

PROGRAMME



CROW'S



BENGAL TIGER AT THE BAGHDAD ZOO

Written by **Rajiv Joseph** | Directed by **Rouvan Silogix**



OCTOBER 11 TO NOVEMBER 6, 2022

CROW'S THEATRE and
MODERN TIMES STAGE COMPANY present
**BENGAL TIGER
AT THE BAGHDAD ZOO**

Written by **Rajiv Joseph**
Directed by **Rouvan Silogix**

October 11 to November 6, 2022

Original Broadway production produced by

Robyn Goodman, Kevin McCollum, Jeffrey Seller, Sander Jacobs, Ruth Hendel/Burnt Umber, Scott & Brian Zellinger, Center Theatre Group, Stephen Kocis/Walt Grossman.

World Premiere produced by

Center Theater Group/Kirk Douglas Theatre (Michael Ritchie, Artistic Director; Charles Dillingham, Managing Director), Los Angeles, CA.

Developed at

The Lark Play Development Center, New York City.

BENGAL TIGER AT THE BAGHDAD ZOO is presented
by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc., New York.

CROW'S THEATRE and
MODERN TIMES STAGE COMPANY present
**BENGAL TIGER
AT THE BAGHDAD ZOO**

OCTOBER 11 to NOVEMBER 6, 2022
GULOIEN THEATRE | TORONTO PREMIERE

THE COMPANY

Rajiv Joseph
Rouvan Silogix
Lorenzo Savoini
Ming Wong
John Gzowski

Playwright
Director
Set, Props, and Lighting Designer
Costume Designer
Sound Designer

Christopher Allen
Andrew Chown
Mahsa Ershadifar
Sara Jaffri
Ali Kazmi
Ahmed Moneka
Kristen Thomson

Kev
Tom
Iraqi Woman/Leper
Haida/Iraqi Teenager
Uday Hussein/Iraqi Man
Musa
Tiger

Geoff Scovell
Corey Tazmania
Israa Abdul JaLeel
Lisa Nighswander
Laura Delchiaro
Andrew Dollar
Maya Bowers
Raida Fahmi and
Ammar Ramzi

Fight Director
Intimacy Director
Iraqi-Arabic Language Speaking Coach
Head of Props
Head of Wardrobe
Stage Manager
Assistant Stage Manager
Translations/Cultural Consultants

Crow's Theatre Supporting Sponsor for
BENGAL TIGER AT THE BAGHDAD ZOO

THE GULOIEN FAMILY

Crow's Theatre is a proud member of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres (PACT) and the Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts (TAPA). We engage professional artists under the terms of the Canadian Theatre Agreement (CTA) with Canadian Actors' Equity Association (CAEA).

Running time of **BENGAL TIGER AT THE BAGHDAD ZOO**
is approximately two hours plus intermission.

WELCOME TO CROW'S THEATRE



Welcome back to Streetcar Crowsnest and to our co-production with Modern Times Stage Company of **BENGAL TIGER AT THE BAGHDAD ZOO**. It's already been a very busy fall for us with two back-to-back openings of *Uncle Vanya* and *The Shape of Home*. We feel very fortunate to be able to premiere - finally! - **BENGAL TIGER**, after last year's cancellation due to a pandemic closure. We welcome back former Crow's Theatre Associate Artistic Director, Rouvan Silogix, in his first show as the new Artistic Director of Modern Times.

This year, we wanted to give Torontonians unmissable reasons to plan a great night out. With our two busy venues, our fabulous restaurant Gare de l'Est offering the best pre-show prix fixe menu in town, and our bar (open pre- and post-show) featuring live music, comedy, and cabaret, the theatre will be full of delights all year long.

Even as the season has already begun, we still have something for everyone, and a subscription offering to match. We have new takes on classic works by Shakespeare, Ovid, and Handel; we have Toronto premieres from international dramatists Lolita Chakrabarti (*Red Velvet*) and Lloyd Suh (*The Chinese Lady*), and we have world premieres by Canadian playwrights Alex Bulmer (*Perceptual Archaeology*) and Paolo Santalucia (*Prodigal*), not to mention Stephen Sondheim's masterful musical, *Merrily We Roll Along*.

Audiences will be treated to a performing arts space that is constantly transforming—something we take pride in at Crow's Theatre. With each production, you will be immersed in a new world, you will encounter life in a new way, and you will experience humanity from a new perspective.

This is the season to rediscover your love of theatre!

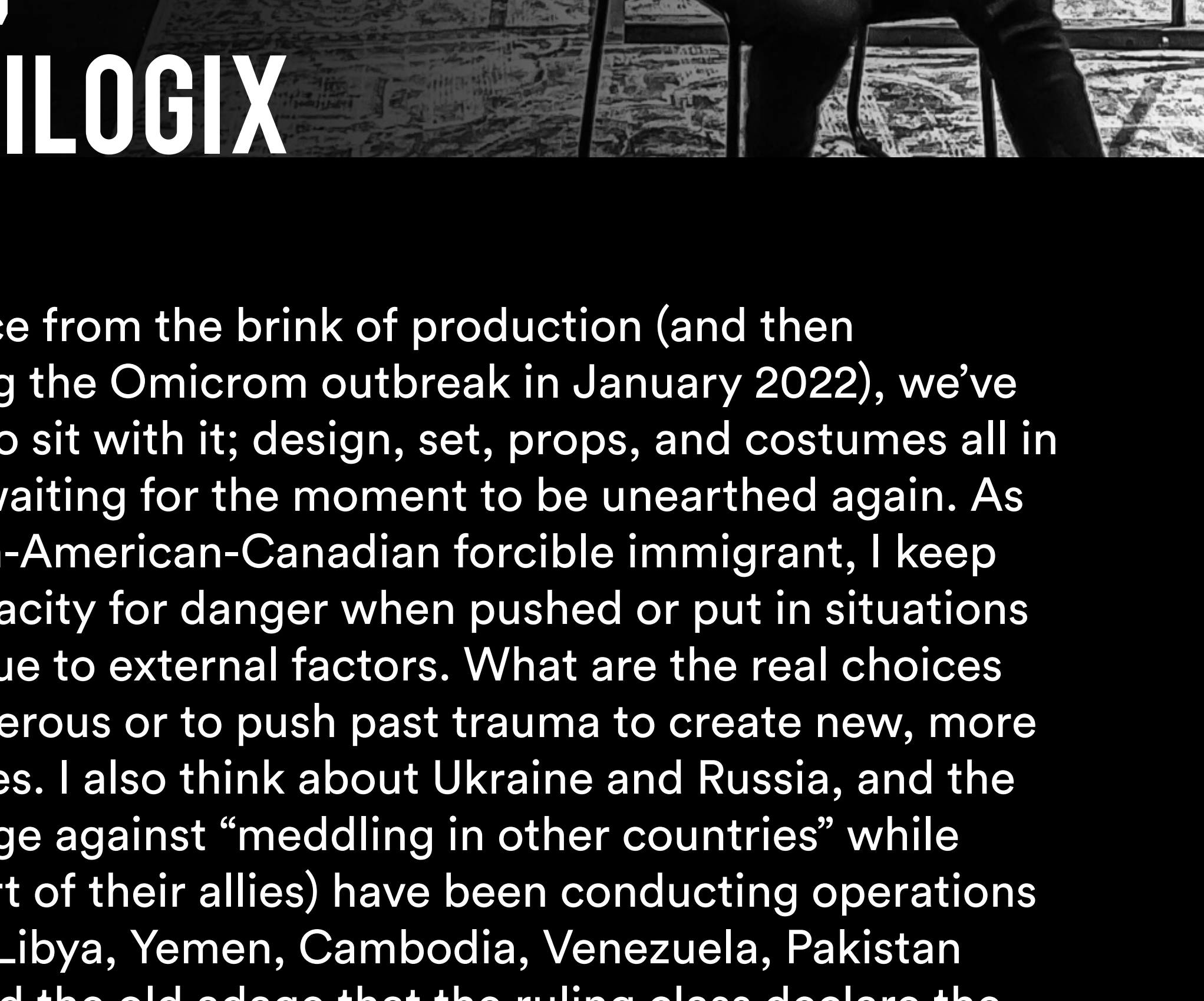
For more information about each of our shows please visit
www.crowstheatre.com

CHRIS ABRAHAM, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

SHERRIE JOHNSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

CROW'S

MESSAGE FROM DIRECTOR, ROUVAN SILOGIX

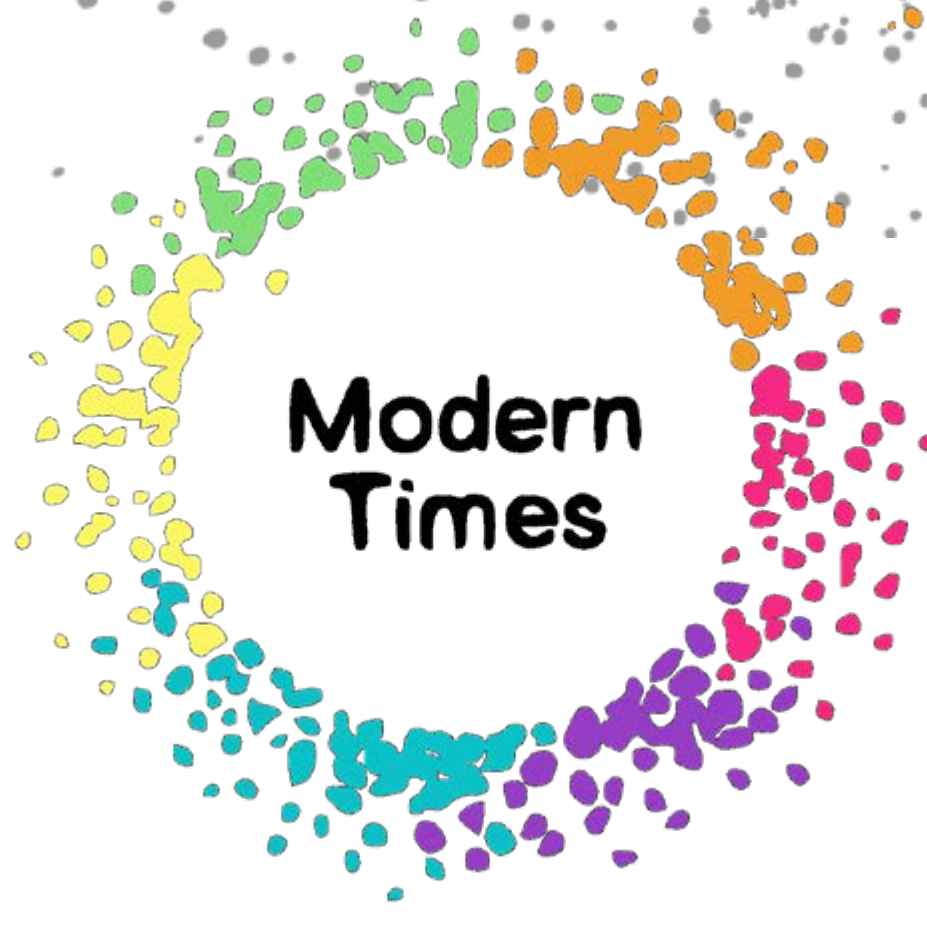


Returning to this piece from the brink of production (and then cancelling following the Omicron outbreak in January 2022), we've all had nine months to sit with it; design, set, props, and costumes all in the can, preserved, waiting for the moment to be unearthed again. As a Pakistani-Tanzanian-American-Canadian forcible immigrant, I keep reflecting on our capacity for danger when pushed or put in situations and circumstances due to external factors. What are the real choices we have? To be dangerous or to push past trauma to create new, more hopeful circumstances. I also think about Ukraine and Russia, and the U.S. leading the charge against "meddling in other countries" while they (with the support of their allies) have been conducting operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Yemen, Cambodia, Venezuela, Pakistan (and on and on...), and the old adage that the ruling class declare the wars but the working class wages them and are the ones to suffer the consequences. It makes me think about our present moment, and how the previous world order is shattering, and how we're looking with hope for what will come next.

I also think about comedy, especially when it undeniably erupts in our most human moments, and its relation to the Tiger's existential journey in this piece. The Tiger, like the characters in this show, and all of us, are plagued by similar questions of purpose, circumstance, and morality in a world that constantly provides evidence to the contrary. Tiger's gotta eat and that means hunting the small, the weak, the feeble, because they are easier to kill. Does that morally and intrinsically doom the Tiger by our societal standards? Likewise, we humans create the societal standards through which we choose to govern ourselves, and in this way, unlike the Tiger, we have more choices ahead of us...or do we?

Most of all, I hope you're exhilaratingly entertained by the show, drawn into its intrigue and mystique, and riveted by the phenomenal writing. What's theatre if it's not grabbing our hearts and squeezing as we laugh, leaving us with questions we perhaps already had about ourselves, our society, and the new one we are presently in the process of creating.

ROUVAN SILOGIX
DIRECTOR, **BENGAL TIGER AT THE BAGHDAD ZOO**
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, MODERN TIMES STAGE COMPANY



ABOUT MODERN TIMES STAGE COMPANY

The Modern Times Stage Company was established in Toronto in 1989. We are an organization that creates original Canadian art, re-imagines classic work, and adapts plays in different languages and contexts to bring holistic and innovative forms to our contemporary and diverse Canadian audiences. We are committed to exploring, imagining, and creating exciting, radical, performing arts, while empowering voices that have been historically and presently marginalized—focusing on artists who have immigrated or sought asylum in Canada.

The company has toured extensively (Montreal, Colombia, the United States, Europe and Iran) and in our 30+ years of existence we have been nominated for 60+ Dora Awards.

STAFF

Artistic Director **Rouvan Silogix**
Artistic Producer and Company Manager **Steph Crothers**
Associate Artist and Producer **Mahsa Ershadifar**
Marketing Manager **Jennifer Otter-Leaney**
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THE CAST

CHRISTOPHER ALLEN

KEV

For Crow's Theatre: ***Orphans for the Czar***. Select theatre credits include: ***A Midsummer Night's Dream*** (Bard on the Beach); ***Sweat*** (Canadian Stage); ***The Birds and the Bees*** (Arts Club); ***Antigone: Fong*** (Young People's Theatre); ***The Birds and the Bees*** (Thousand Islands Playhouse/Western Canada Theatre); ***Selfie*** (Young People's Theatre); ***The Whipping Man*** (Winnipeg Jewish Theatre); ***Julius Caesar, The Comedy of Errors*** (Canadian Stage); ***The Adonis Project*** (The Piece of Mine Festival). Film & TV: ***Star Trek: Discovery*** (Paramount+/CBS), ***Coroner*** (CBC), ***Murdoch Mysteries*** (CBC Television, Citytv), ***Workin' Moms*** (CBC Television), ***13: The Musical*** (Netflix). Awards: Outstanding Performance – Ensemble Theatre for Young Audiences, Dora Mavor Moore Award 2018.



ANDREW CHOWN

TOM

Theatre credits include ***Mary Stuart*** (Chicago Shakespeare Theatre), ***Shakespeare In Love*** (The Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre/Citadel Theatre), ***Vimy*** (Soulpepper), ***Romeo and Juliet***, ***The Merry Wives of Windsor*** (Bard on The Beach), ***The Circle*** (National Theatre School), and ***Harry The King*** (Repercussion Theatre). Film and television credits include ***Her Friend Adam***, ***Burden of Truth*** (CBC Television), ***Nine Short Films About Technology*** (FXX/Hulu), ***Ghost Writer*** (Apple TV+), and ***Lakewood*** (Netflix).



MAHSA ERSHADIFAR

IRAQI WOMAN

Mahsa Ershadifar is a bilingual (English and Farsi) performer, assistant director, stage manager and translator. She has worked with NOWADAYS THEATRE COMPANY on numerous projects, including, but not limited to: ***Dance of Torn Papers***, ***The Only Possible Way*** (Canadian Stage), ***Swim Team*** (The Theatre Centre), ***Winter of '88*** (Next Stage Festival), ***27 Words***, ***Miss You***, ***Poof!***, ***From The Basement To The Roof***. Mahsa is also the new Associate Artist and Producer at Modern Times Stage Company. Most recent credits include ***Dance of Torn Papers*** (directed by Mohammad Yaghoubi, remounted for Fringe), ***On The Shoulders of Antonio*** (directed by Mohammad Yaghoubi), ***Chekhov in Compliance with Protocol*** and ***Chekhov on Shaw St*** (directed by Siavash Shabanpour), ***Heart of A Dog*** (directed by Mohammad Yaghoubi for Next Stage Festival), ***Great Buddha***, ***Help Them!*** (directed by Aida Keykhaii). Mahsa is thrilled to be a part of this amazing cast. [@mahsaerf](https://www.instagram.com/mahsaerf)



SARA JAFFRI

HAIDA / IRAQI TEENAGER

Sara Jaffri is making her theatre debut with Crow's Theatre in the dual role of two very contrasting teenage girls. Sara has previously appeared in several short films, most recently as Nur in Anubhav Singh's forthcoming crime drama ***It Happens to Us***. Sara has also done voice work for visual artist Erdem Tasdelen's audio installation series ***The Characters***, as well as narrated Historica Canada's animated short film on Canada's first mosque. She is a former student, coordinator and member of Toronto's first and only classical North Indian percussion organization, the Toronto Tabla Ensemble (TTE).



ALI KAZMI

UDAY HUSSEIN / IRAQI MAN

A Pakistani Canadian, a multilingual, multifaceted, and experienced, professional creative professional powerhouse of an actor, director and producer. Born in Karachi, Pakistan, Ali lives in Toronto, Canada where he went to Toronto Film and Drama school and restarted his career from scratch. Hailing from a family of creative juggernauts, it is inherent within him. He has been working successfully both on and off camera in Pakistan, India, Canada, and the USA for over 20 years in theatre, television, and film. He has amassed a portfolio, peppered with multi-layered, diverse characters. Last month, Ali appeared in the critically-acclaimed ***Uncle Vanya*** also at Crow's Theatre, and in February 2023 he can be seen in the moving ***Behind the Moon*** at Tarragon Theatre. His film ***Funny Boy***, by the avant-garde director Deepa Mehta, was Canada's submission in the Oscar race for Best picture and best adapted screenplay. Ali has just wrapped Pakistan's first superhero/adventure flick ***Umro Ayaar***.



AHMED MONEKA

MUSA

Ahmed Moneka arrived in Toronto from Baghdad in 2015 and has since collaborated with many art institutions including the Canadian Opera Company, Soulpepper Theatre, National Arts Centre, Tarragon Theatre, Aga Khan Museum, Tafelmusik, Driftwood Theatre Group, Toronto Jazz Festival, Koerner Hall, Modern Times Stage Company, Jabari Dance Theatre, Toronto Laboratory Theatre, The Theatre Centre, Aluna Theatre, TRIA Theatre, Small World Music, and Crow's Theatre. He's been a member of the Soulpepper Academy, a member of Noteworthy–The Musical Stage Company's and Prime Mover Theatre's flagship musical theatre writing program—and an artist-in-residence with Driftwood Theatre Group.



KRISTEN THOMSON

TIGER

Kristen Thomson is an actor and writer for theatre, film, and television. She has received four Dora Awards, two ACTRA Awards, two Canadian Comedy Awards, a Genie, a Gemini, and a Canadian Screen Award. For Crow's, Kristen wrote ***The Wedding Party***, which opened the new theatre and subsequently enjoyed a remount there and later at the National Arts Centre. Thomson is the playwright and performer of ***I, Claudia***, first produced at Tarragon Theatre and later at Crow's Theatre. It has toured internationally and been adapted for television. Her other theatre credits include ***Someone Else*** (Canadian Stage and Crow's Theatre), ***Peggy Pickett Sees the Face of God*** (Canadian Stage and Volcano), ***Pipeline***, ***Uncle Vanya***, ***The Chairs***, ***The Guardsman***, and ***Mirandolina*** (Soulpepper), ***Every Brilliant Thing***, ***Hysteria***, and ***Oleanna*** (Canadian Stage). Thomson had a recurring role in ***Cardinal*** on CTV, and has appeared in the films ***Away from Her***, ***Flower and Garnet***, and ***The Republic of Love***.



THE CREATIVE TEAM

RAJIV JOSEPH

PLAYWRIGHT

Rajiv Joseph's play *Bengal Tiger At The Baghdad Zoo* has been awarded a grant for Outstanding New American Play by the National Endowment for the Arts. Rajiv's New York productions include *Animals Out Of Paper* (Second Stage Theatre, summer 2008), *The Leopard And The Fox* (Alter Ego, fall 2007), *Huck & Holden* (Cherry Lane Theatre, 2006), and *All This Intimacy* (Second Stage Theatre, 2006). In Los Angeles *Huck & Holden* was produced by The Black Dahlia Theatre in 2006. Through the Lark Play Development Center, Rajiv has traveled to Mexico and Romania, where *Bengal Tiger At The Baghdad Zoo* was translated into Spanish and Romanian, respectively, and performed in staged readings. Rajiv has been awarded the Paula Vogel Award by the Vineyard Theatre and the 2009 Kesselring Fellowship. Rajiv is a Founding Member of the new New York based theatre company The Fire Department and was a contributing writer on their first two theatrical events, *Speakeasy* and *At War: American Playwrights Respond To The War In Iraq*. He is a former Lark Playwriting Fellow and Dramatists Guild Fellow. His plays have been published by Samuel French, Dramatists Play Service, and Smith & Kraus. He received his B.A. in Creative Writing from Miami University and his M.F.A. in Playwriting from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, and he is currently a Language Lecturer at NYU with the School of Art and Public Policy and the Expository Writing Program. He served for three years in the Peace Corps in Senegal, West Africa.



ROUVAN SILOGIX

DIRECTOR

Rouvan Silogix is a Pakistani-Tanzanian award-winning writer, director, performer, and classical pianist. He is Artistic Director of Modern Times Stage Company as well as founder and Artistic Director of Theatre ARTaud, a surrealist theatre collective run entirely by artists of color. Rouvan's work primarily explores imaginative forms of art, often reimagining classical texts, digging into the profound and complex socio-political issues of our times. In his former role at Crow's Theatre as Associate Artistic Director developing new work, he was an instrumental co-conspirator in launching Cliff Cardinal's radical retelling of *As You Like It* (The Land Acknowledgement). Recent credits include *Die Versammlung* (Munchner Kammerspiele), *49th Day* (Next Stage Festival), *Julius Caesar*, *Ruby Waters Live*, *As You Like It* (Crow's Theatre), *The Private Life of The Master Race*, *Professionally Ethnic* (SummerWorks); *Lucifer Means Lightbringer* (NAC); *Grab 'Em By The P****: Or How to Stop Worrying & Love The Bomb*, *Blood + Soil*, (Theatre ARTaud); *A Dance Of Torn Papers* (Nowadays Theatre); *Haircuts By Children* (Mammalian Diving Reflex); and *I'll Met By Moonlight* (Pointed Cap Productions).



LORENZO SAVOINI

SET, PROPS, AND LIGHTING DESIGNER

Crow's Theatre: set design for *Orphans for the Czar*, set and lighting design for *Julius Caesar* (Dora Award). Recently: set and video design for *Pipeline* (Soulpepper), set and lighting design for *Of Mice and Men* (Joffrey Ballet), lighting design for *The Miser* (Stratford Festival), lighting design for *Up Close And Musical* (Stratford Festival), costume design for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Stratford Festival). Elsewhere: set design for *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Soulpepper), set design for *The Front Page* (Stratford Festival), set and lighting design for *Mother's Daughter* (Soulpepper and Stratford Festival), *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (Les Grands Ballet), *Rose* (Soulpepper, Dora Award), and lighting design for *Prospera* (Ballet Nacional de Cuba). Other: Member of the Associated Designers of Canada. Recipient of four Dora Mavor Moore Awards. www.lorenzosavoini.com



MING WONG

COSTUME DESIGNER

Ming Wong is a Toronto costume designer, stylist, and wardrobe technician. She has worked on a variety of projects ranging from dance, theatre, film, and television. She has designed across the city and beyond for companies such as Crow's Theatre, Canadian Opera Company, Shaw Festival, Stratford Festival, Citadel Theatre, Canadian Stage, Ross Petty Productions, Nightwood Theatre, Factory Theatre, Obsidian Theatre, and Modern Times Stage Company. Ming is a four-time Dora Mavor Moore Award nominee, as well as the winner of the 2021 Virginia & Myrtle Cooper Award in Costume Design.



JOHN GZOWSKI

SOUND DESIGNER

Composer, sound designer, musician, and instrument maker, John Gzowski has worked on over 300 theatre, dance and film productions for which he has done composition, sound design, live Foley, live music, and as musical director. He has played banjo for opera in Banff, studied Carnatic classical music in India, and played oud and guitar in jazz and folk festivals across Canada and Europe. His theatre work has won him six Dora Awards, from 18 nominations for companies like Stratford, Shaw Festival, Luminato, National Arts Centre, Mirvish Productions, Manitoba Theatre Centre, The Arts Club, Canadian Stage, Soulpepper, Dancemakers, Red Sky, Tarragon Theatre, Factory Theatre and Young People's Theatre. John has played on numerous CDs including recent releases with Patricia O'Callaghan, Tasa, and Autorickshaw, as well receiving a Juno nomination with Maza Meze. John ran Canada's first microtonal group touring Canada playing the works of Harry Partch; he has composed and performed with several new music groups; and he has worked as co-artistic director of the Music Gallery.



GEOFF SCOVELL

FIGHT DIRECTOR

Supervising fight director for the Stratford Festival 2022 season, Associate fight director: 2013-2020 seasons, Assistant fight director: 2004, 2007, 2009 seasons. Elsewhere: Fight director: *Black Drum* (Soulpepper); *Peter and the Starcatcher*, *Sweet Charity* (Shaw Festival); *Don Giovanni*, *War and Peace* (Canadian Opera Company). Film/TV: Stunts (select): See (seasons two and three), *The Lost Symbol*, *The Boys* (four seasons), *Hardy Boys*, *The Man from Toronto*, *Clarice*, *It Chapter Two*, *X-Men: Dark Phoenix*, *Schitt's Creek*, *Murdoch Mysteries*, *Wayne*, *Ginny & Georgia*, *Jupiter's Legacy*, *Utopia Falls*, *Supergirl*, *Impulse*, *What We Do in the Shadows*, *I Was Lorena Bobbitt*, *Save Me*, *Frankie Drake*, *Titans*, *Umbrella Academy*, *The Expanse*, *Designated Survivor*, *Suicide Squad*, *Dark Matter*, *Killjoys*, *12 Monkeys*, *Bitten*, *The Strain*, *Pompeii*, *Orphan Black*, *Carrie*, *Total Recall*. Training: Supreme Fight Master Elite level 3. BFA, Ryerson University. Awards: SAG nomination, Best Stunt Ensemble, 2021. Paddy Crean Award for excellence in Stage Combat. [@GeoffScovell](https://twitter.com/GeoffScovell)



COREY TAZMANIA

INTIMACY DIRECTOR

Corey Tazmania is thrilled to make their Crow's Theatre debut collaborating on such a powerful story. Recent works includes: *Theatre of Heartbreak(s) (Inter Arts Matrix)*; *Little Women*, *The Musical* (The Playhouse Collective); *Iphigenia and the Furies (On Taurian Land)* (Theatre Passe Muraille); *1184* (Phoenix Arts). Corey has taught intimacy for the Stage and Shakespeare workshops at York University, Rosebud School of the Arts, and The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey. MFA York University.



ANDREW DOLLAR

STAGE MANAGER

Andrew's recent credits include: *The Cold War, part one* with Video Cabaret at the Deanne Taylor Theatre, *Driving Miss Daisy* with Orillia Opera House, *The Second City Guide to the Symphony* with the Toronto Second City, and *Krapp's Last Tape* at Theatre Passe Muraille. Past Credits with Modern Times Stage Company are: *The Daughters of Scheherazade* and *Macbeth* at the Tehran international Theatre Festival in Tehran, Iran.



MAYA BOWERS

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

Maya is a Toronto based stage manager. Recent work includes assistant stage manager in *On Golden Pond* (Drayton Entertainment), assistant production manager in *Musik fur das Ende* (Soundstreams), apprentice stage manager in *The Curious Voyage* (Talk is Free Theatre), *Sweet (Young People's Theatre)* and Studio 180 Theatre), *Actually* (Obsidian Theatre Company and Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company), *Antigone* (Young People's Theatre); and *The Christmas Express*, *The Great Kooshog Lake Hollis McCauley Fishing Derby*, *Knickers!*, *Boeing Boeing* (Upper Canada Playhouse).



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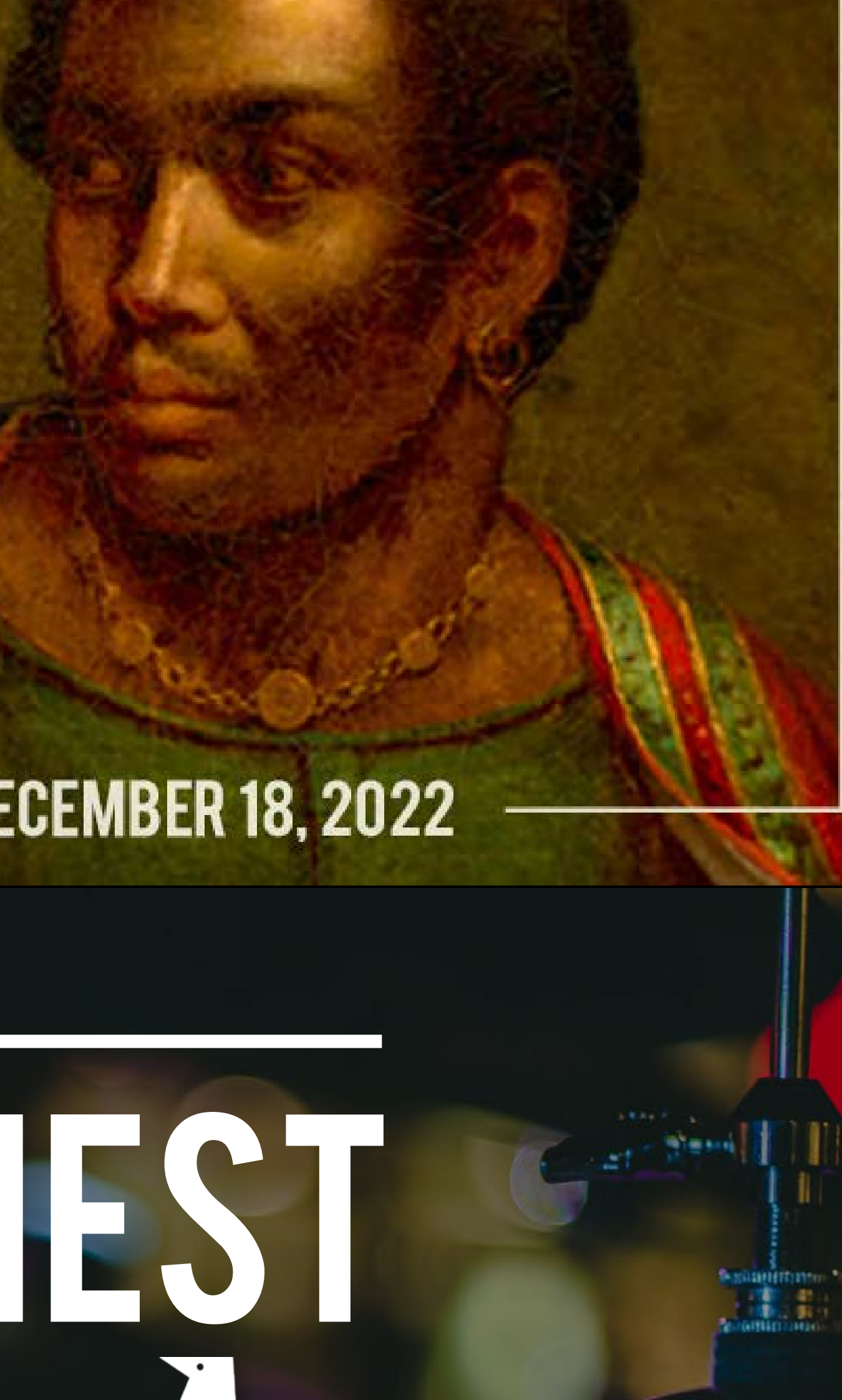
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Written by **Lolita Chakrabarti**
Directed by **Cherissa Richards**
Allan Louis as Ira Aldridge

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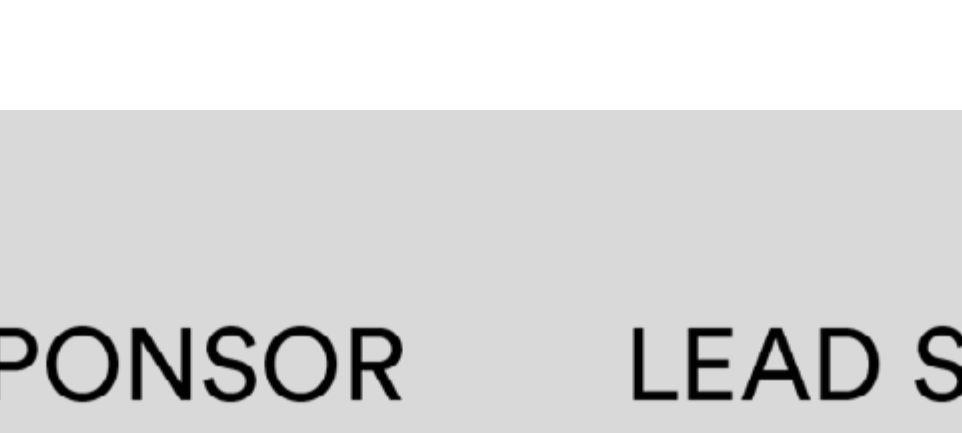
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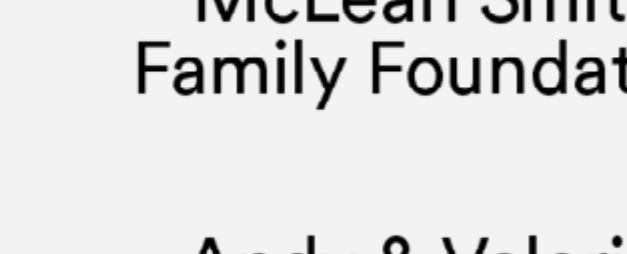
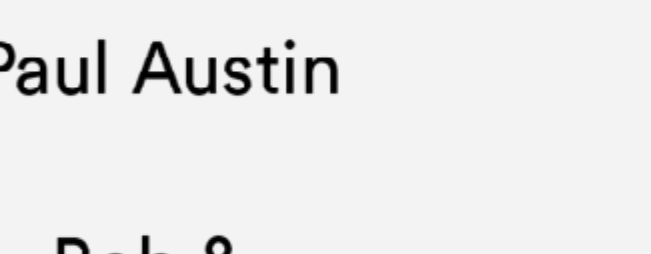
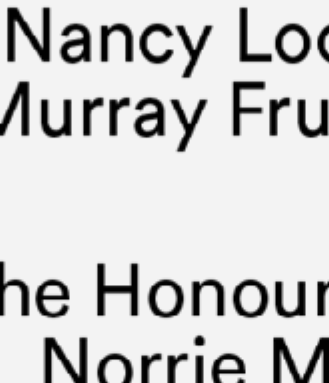
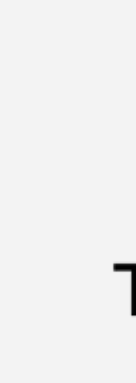
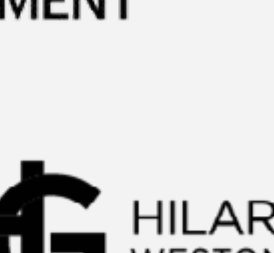
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