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A TALK IS FREE  
THEATRE PRODUCTION

WRITTEN BY AND  
STARRING JAKE EPSTEIN

DEVELOPED WITH AND DIRECTED  
BY ROBERT MCQUEEN

# BOY FALLS FROM THE SKY



Nov 19  
- Dec 10  
2023

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MAGAZINE

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Welcome to the Segal Centre! If you were fortunate to experience *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical* on our stage only weeks ago, then I'm genuinely thrilled for you to find the connection between *Beautiful* and *Boy Falls From The Sky*. Knowing you consider the Segal as a place to keep returning to means the world to us. And, while I'm not one for spoilers, I can promise another unforgettable experience.

When I first saw *Boy Falls From The Sky*, it resonated with me profoundly. As a forever "theatre kid," Jake's unfiltered tales from his illustrious career felt both intimate and universal. At its core, this play celebrates the theatre, with all its highs, lows, and everything in between, so I had a perpetual smile on my face. It was clear we could all use a bit more of Carole King in our lives, and a dose of Jake Epstein is a pretty fabulous follow up! Performances like the one Jake delivers remind us of the healing and unifying power of storytelling on stage. It's also a nod to all the artists both on our stage and behind the scenes. If they make it look easy, it's because they dedicate countless hours perfecting their craft. Let's hear it for the artists who continuously show up when we need them the most.

Finally, if you've enjoyed our first two shows of the season, I'd like to remind you that we've still got plenty of incredible theatre in store for you and it's not too late to subscribe: you can upgrade your single ticket to a subscription to see *Fifteen Dogs* and *POTUS*. Until then, I wish you a happy, healthy, and peaceful holiday and look forward to welcoming you back to the Segal Centre in 2024.

Thank you for being here, for sharing in our journey, and for embracing the magic of theatre with us.

**LISA RUBIN**  
Artistic and Executive Director

*The Segal Centre is situated on the traditional territory of the Kanien'kehá:ka people. The land was also a diplomatic meeting place with other Iroquoian and Algonquians including Algonquin-Anishinaabe, Atikamekw, and Huron-Wendat. We acknowledge that we are located on a land that has been the site of human creativity and story-telling for thousands of years, and are thankful that we are able to create, collaborate, play, and work here. To learn more about this, visit [segalcentre.org/en/land-acknowledgement](https://segalcentre.org/en/land-acknowledgement)*

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Photo by Scott Cooper

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We are in the business of making art, but artists are our #1 priority. Check out our website, or come see us in Barrie! We cordially invite you to experience more of what **Talk Is Free Theatre** is all about.

THE SEGAL CENTRE FOR PERFORMING ARTS PRESENTS  
A TALK IS FREE THEATRE PRODUCTION

# BOY FALLS FROM THE SKY

WRITTEN BY AND STARRING  
KEYBOARD Jake Epstein  
UPRIGHT AND ELECTRIC BASS Daniel Abrahamson  
DRUMS Srikanth Narayanan  
Christina Beaudry-Cárdenas

## CREATIVE TEAM

DEVELOPED WITH AND DIRECTED BY Robert McQueen  
MUSIC DIRECTION, MUSIC SUPERVISOR, Daniel Abrahamson  
ORCHESTRATIONS AND ARRANGEMENTS  
SET DESIGN BY Brandon Kleiman  
ORIGINAL LIGHTING DESIGN BY Chris Malkowski  
PRODUCTION MANAGER / SOUND DESIGNED BY Erik Richards  
STAGE MANAGER Emmanuelle So

## TALK IS FREE THEATRE TEAM

ARTISTIC PRODUCER Arkady Spivak  
ARTISTIC ASSOCIATE Michael Torontow  
ADMINISTRATOR Cara McRae  
ASSOCIATE PRODUCER Dustyn Wales  
ASSISTANT PRODUCER Matthew MacQuarrie-Cottle  
PRODUCTION CONSULTANT Crystal Lee  
ARTIST B.I.G. PROGRAM LIAISON Richard Lam

**THE RUNNING TIME IS 75 MINUTES**

The Segal Theatre is a member of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres and engages, under the terms of the Canadian Theatre Agreement, professional artists who are members of Canadian Actors' Equity Association. The videotaping or other video or audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited.



Photo credit: Cylla Von Tiedemann

“I have a photograph of Fred Astaire from the knees down with his feet crossed. It’s kind of inspiring because it reminds me his feet were bleeding at the end of rehearsals. Yet when you watch him, all you see is freedom. It’s a reminder of what the job is about.”—Alan Rickman

After living and performing in New York for five years, I moved home and felt stuck. I had spent my life trying to be a Broadway performer and I had achieved a version of that dream. I should have been flying high. Yet the whole experience felt massively disappointing and confusing. When people asked me about my time in New York, I would lie, or I would say nothing. I couldn’t bear to tell the truth: New York broke me.

I used to go watch my wife, actor and writer Vanessa Smythe, host a storytelling night at Streetcar Crowsnest in Toronto’s East End, and I’d witness people going up onstage and telling real stories from their lives. These stories were sometimes sad, sometimes funny, sometimes outrageous, but always true. It was captivating to see strangers getting up on a stage, in front of an audience, telling their story.

It was around that time that I started getting asked by venues in the U.S. to come and perform “my act” in their theatre. I was unemployed, and eager to earn some money. But I thought, “what the hell is my act?” I asked one producer what they would like me to do. He replied: “You’re an actor. You know, stand there and act.”

I turned all those offers down.

One night at a bar, I started telling some friends stories of what had happened to me in New York. Like the stories I had heard in the East End, my tales were real, funny, and a little outrageous. I expected awkward comfort from my friends and the deepening feeling of embarrassment for admitting some of it. But the strangest thing happened: my friends laughed. And they began sharing stories of their own honest and funny disappointments.

Shortly after that, I was once again asked to perform “my act” at a venue in Lennox, Massachusetts. And the following month, Vanessa and I drove nine hours to Lennox so I could perform. My act: a series of real stories interwoven with songs. After that first show, we spent the evening hearing stories from audience members who were moved and wanted to share their own experiences. There was an alchemy happening. These shameful, embarrassing, disappointing stories, became hilarious, sometimes cringeworthy, glorious moments of theatre shared between strangers.

With the encouragement of my sister, I pitched the show to my favourite director in the country, Robert McQueen. And I suddenly found myself doing something I never thought I'd do – a revealing solo show at the Toronto Fringe Festival. Performing at the Fringe led me on a development path that has somehow ended up in this theatre tonight. The irony of all ironies: the disappointment I had from my experiences in the theatre, became a piece of theatre itself.

The biggest misconception about a solo show is that it is done alone. This show would not have been developed were it not for Derrick Chua's generous and unwavering support, Daniel Abrahamson's expert wit and musical collaboration, Arkady Spivak and the whole Talk Is Free team for their incredible help getting the show on the road, my parents Kathy Kacer and Ian Epstein for encouraging me to dream big and helping with editing and legal advice, my sister Gabi Epstein for the comedy "booster shots," and of course my partner Vanessa Smythe for a level of support and love that can't be properly described in words.

Thanks to Lisa Rubin and Jon Rondeau for their belief in the show and offering this beautiful theatre to perform in.

Last but not least, Robert McQueen, the beekeeper and amateur cellist himself, who helped me out of my dark cave by encouraging me to be more honest and revealing in the work.

For me, this show started with a question: What do you do when life disappoints you?

My answer: You go to a bar with your friends and share the stories as badges of pride. The truth will set you free. There is no business like show business. There is also no business like certified public accounting, but it doesn't rhyme as well.

**JAKE EPSTEIN**

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Directed by Alisa Palmer

Pictured: Diane Flacks



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Written by Erin Shields  
Directed by Amanda Kellock

Pictured: 1st row: Espoir Segbeaya, Felicia Shulman, Julie Tamiko Manning,  
Warona Setshwaelo. 2nd row: Deena Aziz, Leni Parker, Joy Ross-Jones



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## WHAT IS *DEGRASSI*?

*Boy Falls From The Sky* is packed with pop culture references, with show titles and celebrities name-dropped in just about every line. Here are a few that are important to understand the story:

***American Idiot* (musical):** A musical set to the tracks from the Green Day rock album of the same title. Following the same themes from the album, the story centres on three young men struggling with dissatisfaction in their suburban upbringing and searching for meaning in their lives.

***Avenue Q:*** A musical comedy that premiered in 2003 in which actors used puppets to parody, often described as “*Sesame Street* for adults.” The show ran both on Broadway and off-Broadway.

**Broadway:** A theatrical district in New York City known for its excellent musical theatre scene. For a venue to be considered a Broadway theatre, it must be located in this geographical location and have at least 500 seats. **Off-Broadway theatres** are smaller theatres in New York City that have fewer than 500 seats, regardless of where they are located.

**Bono and the Edge:** Musicians from the popular rock band U2.

***Cabaret:*** A musical set in a Berlin nightclub right before the Nazis gained power.

**“Can You Feel the Love Tonight”:** A romantic song in the musical *The Lion King*. It’s sung between the main character and his love interest and is not an ideal brother-sister duet.

***Degrassi: The Next Generation:*** A Canadian TV-series soap opera about teenagers that ran on CTV and MTV Canada from 2001 to 2015. The stories centered around a group of teenagers at Degrassi Community School facing challenges in dramatic inter- and intrapersonal issues.

**Drake:** A Canadian rapper who was on *Degrassi* with Jake and went on to become one of the biggest selling artists of all time. Recently, he tied Michael Jackson’s record for most #1 hits by a male artist on the Billboard Hot 100 chart. Years after *Degrassi*, many castmates, including Jake, reunited on Drake’s “I’m Upset” music video.

***Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark:*** A musical stage adaptation of the superhero comic *Spider-Man*, with music written by U2’s Bono and The Edge. The Broadway show was infamous for the number of injuries that happened during the dangerous aerial stunts.

***Spring Awakening:*** A musical set to contemporary rock music that “explores the mystery of attraction, desire, sex, insecurity, and the highs and lows of navigating the pressures of young adult life.”

\* For sources and more fascinating information, check out our AUDIENCE GUIDE at [segalcentre.org](http://segalcentre.org)

**JAKE EPSTEIN**

**Writer/  
Performer  
Segal Centre  
Dangerous  
Liaisons  
Talk Is Free  
Theatre Open  
the Window,**

*Dani Girl* **Elsewhere** *Boy Falls From The Sky* (Mirvish—Dora Award nominations for Outstanding Performance, Outstanding New Musical and Outstanding Production); *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical* (Broadway—original cast); *Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark* (Broadway); *Spring Awakening*, *American Idiot* (First US National Tours); *Straight* (Off-Broadway); *Dear Jack*, *Dear Louise* (Arena Stage—World Premiere); *Billy Elliot: The Musical*, *Oliver!*, *Our Town* (Mirvish); *Uncovered: Carole King/James Taylor*, *Elton John/Billy Joel*, *Bob Dylan/Bruce Springsteen* (Musical Stage Company), *Therefore Choose Life* (Harold Green, co-writer, Broadway/World Award—Best Performance in a Play); *Dog Sees God* (Michael Rubinoff); *Cinderella*, *Beauty and the Beast* (Ross Petty Productions) **Selected Film/TV** *Degrassi* (Gemini Award—Best Youth Performance); *Umbrella Academy*, *Suits*, *Designated Survivor* (Netflix); *Hardy Boys* (Disney+); *Star Trek: Discovery* (Paramount+); *Mouthpiece* (TIFF Opening Night Selection); *The Wedding Contract*, *Eight Gifts of Hanukkah*, *Good Witch* (Hallmark); *Candy Cane Candidate*, *Mistletoes and Menorahs* (Lifetime); *Hudson and Rex* (CityTV); *Private Eyes* (Global); *Murdoch Mysteries*, *Frankie Drake*, *Being Erica* (CBC); *Charlie Bartlett* (Opposite Robert Downey Jr.); *The Zack Files* (YTV). **Training** Graduate of the National Theatre School of Canada. **Et cetera** Lover of live music, Japanese food, and Vanessa Smythe. **Favourite role to date:** being a dad to Miles, even though it means performing on no sleep.

**ROBERT  
MCQUEEN**

**Director/  
Developer  
Segal Centre  
Debut  
Talk Is Free  
Theatre Debut  
Elsewhere**

*Boy Falls From The Sky* (Royal Alexandra Theatre, Mirvish—2022 Dora nomination, Outstanding Direction); *Caroline, or Change* (Musical Stage Company—2020 Dora nomination); *Fun Home* (Musical Stage Company—2018 Toronto Theatre Critics Association award for Outstanding Direction, Dora Mavor Moore nomination); *Life After* (Musical Stage Company—2018 Outstanding Direction Award, Dora Mavor Moore Awards); *Forest Boy* (New York Musical Theatre Festival—2017 Outstanding Direction nomination); *Man of La Mancha* (Stratford); *The Wild Party* (Obsidian/Musical Stage); *Falsettos* (Harold Green/Musical Stage); *The Light in the Piazza* (Musical Stage). Regionally, in North America, Robert's directing assignments have included productions of *I Am My Own Wife*, *As You Like It*, *The Cradle Will Rock*, *Hair*, and *Pal Joey*. Internationally, Robert's work includes direction and dramaturgy of *Where Elephants Weep* which had its premiere in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. He also helmed the Japanese language production of the Rogers and Hammerstein musical *Carousel* at the Galaxy Theatre in Tokyo. In the commercial theatre, Robert was the Associate Director for the Broadway and national touring productions of *Mamma Mia!* and recently directed the Mexico City, Sao Paulo and Buenos Aires productions. Additionally, he was Associate to Harold Prince for the national tour of *Showboat*. **Opera** Strauss's final operatic composition, *Capriccio* (Pacific Opera); *La Bohème* (COC); *Turandot*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (Arizona Opera); *Faust* (Associate Director—Cincinnati Opera); *The Magic*

*Flute*. (Director/dramaturge/libretto adaptation–Vancouver Opera).

**Et cetera** In addition to being a director and dramaturge, Robert is also an educator.



**DANIEL ABRAHAMSON**  
**Music Direction,**  
**Music Supervisor,**  
**Orchestrations and**  
**Arrangements/**  
**Keyboard**  
**Segal Centre**  
**Debut** *Talk Is*

**Free Theatre** *Emily, Dinner À La Art*  
**Elsewhere** Music Supervisor, *Boy Falls From The Sky* (Mirvish); Music/Lyrics, *The Stars of Mars* (Michael Rubinoff–PGC Tom Hendry Award for Best New Musical in Development); Music/Lyrics, *Hugh and I* (TO Fringe–Patron's and Critic's Pick); Musical Director, *Million Dollar Quartet* (Port Hope Festival Theatre); Musical Director, *Nonsense* (Drayton Entertainment). **Et cetera** Founder and Chief Technologist of StreamStage.live, father to 2.5 y/o Stella and husband to wife Kayla James (co-star of @Tunes4Toddlers on YouTube) whom this tour is dedicated to and in support of. Big gratitude and love to them, and Jake, Robert, & the Epstein family. **Online** @streamstage.live @tunes4toddlers



**SRIKANTH NARAYANAN**  
**Upright &**  
**Electric Bass**  
**Segal Centre**  
**Debut**  
**Elsewhere**  
*Swing!, Pure*  
*Variety, Get*

*Down Tonight!, Blazing Boots* (NCL Gem), *Le gros spectacle* (Théâtre St-Catherine) **Music/Recordings** Bassist and MD for the Perry Phillips Quartet on RCI 2014-2019 with 5 self-produced albums of the jazz quartet. **Training/Experience** B.Mus from McGill

University, Independent Jazz studies at Concordia University, Freelance bassist for various groups and venues in the Montreal area since 2008. 16 cruise ship contracts.

**Online** www.Srikanth-music.com, https://srikanth.bandcamp.com

**Et cetera** Teaches guitar, bass, and ukulele lessons in Lachine, TMR, and St-Henri.



**CHRISTINA BEAUDRY-CÁRDENAS**  
**Drums**  
**Segal Centre**  
**Debut**

**Elsewhere** *Lizzie* (In the Wings),  
*A Chorus Line*

(Nuvo) **Music/Recordings** *Backwater Township II* (2022), *Ultrafox 2* (2022), *Ultrafox* (2021) **Training/Experience** BFA Concordia University – Jazz Studies  
**Awards** 2022 Oliver Jones Award **Online** @christ.bc



**EMMANUELLE SO**  
**Stage Manager**  
**Segal Centre**  
**Debut**  
**Talk Is Free**  
**Theatre** Debut  
**Elsewhere** As  
Apprentice  
Stage Manager:

*Of the Sea* (Tapestry Opera/Obsidian Theatre); *The Marriage of Figaro* (Canadian Opera Company); *The Ex-Boyfriend Yard Sale* (Soulpepper/Outside the March/Never Mind the Noise/Red Light District); *Boy Falls From The Sky* (Mirvish/Past Future Productions). As Stage Manager: *John Who* (Preamble Productions). **Training** Emmanuelle is a graduate of Toronto Metropolitan University's Performance Production BFA program.



**ERIK RICHARDS**  
**Production**  
**Manager/Sound**  
**Designer**  
**Segal Centre**  
 Debut  
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**Elsewhere**

*The Pillowman, Dead in the Water* (Sound Designer–YES Theatre); *Dion: A Rock Opera* (Production Manager–Coal Mine); *Evandalism* (Sound Designer–Fringe Theatre); *Talk Treaty To Me, Hacking and Slashing, Lemon, CHANZO, Monster, Constellations, Air* (Producer, Director–ReadyGo Theatre). **Et cetera** Erik is a freelance production manager, audio designer, director, and playwright. He sends his heart home to his family and partner, Frances, in Edmonton, who he is away from while following his passion out east.



**CHRIS**  
**MALKOWSKI**  
**Original Lighting**  
**Designer**  
**Segal Centre**  
 Debut  
**Talk Is Free**  
**Theatre Debut**  
**Elsewhere**

Lighting Designer: *King Lear* (Stratford Festival); *Chitra* (Shaw Festival); *HMS Pinafore* (Vancouver Opera); *Face to Face* (Naishi Wang/Citadel+ Compagnie); *Gloria* (ARC/Crow's Theatre); *Waves of Flesh* (Lab Works/Staatsballett Berlin); *AF* (Red Sky Performance/Canadian Stage); *Suitcase* (Theatre Mada/Passe Muraille); *Portia's Julius Caesar* (Hart House); *Pass Over* (Obsidian Theatre/Buddies in Bad Times); *Black Drum* (Deaf Culture Centre/Soulpepper); *Red Bike, Fever/Dream, The Winter's Tale, Antigone, Pantalone's Palace* (Brock Dramatic Arts). Art Installations: Lighting Designer, *1000 Faces* (+AMOR/Ontario Place). **Et cetera** Chris Malkowski is a

full member of Associated Designers of Canada



**DERRICK CHUA**  
**Original**  
**Producer**  
**Segal Centre**  
 Debut  
**Talk Is Free**  
**Theatre Debut**  
**Elsewhere** As  
 Producer: *The*

*Ex-Boyfriend Yard Sale* (Haley McGee & Soulpepper); *Boy Falls From The Sky* (Past Future & David Mirvish, Royal Alexandra Theatre); *The Chinese Lady* (Studio 180 & fu-GEN); *Julius Caesar* (Groundling Theatre & Crow's Theatre). **Awards** Derrick is the proud recipient of a Dora Award, Harold Award, Now Magazine Award as Toronto's Best Indie Producer, and Canadian Actors' Equity Association Honourary Membership for Outstanding Contribution to the Performing Arts.

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The Segal Academy offers professionally taught performing arts courses, workshops, and camps for children aged 7-17. Whether our students choose a career in the arts or simply enjoy participating, they gain knowledge, inspiration, skills, and a love for the arts that will last a lifetime. We hope you get as much joy and inspiration from this theatre experience as our students do at the Academy!

*Enjoy the show!*

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For more information, please contact Liana Wiener, Academy Director  
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Derrick Chua

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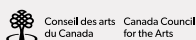


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