



A Message from our Artistic Director

During this pandemic, my overriding passion has been to use this as an opportunity to explore new directions in our imaginative style of performance.

We've taken Odyssey digital. We have commissioned and workshopped new plays, staged public readings, completed a community outreach video series, taught our Youth Apprenticeship Program, offered workshops for young people in mask and puppet making, and launched two major digital series.

The first is our podcast series of original Canadian audio plays. *The Other Path* features 15 of Odyssey's most beloved actors, performing one-act plays by outstanding Canadian writers in the field of fantasy and folklore including Jo Walton, Marty Chan, and Emily Pohl-Weary. In this newsletter, you can read more about *The Other Path* and our upcoming podcast launch, to which you are all invited!

The second is our web series on Commedia dell'Arte – Odyssey's specialized art-form incorporating masks and physical performance. *Commedia Talks* is a five part video series that will introduce Commedia through its finest scripts, old and new, to actors, directors, teachers and theatre enthusiasts.

Our digital programs have reached new audiences, engaging thousands of people of all ages, not just in Ottawa but across Canada. And with our upcoming podcast and web series, we hope to introduce our art and our artistic process to new audiences across Canada and internationally.



We hope you, our loyal supporters, have had a chance to enjoy some of our online content. If not, you can still check them out on our website.

Through this process we are exploring new artistic domains. Odyssey has long created new plays inspired by myth and folktale. In *The Other Path*, we asked writers to be inspired by a folktale but set it in the contemporary world. The result will surprise and delight you with haunting dramas, sinister comedies and fantastical adventures. And of course, we are also creating plays for future seasons when we return LIVE to Strathcona Park and have the pleasure of seeing you in person.

Who would have thought when all this started, that we would take such a journey! Of course, we are immensely grateful to those who have stood with us during this tough time for the arts -- our funders, partners, donors, and audiences, without whom it would not have been possible. I wish you and your family a safe and healthy holiday season and I hope you follow us down *The Other Path* early in 2022!

— Laurie Steven, Artistic Director



What's Inside?



The Other Path Podcast, emerging artist training, upcoming workshops, and more!

Photo: Recording of *The Feathered Ogre*

VENTURE DOWN THE OTHER PATH

with *Odyssey's New Fantasy Podcast*



Chandel Gambles and Cheri Maracle recording *The Feathered Ogre*

Cannibal witches, mystical bathtubs, malevolent mermaids, and much, MUCH more will meet you on your journey down *The Other Path*. Soon to be released as a Podcast, our exciting new fantasy audio-drama series features sinister comedies, haunted dramas, whimsical mysteries, and chilling quests.

Five renowned fantasy and fiction writers from across Canada have each reimaged a classic folktale and set it in a contemporary world. Each original play was given two online script

workshops this year with Director Laurie Steven, dramaturge Janet Irwin and 15 actors to provide feedback to the writers and to experiment with sound and music. The plays are being brought to life with stellar performances enriched with opulent sound and music.

This new series builds on our tradition of creating award-winning productions inspired by myth and folktales interpreted for adult audiences, drawing on Italian, Spanish, German, Chinese, Indonesian, Indian, and Greek works.

Heart's Home by Jo Walton

Heart's Home is set on the Island of Nova Cambria, once called Atalante, home of the Tiglath. Anoon, their leader, is an ancient shape-shifting sorcerer, who loves to play tricks and fairy games on the island's citizens. Kigva and her family realize how deadly serious these games are when they discover that life as they know it could literally disappear.

A story about home and belonging, this eerie fantasy is inspired by a legendary story from the Third

Branch of the Mabinogion, a work of mediaeval Welsh literature.

Jo Walton is the author of fifteen science fiction and fantasy novels, most recently *Or What You Will* (2020). She has also published three collections of poetry, two of essays, and one of short stories. She has won all the major prizes in her genre, including the Hugo, Nebula and World Fantasy Awards. Her novel *Among Others* is one of only seven novels to have ever been nominated for all three. She comes from Wales but has made her home in Montreal since 2002.



Double Trouble by Marty Chan

Double Trouble follows a misfit couple, Jesse and Liam. Big spenders who can't pay the rent, they resort to porch pirating to cope with their ever-looming debt. Just when the couple thinks they've reached the end of their rope, they steal an old bathtub that could be their ticket. But is two always better than one?

A tale about the desperation of poverty, Chan's dark and suspenseful comedy is inspired by the Chinese folktale "Two of Everything."

Marty Chan writes books for kids, plays for adults and tweets for fun. He's best known for his hit plays, *Mom, Dad, I'm Living with a White Girl*, *The Bone House*, and *The Forbidden Phoenix*, which have been produced internationally, including Off-Broadway and at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. For kids, he's written 16 books, including this latest thriller: *Haunted Hospital*. From 1994 to 2000, his weekly series *The Dim Sum Diaries* aired on CBC Radio. He works and lives in Edmonton with his wife Michelle and their cat Buddy.



The Witch's Circle by Emily Pohl-Weary

The Witch's Circle follows Lisa, an orphaned teen, as she navigates the scary reality of life in a group home. Desperate to be rid of her abuser, Lisa's pursuit for freedom leads her to the ferocious Baby Yaga, a witch with an unfortunate taste for human flesh. Unknowingly, Baby Yaga helps Lisa find the power she needs to set herself free.

Pohl-Weary's modern day Gothic adventure is inspired by the Slavic folktales about the extraordinary Baba Yaga.

Emily Pohl-Weary is an award-winning novelist, biographer, poet, comic-book writer, editor of magazines and English textbooks, and an assistant professor at the UBC School of Creative Writing, teaching writing for young adults and speculative fiction. Among other works, her poetry collection, *Ghost Sick*, explores tragedy and resilience in Toronto's Parkdale neighbourhood where she grew up. For two decades, Emily worked in Arts Education. In 2008, Emily founded a free writing group for inner-city youth, and leads a weekly writing workshop for residents of Sagatay, a long-term transitional home for First Nations, Metis and Inuit men in Toronto.



The Belt and Necklace by C.S. MacCath

The Belt and Necklace follows Barbara who is mercilessly ridiculed for her appearance. After being cut out as heiress to her family's fashion empire, she strikes a bargain with the child-snatching Merfolk. With her appearance changed, Barbara's life becomes all she wanted and more, but in a world where looks are currency, will the price be too steep to pay?

This haunting and fantastical dramedy adapted from a recently discovered 19th century Bavarian folktale, explores fashion's fixation

on beauty and our exploitation of nature.

Ceallaigh S. MacCath-Moran (C.S. MacCath) is a PhD candidate in Folklore at Memorial University of Newfoundland, and a writer of fiction, non-fiction, and poetry. Her long-running *Folklore & Fiction* newsletter and podcast integrates these passions with a focus on folklore scholarship for storytellers. Her work has been shortlisted for the Washington Science Fiction Association Small Press Award, and nominated for the Pushcart Prize and Rhysling Award.



The Feathered Ogre by Daniel Peretti

Following a strange dream, Lucy sets off to find her best friend Anna who has disappeared. Her quest takes her on a forbidden journey across the River to the east side of Orco, where people shun modernity for a meadiveal life, but live in fear of a tyrannical Ogre. Can Lucy's indomitable spirit help her discover the fate of her friend and bring the divided town together?

A contemporary adaptation of Calvino's Italian folktale, this whimsical mystery

explores the tension between tradition and modernity and how to heal what divides us.

Daniel Peretti was born in Ontario, grew up in Michigan, and lives in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, where he is an Assistant Professor of Folklore at Memorial University. His writing includes essays, short stories, the feature length film *Own Worst Enemy*, and an academic study titled *Superman in Myth and Folklore*.



VIRTUAL ODYSSEY EVENTS

Check out the youth programming that Odyssey offered this summer!

Youth Apprenticeship Program

Thanks to the support of our partners, we were able to host another successful Youth Apprenticeship Program this summer! Being online allowed us to reach out further to youth. We had 12 high school students from across the region, from Gloucester in the east, to Nepean in the west and Barrhaven in the south, and across Canada with a student from Toronto and another from Vancouver!

For four weeks from July 27 to August 19, our aspiring artists took part in a series of 12 workshops under the leadership of award-winning Ottawa theatre artist Eleanor Crowder. The students started by exploring the roots of Commedia dell'Arte, and moved on to learning about character creation, writing, and directing their own performances. In addition, the students took a design workshop with award-winning Ottawa designer Brian Smith, as well as two more with professional actors Chandel Gambles and William Beddoe, exploring everything from character development, to mask work and improvisation, to beginning a career as an actor.

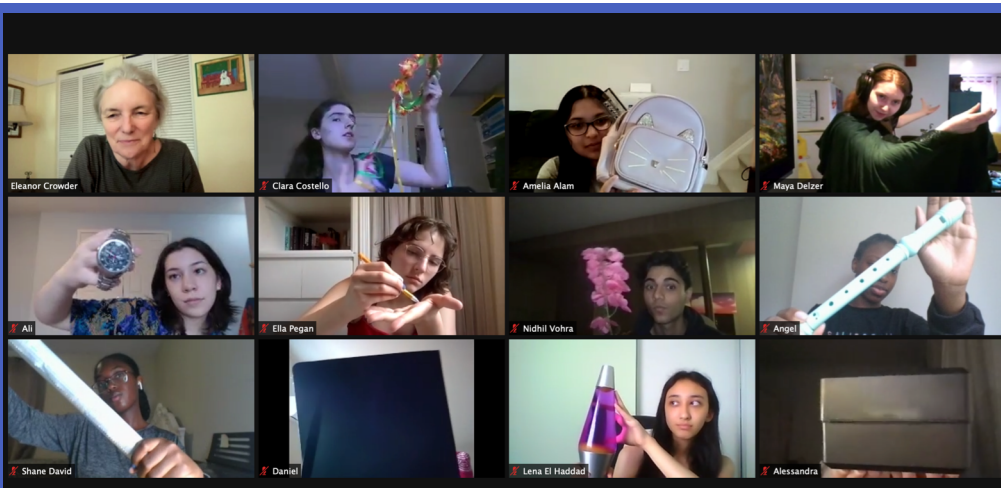
At the end, the students culminated their training by creating a performance for an online audience of 50 invited family, friends, and peers. These scenes were inspired by the plays they had been exploring, with scenes, monologues, and improvised pieces of their own creation.

See the photo below for the kind of fun and insightful experience all the students had while learning from professional artists mentors and making friendships that will follow them after the program.

Stay tuned next Summer for the 2022 season of the program. For more information, visit our Youth page on our website!

Mask Making Workshop

No one does masks quite like Odyssey, and this summer 10 kids unleashed their imaginations through the return of our online mask-making workshop. They were led by our talented mask designer, Clelia Scala, who is also a puppet designer, installation artist, illustrator, and occasional puppeteer herself! Over the course of our two-day workshop under the guidance of Clelia, these creative kids built and painted their very own fire breathing dragon mask!



PROMOTE YOUR PODCAST WORKSHOP

Interested in podcasts? Don't miss our FREE workshop!



How can you explore podcasting to enrich your artistic practice? Podcasting expert Sam Laliberte is here to help with Odyssey Theatre's Promote Your Podcast Workshop.

Whether you've considered launching your own podcast but are intimidated with where to start or the cost to get it off the ground OR you've recently launched one and want to attract listeners, expand your reach, and set your show up for success, this workshop is for you!

Sam is the Host and Producer of the Freedom Lifestyle Podcast. She has helped more than 1000 aspiring podcasters launch, grow and monetize their podcasts and is the

creator of Launch a Podcast on a Budget.

This **FREE** workshop takes place on **November 30th from 1:30pm-4:30pm** over Zoom. Space is limited so be sure to sign up now! To reserve your place and find out more info, visit our website! Can't make the workshop? Check our website for a recorded version.

Many thanks to the Ontario Trillium Foundation for their support.

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Trillium Foundation Helps Odyssey Through the Pandemic

Odyssey Theatre is pleased to announce that we have received a grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation's Resilient Communities Fund. We are very grateful for the funding of \$22,600 which will help us produce high quality digital content and support a successful return to live performances in the Park next summer.

As a result of the pandemic, Odyssey has been actively creating digital online content in place of live performance, such as our new podcast series. This presents exciting opportunities and

some new challenges as actors now rehearse and perform from their personal residences which requires new equipment and skills.

The Resilient Communities Fund was set up to help organizations carry on through the health crisis and emerge from the pandemic in a strong position to resume our work. With support from the Fund, Odyssey Theatre is able to:

- Work with experts at The Podcast Exchange to access market research and create a marketing strategy for our upcoming Podcast series;

- Acquire sound and video equipment and an audio-video technician to help our director and actors create high quality digital content from home;
- Buy new lighting and sound equipment for when we resume live Theatre Under the Stars performances in Strathcona Park next year.

Thanks again to the Trillium Foundation for their support!

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on all things
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We want to recognize all of those who have supported Odyssey and local theatre artists this year. Your generosity and compassion towards the Ottawa arts community has been indispensable during these difficult times. Thank you!

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