whistle Down the Wind* (New York Stage and Film).

Other: Ben Page is a non-binary musical author, music director, and performer. They split their time between their hometown of Toronto and New York, where they recently completed their Master's at NYU. Ben's composition debut *Leaving Eden* (book and lyrics by Jenny Waxman) won best musical in the New York Musical Festival in 2019. Cast albums: *Ursa* (The Uncommon Folk Collective), *Alice* (Bad Hats). @here_is_ben



WILL DAO

DIRECTOR

For TIFT: *All The Cows Are Dead*

Elsewhere: Directing: *Laura Secord's Thing* (freeswim/Crow's Theatre–upcoming); *Harm's Way* (TMU); *i love the smell of gasoline* (Pencil Kit Productions/Nightwood Theatre); *Queer Youth Cabaret, Peggy Picket Sees The Face of God* (Soulpepper Theatre); *The Boy Who Cried, Gulp* (Toronto Fringe). Assistant Director: *As You Like It* (Stratford Festival); *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* (Canadian Stage); *Uncle Vanya* (Mirvish); *The Master Plan* (Crow's Theatre).

Other: Will is an artist in residence at Roundabout Theatre in New York. He is a graduate of the University of Toronto and the Soulpepper Academy. He's an alumni of Stratford's Langham Director's Workshop and Outside the March's Artistic Accomplice Program. His instagram is @iwannabewilldao.

COMPANY



ALESSIA URBANI

SET, COSTUME AND PROPS DESIGN

For TIFT: Debut

Elsewhere: Costume/Set Designer: *Iris (Says Goodbye)* (Mixtape Projects). Costume Designer: *Into the Woods, Million Dollar Quartet* (Grove Theatre); *Enemy Lines* (Aeris Körper); *Killing Time* (Mixtape Projects). Co-Costume/Set Designer: *Viva La Mamma, Lucretia* (UofT Opera). Co-Costume Designer: *Three Islands, Cendrillon, Il capello di paglia di Firenze, A Tale of Two Cities* (UofT Opera); Assistant Set/Costume Designer: *Saturday, Sunday, Monday* (Stratford); Assistant Costume Designer: *As You Like It* (Stratford).

Other: Alessia Urbani is a Toronto-based Costume/Set designer and artist, working in



CHRISTINA FOX

FIGHT DIRECTION

For TIFT: Perfect on Paper, Blackbird

Elsewhere: Theatre (selected): *Murder on the Orient Express* (Theatre Aquarius); *A Mirror* (ARC Stage); *You, Always* (Canadian Stage); *Enormity, Girl and the Earthquake in her Lungs* (Nightwood Theatre); *Oliver!* (Yes! Theatre Sudbury). Film/TV (selected): *Macy Murdoch* (Shaftesbury Films/CBC); *This Is Not A Test* (Anova Pictures); *Settle Down* (CBC/OutTV).

Other: Christina is a non-binary actor, fight director and intimacy coordinator based in Tkaronto. They are a graduate of the National Theatre School of Canada.



SABRINA WEINSTEIN

STAGE MANAGER

For TIFT: *Debut.*

Elsewhere: Theatre: *Spring Awakening* (Soulpepper Theatre); *Bad Roads*, *Earworm* (Crow's Theatre); *Grease*, *Finding Neverland* (Drayton Entertainment); *Love You Forever and More Munsch* (Young People's Theatre); *Maanomaa*, *My Brother* (Canadian Stage); *Bronte: The World Without* (Guild Festival Theatre); *Fertility* (Light Echo Theatre); *The Strange and Eerie Memoirs of Billy Wuthergloom* (Eldritch Theatre).

Other: Sabrina is a proud graduate of the University of Toronto's Centre for Drama, Theatre, and Performance Studies. Much love to Liam and Otis, as well as her wonderful friends and family.



LAUREN CULLY

PRODUCTION MANAGER/FOH MANAGER

For TIFT: Set and Props Coordination: *Perfect on Paper*, *Blackbird*, *12 Dinners;* Production Assistant: *All the Cows Are Dead;* Production Manager: *The Maids*, *Don't Touch The Art*

Elsewhere: Set Design: *Blithe Spirit*, *The 39 Steps*, *Table Manners* (South Simcoe Theatre). Props: *Little Shop of Horrors*, *The 39 Steps*, *Hello Dolly*, *Table Manners*, *The Secret Garden*, *That December Show!* (South Simcoe Theatre).

Other: Love and thanks to TIFT team for keeping me on the call list! Extra special thanks and love to Colin, MJ, and Mum.

NEXT UP IN **BARRIE**



A powerful new work by contemporary Ukrainian playwright Oleg Mikhailov, ***Letters of Ice and Sand*** makes its world premiere in Barrie.

Written from inside a nation at war and spanning generations of conflict—from the Soviet-Finnish Winter War to the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine—the play gives voice to those whose lives have been shaped by violence, displacement, love, and loss, offering a deeply human perspective on one of the defining global crises of our time.

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Plan to Give to

TALK IS FREE THEATRE

Everyone who supports TIFT is a beautiful flower in our garden.

Every flower has its season, and that season must, one day, come to an end. The roots remain, the seeds grow ready to bring new life, keeping the garden as beautiful as when you occupied your place in the plot.

In honour of our 25th season, we hope you'll consider sharing your seeds with us after your season comes to a close.

To discuss this further, please reach out to Arkady Spivak at arkady@tift.ca.

GRATITUDE TO OUR BILLETERS & VOLUNTEERS

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What if you can watch a play in a language you don't speak and have it translated in real time right before your eyes? We made it happen, thanks, in part, to these fine folks who "bought" languages for our ARIA Translation Glasses.

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