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The Persuasion Presents



BUYSEXUAL

Written by ANDREW RIDDLES
Directed and produced by
ELLE ATTSON & ANDREW RIDDLES
Stage managed and produced by
KEANNA LOUIS-CHARLES

LabO Theatre, June 13th - 22nd
Ottawa Fringe 2024

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BUYSEXUAL

A play in five acts by
Andrew Riddles

Leslie **Kim Blanche**
Brian **Harold Swaffield**
Cordelia **Heather Trent**
Amanda **Heather Evens**
Nine-Inch Nils **Logan Indewey**

Directors **Elle Attson**
Andrew Riddles

Producers **Keanna Louis-Charles**
Elle Attson
Andrew Riddles

Stage Manager **Keanna Louis-Charles**

ASMs **MJ Costales**
Rachel Durling

Executive Producer **Thera Pritchard**

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Cast and Crew

Kim Blanche Leslie



Kim Blanche first took the stage in high school where she fell in love with live theatre. She acted with ITR in her 20's but did not return to the craft until recently. She has performed with ITR (*Staff Room*), Lakeside Players (*Play On!*) and RRT (*Bad Auditions on Camera* and *Tea With Roger*). Besides acting, she is trying her hand at writing plays, short stories, and hopefully a mystery novel in the near future. Kim has thoroughly enjoyed the process of becoming Leslie and working with the amazing cast, producers, directors and stage manager of *BUYSEXUAL*. Newly retired, she doesn't know what is in store next but it will not involve eggplants or puffins. Unless she crochets them!

Harold Swaffield Brian



Harold was born in Ottawa in the early 60's. He started singing and playing piano at a young age. He continued to sing till he turned 20 with St. Matthews Choir under the direction of Brian Law. In the 90s he joined Nepean Choir and then in 2006 to Ottawa's 17 Voyces, also with Dickens Carolers Ottawa. He started acting in 2007 with The Lakeside Players as a dame in the Pantomime, *Jack and the Beanstalk*. From there the world was his oyster. He appeared on stage at OLT, Kanata Theatre, Phoenix Players, ITR, RRT and many more times with The Lakeside Players. He continues to be active by directing and acting in various west end companies and he still sings.

Heather Trent Cordelia



Heather embarked on her acting journey in high school, gracing the stage in productions like *The Election*, *Little Women*, and *Bye-Bye Birdie*. Following her high school stint, she delved into theatre studies at York University for a year before realizing her passion for film acting, prompting her transition to Humber College to specialize in acting for film and television. At Humber, she underwent rigorous combat training, mastering hand-to-hand combat, swordplay, dagger techniques, rapier skills, and dual wielding. Heather's talent shines in various acclaimed short films including *Shades*, *Exit*, and *Ice Cream Malibu*. Amidst her accomplishments, she also took on the roles of writer, producer, and director for her own creation, *The J-Slur*, a project she crafted while studying at Toronto Film School. Heather is eager to reconnect with her theatrical origins in *BUYSEXUAL!*

Heather Evens Amanda



Albeit an indirect path for Heather, nearly three decades of theatre adventures around the globe have led to being cast in this Fringe production. She had appeared on stage in 12 different cities before landing in Ottawa last year – favourite roles have included Lennie in *Crimes of the Heart*, Ruth in *The Norman Conquests* trilogy, Randa in *The Savannah Sipping Society*, Jan in *Bedroom Farce*, and Ender in Phoenix Players' recent production of *Shorthanded*. Non-acting highlights over the years have included co-founding The Seoul Players, co-founding and producing two shows under That Other Theatre Company, blogging for the GVPTA, and doing social media for Urban Ink's *Children of God*. Today, she thanks YOU for supporting live theatre. The arts matter.

Logan Indewey Nine-Inch Nils



Logan Indewey is an Ottawa-based performing artist and graduate of both the Performing Arts program and Scriptwriting program at Algonquin College. He has previously played the roles of Isaac Jaggard in the OLT's production of *The Book Of Will*, Macduff in S'n'B's *Macbeth*, and The Officer in 9th Hour Theatre Co's *Beauty Will Save The World* to name a few. He is hoping to establish a career in the Canadian performing arts industry and believes his time in fringe fest will be crucial to his journey.

Elle Attson Director & Producer



Elle has called Ottawa home since 2012, pursuing a psychology degree. *BUYSEXUAL* is her directorial debut. She is an actor with the Meus Agency, has experience in local film, VO, mocap, and as a former highland dancer. She founded Fifteenth Floor Theatre, co-produced and acted as Estelle in a production of Sartre's *No Exit*. Previous theatre roles include *Sabrina Fair* (OLT), Christopher Wren in *The Mousetrap* (Phoenix Players), and Mother in *A Christmas Story* (Kanata Theatre). She is writing a play about the witch from 'Hansel and Gretel' – an homage to the roots of her love for story telling, which began at 11 years-old. Life is too short not to pursue joy, and fearlessly express yourself – even in difficult times.

Keanna Louis-Charles Stage Manager & Producer

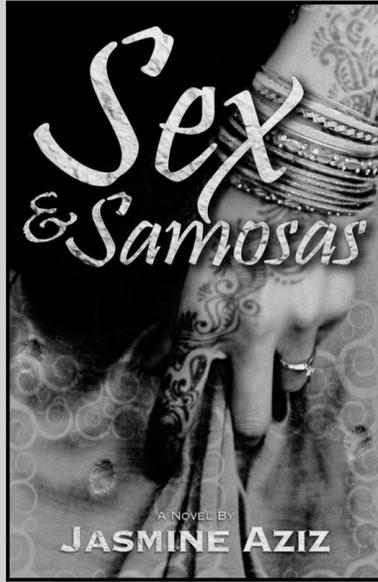


Born and raised locally in Ottawa, Keanna is passionate about serving her community in both her professional, and personal life. Keanna works fulltime at a non-for-profit music festival and studied at Carleton University to acquire her Bachelors in Performance Music (Saxophone Studies). Keanna has previous experience as a stage manager with local and international musicians around Ontario, and as a budding actress, is excited to continue her journey within the theatre space. Before branching into the theatre and film space, Keanna dedicated herself as an educator supporting youth and those who may not otherwise have had the opportunity to experience music.

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Andrew Riddles Playwright, Director & Producer



Andrew Riddles was born in Britain and moved to Canada in 2003. He has had several short stories published in both countries and has won prizes in the Carleton University Creative Writing Competition. His most recent story *The King of Ithaca*, was published in the inaugural edition of the literary journal *Sumac* (2023). *BUYSEXUAL* is his first play. Prior to producing this work, Andrew's theatrical career in the Ottawa area has been mainly in opera, singing chorus in two separate productions of *L'elisir d'amore* (Donizetti), *Tosca* (Puccini), *Dido and Aeneas* (Purcell) and *Le docteur miracle* (Bizet), as well as singing the role of Marullo in *Rigoletto* (Verdi). Aside from writing, Andrew is busy listening to opera, getting tattooed, travelling the world, and being active in the movement to free Palestine.

Thera Pritchard Executive Producer



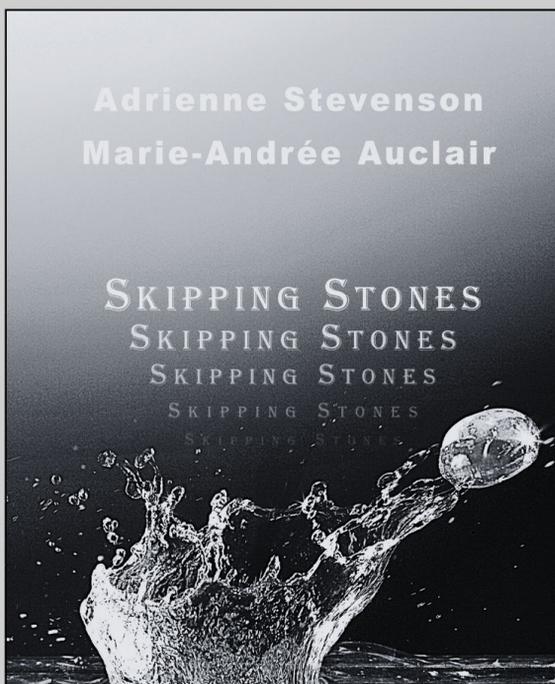
Thera is a tireless supporter of local arts, local culinary arts, and live music. She is ahead of the curve with city art events, sharing the information with her friends. For her, sitting down for a delicious meal at a hip joint is a passion, while taking the effort to post gracious reviews of support. If there is a good band in town, you can find her rocking out and dancing the night away. She patronizes local coffee shops, like Equator, keeps fit at the gym, and finds peace in her flower gardens. As a life-long learner, she schools herself in thoughtful documentaries, inspiring biographies, and has been known to dabble in LEGO. FREE PALESTINE!

Food used in the play is not safe for consumption after use. In recognition of this waste we are making a donation to the Parkdale Foodbank.

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Thank you

For reading the roles (and giving input on their characters) during the workshopping process thanks to Petra Watzlawik-Li (Leslie), Mike Barker (Brian), Claire Donnan (Cordelia), and Desmond Feaithil (Nine-Inch Nils). For expert input in the workshopping process Mary Kathryn Roberts, Daphne Uras, and Marie-Andrée Auclair (Special thanks to the latter for constant input and advice during the whole project). Massive thanks to Emily Wood and Tarek Hassan of GONGFU BAO for free rehearsal space for so many weeks. For much moral support: Jen Ridgley (also t-shirt production), Arkam Mazrui, and to everyone who auditioned - the standard of acting talent we saw was **stellar**. Also thanks to Shawn Hunsdale for advice and insight, as well as Merriam Printing for making our beautiful posters and programs and Diffusearts for putting them up!

Music credits

Lover Boy

Music	Arkam Mazrui
Lyrics	Elle Attson & Arkam Mazrui

Composed by Andrew Riddles:

*I think that is him coming in now
 The Moon and Textbooks
 You have been telling me this all my life*

Land Acknowledge

We acknowledge that BUYSEXUAL is written, rehearsed, and performed on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishnaabeg People. The Algonquin peoples have lived on this land throughout history and created and performed stories here during all that time. We honour that tradition and recognise our privilege and the cost of this to others.

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Other wondrous loves

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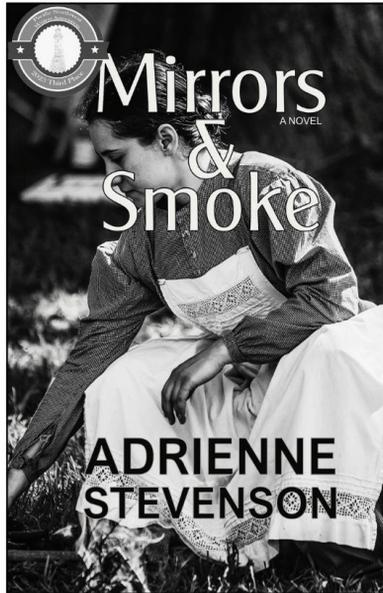
Tamara Steinborn

Emily Wood

Mirrors & Smoke

Adrienne Stevenson

A story of courage, strength & resilience



Rebecca Plummer is a herbalist and midwife in Niagara, Upper Canada. Her situation both before and during the War of 1812 is complicated by her feminist attitude and activities to help other women, both of which run counter to the colonial establishment.

Mirrors & Smoke placed third in the Historical Fiction category of the **Pacific Northwest Writers Association** contest.

“Based on real people and historical events, this fictionalized account is told from the Canadian perspective and presents a rarely seen view of life in war-torn, rural Canada.”

- Donna D. Conrad, award-winning author of *House of the Moon: Surviving the Sixties* & *The Last Magdalene*

adriennestevenson.ca

Director's notes

In September 2023, I was drawn to this play as an actor. The themes, subject, and characters are attractive to any actor who takes their craft seriously. But, I didn't get a chance to read as Cordelia in Andrew's play workshop session. Instead, I received an unexpected offer; an offer I couldn't refuse. To direct an incredibly well-written play alongside the playwright, is an opportunity not many actors get in a career. Andrew graciously shared his vision and entrusted me with preserving and building upon it. He allowed me to add to and edit the script, add transitions, and add a song at the top of the show. I didn't even have to pay for postage to ask for permission! Gratitude is all I feel. Immense gratitude.

I'm a crunchy peanut butter kind of girl. Contrasts, layers, and believability are my jam. From great acting teachers and directors in theatre and film, I have learned how to analyze a script and embody characters. In theatre, the magic is in all of the organic discoveries made during rehearsal and preparation. The more you can work with a script, the more layers of nuance and meaning you find. Approaching this as a director was an exciting challenge. Responsibility for the entire story and vision for how the messages and activity will be conveyed, decision-making power, and a leadership role -- my imposter syndrome had no time to breathe!

Working with Andrew, Keanna, and the cast has been an easy, joyous, and fulfilling collaboration. My artistic craft, personal confidence, and creative community have grown so much during the production and rehearsal process. You'll find many parallel lines and moments among the different Acts, which are intentional echoes by the playwright and directors. We've added elements of physical comedy and nods to the inner lives of these characters. The actors completely embodied their characters and embraced the risks inherent in giving believable performances.

I hope you love this play as much as I do, and come out of the theatre with questions, laughter, commentary, and a sense of relatability. This show was put together with a bit of luck, a lot of intuition, and a heck of a lot of tenacity. Our group of unknown artists built a show that gets to share a venue with award-winning and known-name shows. I hope this show, its themes, and its characters stay with you. It has changed my life for the better.

Always pursue joy,
Elle

Playwright's notes

I have helped direct this play for the past fifteen weeks in preparation for Fringe. Having done so, I now regard those of us who write but also want to direct our own plays in the same weary way a judge regards a defendant who announces they are going to conduct their own defence. It's a cute idea, but there's a reason we have professionals to do this kind of thing.

Not that I wouldn't do it again. Rehearsal is my favourite part of the production process. I get to see top class acting talent not just once (as when I pay to attend the theatre) but multiple times a week, for months on end, always from a front row seat. Additionally, no one throws me out if I call out suggestions to the actors.

More importantly, as a writer, being at every rehearsal you see what even the most imaginative of us could never picture. People speak of seeing your characters come to life, but it is something beyond seeing people speak what you wrote: your words, in the mouths of the actors, their movement directed by Elle, becoming larger, more dynamic, punchier – in a word, better. Somehow you feel like you got a great deal – like someone painted your house for free when you were on vacation, or tuned up your bike when you parked it outside the grocery store. What a privilege.

If being in the studio directing, along with my amazing colleague Elle Attson, has been a thrilling ride, I try to picture the more usual experience for writers: your play is picked up and directed with little or no input from you on what particular lines of text mean or how they should be interpreted. I can't imagine handing over my script at the start of March, and seeing it next on opening night. It would be like handing over your child at five years of age to a boarding school and picking them up when they are eighteen, your fingers crossed that you recognize at least a glimmer of the child you sent away all those years ago. I recognize everything about my script in the work you are watching this evening. I also know the best parts of what you will see are what Elle and the actors took and ran with. Enjoy the play.

Andrew

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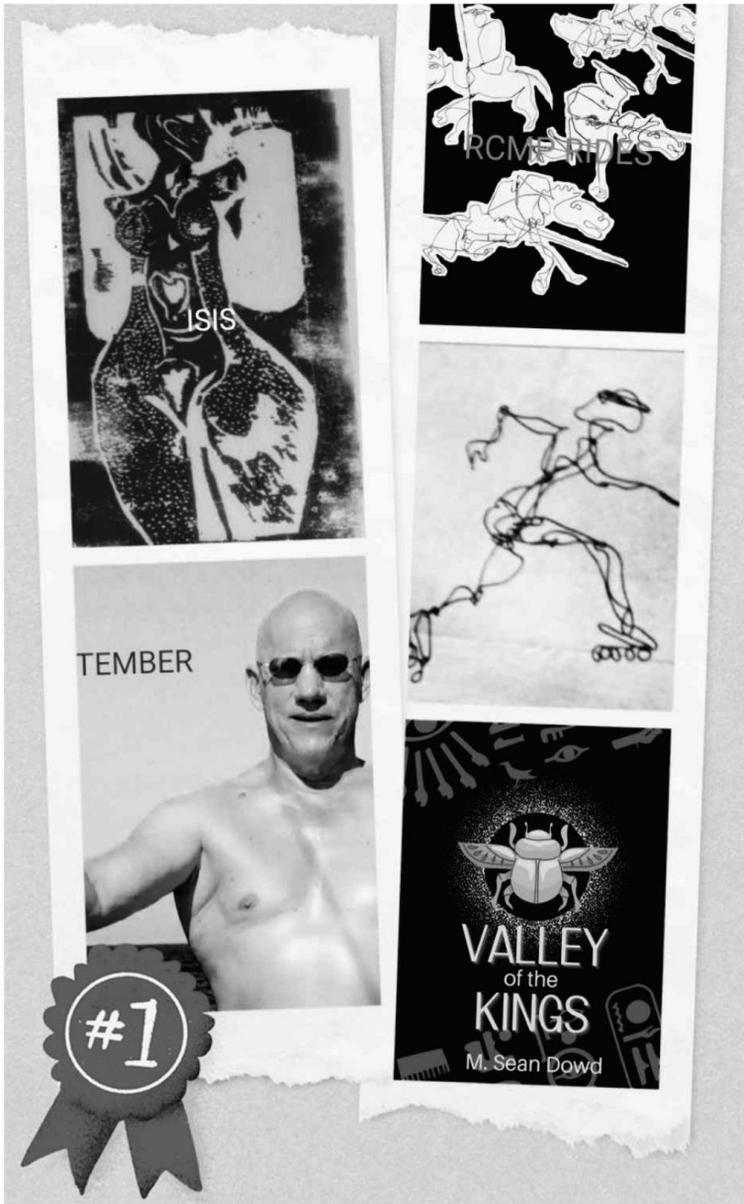
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