



photo by Olivier Clément

EDA HOLMES

Artistic and Executive Director

What a thrill and a privilege it is to welcome the extraordinary Ronnie Burkett back to Centaur. The talent, creativity and unabashed joy that Ronnie brings to the stage with his wild company of eccentric characters who come to life from the tips of his fingers is the definition of the magic of theatre. His imagination knows no limits and it is no wonder that he is taking on the Bard himself so that we can all rediscover the story of the star-crossed lovers Romeo and Juliet. Don't expect to just sit back in the dark—you never know when he will call out to the audience for a helping hand... but don't worry! As always Ronnie will lead us through the story with wit, irreverence and deliver us to the ending with a deep sense of compassion and love. Bon Spectacle! Enjoy the show!

Land Acknowledgment

Montreal is an incredible place in which to have the privilege to make theatre. It has such a rich and unique story of its own.

Long before Cartier sailed up the St. Lawrence and encountered a nation of Iroquoian people in a place called Hochelaga, the island that the European settlers chose to call Montreal had been a point of conflict, conference, creativity and exchange since time immemorial for many Indigenous peoples including the Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabeg, Huron-Wendat, and Abénaki Nations. The people of the Kanienkéha:ka Nation – known in English as the Mohawk – are now considered the caretakers of the unceded land and water around Montreal. In their language, this island bears the name of Tiohtià:ke, which means “broken in two,” because of the way the river breaks around it.

I love how this Indigenous language identifies the island as part of the river because it reminds me that we are all in the flow of a much larger story. This mighty river has for centuries carried people here from all over the world in search of new opportunities and new lives, and the Lachine Rapids that sit just off the western tip of this island have given pause to many of those journeys. The river has made contemporary Montreal into a vibrantly diverse city. I find that diversity inspiring because it is by telling each other our stories that we build bridges between our different cultures and languages.

BUILDING THE FUTURE

@ CENTAUR SEASON 23/24

OCTOBER 17 – NOVEMBER 5
CENTAUR THEATRE
PRESENTS THE ENGLISH
LANGUAGE PRODUCTION
OF MENUENTAKUAN'S

alterNatives

Written by Drew Hayden Taylor
Directed by Xavier Huard



MARCH 12 – MARCH 30

GUILT (a love story)

Written and performed by Diane Flacks
Directed by Alisa Palmer



APRIL 23 – MAY 12
CENTAUR THEATRE IN
PARTNERSHIP WITH REPERCUSSION
AND TABLEAU D'HÔTE PRESENTS

THY WOMAN'S WEEDS

Written by Erin Shields
Directed by Amanda Kellock



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CENTAUR THEATRE

May 2 – 14, 2023

Ronnie Burkett

LITTLE WILLY



**CENTAUR THEATRE COMPANY
PRESENTS**

Ronnie Burkett

LITTLE WILLY

Created and performed by **Ronnie Burkett**
Original Music by **John Alcorn**

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Marionette, Costume and Set Design by **Ronnie Burkett**

Music and Lyrics and Music Production by **John Alcorn**

Production Manager/Artistic Associate: **Terri Gillis**

Stage Manager/Technical Director: **Crystal Salverda**

Dramaturge: **Tanja Jacobs** Associate Producer: **John Lambert**

Little Willy is presented with the support of the Canada Council for the Arts
and the Ontario Arts Council

Ronnie Burkett received development support for *Little Willy* from the
Canada Council for the Arts Explore and Create Program.

Ronnie Burkett Theatre of Marionettes is exclusively represented by
John Lambert & Assoc., Montreal, Canada (www.johnlambert.ca)

Marionettes designed and
created by **Ronnie Burkett**

Costumes: **Kim Crossley**

Studio Assistants: **Angela Talbot,
Gemma James-Smith, Marcus
Jamin, Jesse Byiers, Alexander
Mantia, with Martin Herbert**

Shoes and Accessories:

Camellia Koo and Robin Fisher

Marionette Controls: **Luman Coad**

Marionette Stringing:
Marcus Jamin

Majordomo: **Robbie Buttinski**

The Daisy Theatre stage
created by **Mike Kukucska,
Hamilton Scenic Specialty Inc.**

"The Max Blümchen Orchestrale"
pit band constructed by
Eric James Ball, with puppets
sculpted by **Noreen Young**.

The Daisy Theatre theme song
sung by **Laura Hubert**.

Music recorded at
Desert Fish Studios

Mixing and mastering:
Jeff Wolpert

Musicians

John MacLeod: Trumpet

Bob De Angelis: Clarinet
and Tenor Saxophone

John Alcorn: Keyboards
and Programming



RONNIE BURKETT

Creator and Performer

Ronnie Burkett has been captivated by puppetry since the age of seven, when he opened the World Book Encyclopedia to "Puppets". He began touring his puppet shows around Alberta at the age of fourteen and has been on the road ever since.

Recognized as one of Canada's foremost theatre artists, Ronnie Burkett has been credited with creating some of the world's most elaborate and provocative puppetry. Ronnie Burkett Theatre of Marionettes was formed in 1986 and has stimulated an unprecedented adult audience for puppet theatre, continuously playing to great critical and public acclaim on Canada's major stages, and as a guest company on numerous international tours abroad.

Ronnie has received numerous awards in the Canadian theatre as a playwright, actor and designer for his work with Theatre of Marionettes, including the 2009 Siminovitch Prize in Theatre, The Herbert Whittaker Drama Bench Award for Outstanding Contribution to Canadian Theatre, and international recognition including a Village Voice OBIE Award in New York for Off-Broadway Theatre, The GLAAD Award for Outstanding Theater, Broadway/Off-Broadway, and four Citations of Excellence in the Art of Puppetry from the American Center of the Union Internationale de la Marionnette. In 2019, he was appointed as an Officer of The Order of Canada.

Ronnie's highly acclaimed and wildly popular improvised marionette vaudeville cabaret *The Daisy Theatre* has played seven consecutive sold-out touring seasons including Los Angeles to New York, Vancouver, Toronto, Sydney and Auckland, and follows the international successes *Penny Plain*, *Billy Twinkle*, *10 Days on Earth*, *Provenance* and the "Memory Dress Trilogy" of *Tinka's New Dress*, *Street of Blood* and *Happy*. *Little Dickens* (The Daisy Theatre version of A Christmas Carol), premiered in 2017. In June 2019, Ronnie Burkett Theatre of Marionettes premiered a new audience-interactive production, *Forget Me Not*. In 2022, *The Loony Bin* premiered, Ronnie's first solo salon hand puppet show since he was a teenager. In 2023, The Daisy Theatre cast takes on Shakespeare in *Little Willy*, and work has begun on Ronnie's dream project *Wonderful Joe* for a spring 2024 premiere.



JOHN ALCORN

Lyrics and Music, Music Producer

John Alcorn is one of Canada's premiere jazz vocalists, delivering his distinctive renditions of jazz standards on the most prestigious bandstands and concert stages across Canada. His list of citations and acknowledgements in music and theatre include both Jazz Report (Male Vocalist of the Year) and Dora (Outstanding Music) awards. As composer, lyricist, musical director, arranger and producer, he has collaborated with numerous significant Canadian theatre artists, including Daniel MacIvor, Deanne Taylor, Sky Gilbert, Theresa Tova, and Tomson Highway, and eight collaborations with Theatre of Marionettes.



CRYSTAL SALVERDA

Stage Manager

With over 30 years in the entertainment industry, Crystal has been blessed to work both across the country and internationally stage managing some wonderful productions. She has had the pleasure of working with Ronnie for the past 11 years. She has also worked with companies such as Blyth Festival, Kidoons Network, Calgary Stampede, Necessary Angel, Soulepper Theatre, Canadian Stage, Harold Green Jewish Theatre, just to name a few. Other work experience includes Operations for *Field of Dreams* and *Little League Classic* (BaAM Productions), Sales Manager (Westsun), Concert Stage Manager (Marquis Entertainment).