

Soulpepper

? unctuate! Theatre

SOULPEPPER PRESENTS THE PUNCTUATE! THEATRE PRODUCTION OF

# FIRST MÉTIS MAN OF ODESA

WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY  
MATTHEW MacKENZIE AND MARIYA KHOMUTOVA  
DIRECTED BY LIANNA MAKUCH





We're thrilled to be presenting Punctuate! Theatre's multi-Dora Award-winning production of *First Métis Man of Odesa*. There's a reason this show was the most popular touring show in the country in 2023 and why we wanted to bring it back to Toronto – it's a play that continues to feel urgent and relevant, speaking to timely issues in ways that are both moving and theatrically compelling.

We have been so lucky to have witnessed the evolution of this play from its original workshops during Matt's residency at Soulpepper, and have always been excited by how it is both epic and deeply personal. It's a play that shows us the effects of large-scale world events on two people who continue to find joy in some of our darkest times. It's also a romantic comedy based on the true story of its creators – a Métis playwright and a Ukrainian actor – their real-life romance, infused with the courage to navigate and transform their own stories into art, is inspiring. Especially knowing that they both stepped out of their comfort zones to do it; Maryia is a first time playwright, and Matt is making his acting debut.

This play is such a courageous offering to us – the audience. It is a daunting task and at the same time, a deeply momentous undertaking to create art out of events like the pandemic, and the continuing war in Ukraine – that not only affect them but continue to shape the lives of others on a global scale. How these two people found each other, reached out to each other, and now reach out to us despite so many obstacles that challenge and inhibit them is courageous and uplifting.

**GIDEON ARTHURS**  
Executive Director,  
Soulpepper Theatre Company

**WEYNI MENGESHA**  
Artistic Director,  
Soulpepper Theatre Company



This is a love story. And like any grand, sweeping love story, our lovers are faced with grand, sweeping obstacles that challenge their fate. They are faced with modern challenges like Facebook messaging over great distances throughout a pandemic. And like the many great love stories that came before them, Matt and Masha's story is also set against the backdrop of war.

I have been witness to Matt and Masha's love story from the beginning. It is only fitting that these two theatrical romantics would fatefully meet through the theatre. It was at a workshop of my play *Barvinok* in Kyiv that Matt and Masha first met, and a second

workshop that brought Matt back to Ukraine prior to the pandemic. At the time, I had no idea that being a third wheel would grant me a unique perspective as their future director. I also had no idea exactly how quickly and significantly our worlds would change in so many ways.

When Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine began on February 24, 2022, it was impossible to turn away. For so many people part of the Ukrainian diaspora, the war was and continues to be omnipresent. Mundane, routine tasks are weighted. News about it is inescapable. The cognitive dissonance of scrolling through Instagram memes followed by images of horrific Russian war crimes has been a reality for the last two years. To be part of the Ukrainian diaspora is to contend with your head and heart breaking for your loved ones in Ukraine, and striving to not fully dissociate from your safe, physical reality in North America.

This is also a love story about Ukraine. I want audiences to fall in love with all that Ukraine is, undefined by Russia's atrocities. Just as Matt and Masha's love blossomed on the cobblestone streets of Kyiv, or the ultra-romantic promenades outside the iconic Odesa Opera House, there is so much about Ukraine to fall in love with. Like any grand, sweeping love story, this one shows us that not even the greatest obstacles, like the most evil forces of war, can taint true love. Matt and Masha's son, Ivan, is a reminder of this unbreakable spirit. Ivan is a beautiful union of two cultures whose love has created a symbol of the kind of future we are fighting for.

Слава Україні. Все буде Україна.

### **Lianna Makuch**

Director, *First Mētis Man of Odesa*

## CAST & CREATIVE TEAM

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### Cast

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**Mariya Khomutova**  
Herself

**Matthew MacKenzie**  
Himself

### Creative Team

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**Lianna Makuch\***  
Director

**Aaron Macri**  
Sound Design

**Maria Nelson**  
Beadwork

**Mariya Khomutova**  
Writer

**Daraba**  
Composition

**Krista Leddy**  
Beadwork

**Matthew MacKenzie**  
Writer

**Amelia Scott**  
Projection Design

**Lore Green\***  
Stage Manager

**Matt McGeachy**  
Dramaturg

**Cameron Fraser\*\***  
Associate Design

**Krista Lin**  
Choreography

**Dawn Marie Marchand**  
Design Consultation  
& Scenic Artwork

**Daniela Masellis\*\***  
Production Design

### Punctuate! Theatre

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**Matthew MacKenzie**  
Artistic Director

**Trent Crosby**  
Production Manager & Technical  
Director

**Ashley Hiebner**  
Paint

**Sheiny Satanove**  
Managing Director

**Emily Randall**  
Head Scenic Paint

**Theatre Garage**  
Drape Stitching

**Andy Cohen**  
Producer

**Amy Powell**  
Paint

**art lab**  
Fabrication

**Alyson Dicey**  
Associate Producer

### Soulpepper Production

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**Paul Boddum**  
Head Scenic, Soulpepper

**Gunes Agduk**  
Lighting Operator

**Lisa Nighswander**  
Head of Props, Soulpepper

**Dalton Villeneuve-Marini**  
Deck Hand



\*The participation of these Artists is arranged by permission of Canadian Actors' Equity Association under the provisions of the Dance Opera Theatre Policy (DOT).



\*\*Indicated designers on this production are represented by the Associated Designers of Canada, Local ADC659.

**Running time:**  
**90 minutes, no intermission**



**ANDY COHEN** has worked on stages and in stadiums across the country and internationally for two decades. SOULPEPPER: First Métis Man of Odesa. THEATRE (Selected): Charlotte (Theaturtle/National Theatre - Prague), Hunchback (Catalyst/Vancouver Playhouse), Godspell (Arts Club), Fiddler on the Roof (Persephone), Circle Game (Firehall), Elf (Chemainus), Hair (Mayfield), East Van Panto: The Little Mermaid (Theatre Replacement/The Cultch). OTHER: Andy has worked on the mass movement, stage management, and producing teams of major events including the Opening and Closing Ceremonies for the Olympic & Paralympic Games (Vancouver, Rio de Janeiro), AIMAGames (Ashgabat), Invictus Games (Sydney), Commonwealth Games (Gold Coast), as well as Beach Volleyball World Championships (Mexico). He was responsible for the Sitewide Programming at Expo 2020 Dubai, and was the lead Show Producer for the COP28 Opening Ceremony in Dubai. As performer, director, music director, and arranger, Andy earned a SATAward, a Jessie nomination, and a BFA in Acting from UBC.



**TRENT CROSBY** is an Edmonton-based artist and arts enabler with a specialty in activating non-traditional performance spaces. Trent has spent 13 years as a Lighting Designer, Production Manager, Technical Director, and Entertainment Programmer. He is a graduate of Grant MacEwan's Theatre Production program and The Banff Centre for the Arts. SOULPEPPER: First Métis Man of Odesa.



**ALYSON DICEY** is an Edmonton-based artist and graduate of the BFA Acting class of 2012 at the University of Alberta. SOULPEPPER: First Métis Man of Odesa. THEATRE: Alyson is a founding member of Girl Brain Sketch Comedy and is proud to write and perform with a troupe that celebrates and promotes the strength of women. Alyson is an Artistic Producer with the Edmonton immersive theatre company, Thou Art Here Theatre, and Volunteer Coordinator for the multidisciplinary arts festival featuring women-identifying and non-binary artists, SkirtsAFire. OTHER: During the summers, Alyson can be found at the Edmonton International Fringe Festival in her role as KidsFringe Director.



**CAMERON FRASER** is a multidisciplinary artist with an extensive background in performing and visual arts, spanning over two decades. SOULPEPPER: First Métis Man of Odesa. THEATRE: Cameron has contributed projections, sets, props, or assisted designers for such companies as The Shaw Festival/Why Not Theatre, Vancouver Opera, The Grand Theatre, Alberta Theatre Projects, Vancouver Asian Canadian Theatre, The Confederation Centre for the Arts, Kentucky Opera, Theatre Calgary, Vertigo Theatre/The Arts Club, Talk is Free Theatre, and more, as well as for a variety of corporate clients. OTHER: He is a Guinness World Record Holder and a proud member of the Associated Designers of Canada.



**LORE GREEN** is thrilled to be working with Punctuate! Theatre on this beautiful show! SOULPEPPER: First Métis Man of Odesa. THEATRE (Selected): A Christmas Carol, West Side Story, Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time, Sense & Sensibility, Hadestown, Silver Arrow, Peter Pan Goes Wrong, Clue and Jersey Boys (Citadel Theatre); Timothy Findley's The Wars, Mamma Mia and Titanic: The Musical (Grand Theatre); Barvinok, Michael Mysterious and Alina (Pyretic Productions). OTHER: Lore is the resident stage manager for Pyretic Productions and holds a BFA in stage management from the University of Alberta. Slava Ukraini!



**DARABA** is a creative audiovisual group (based in Kyiv, Ukraine). It was founded in 2020 by composer Andrii Merkhel and designer Yaroslav Zen and also includes composer/sound designers Tetiana Khoroshun and Serhii Vilka. SOULPEPPER: First Métis Man of Odesa OTHER: Over the years, the team has presented a number of projects in collaboration with leading productions, institutions, and theatres in Ukraine and other European countries. Their focus is on performance, creative solutions for films, computer games, installations, and exhibitions.



**MARIYA KHOMUTOVA** Ukrainian actor and playwright Mariya Khomutova started her theatre studies in Odesa at age 12, and continued her professional development at I.K. Karpenko-Kary Kyiv National University. Since 2020, Mariya has lived in Canada with her family - Canadian playwright Matthew MacKenzie and their son Ivan. SOULPEPPER: First Métis Man of Odesa THEATRE: Mariya co-wrote and stars in First Métis Man of Odesa, which she has been honoured to share with audiences across Canada. The show won 3 Dora Awards, with Khomutova also receiving a nomination for Outstanding Acting. In 2023, the Toronto Star named Mariya one of the 'Breakthrough Artists of the Year'. OTHER: Mariya worked in two repertoire theaters in Kyiv and had an extensive career in Ukrainian film and TV. In 2020, Mariya won Best Actor at the Odesa International Film Festival, for her performance in the film Two People. Since February 24, 2022, Mariya has concentrated her work around promoting contemporary Ukrainian playwrights' voices to the global theatre community.



**KRISTA LEDDY** is a proud Métis multidisciplinary artist whose family comes from the historical Métis communities of St. Albert and Lac St. Anne. She currently calls amiskwaciwâskahikan (Edmonton) home. SOULPEPPER: First Métis Man of Odesa. OTHER: Her beadwork is influenced by the beautiful teachings, stories, and patterns of her Métis ancestors and brings the spirit of her grandmothers into all of her pieces, whether they are traditional or contemporary in nature. Krista also works to reconnect Métis people back to the community through traditional arts including beading, weaving, sewing, storytelling, and dance. @beadedchickadee



**KRISTA LIN** is a contemporary artist based in amiskwacîwâskahikan (colonially Edmonton). A graduate of The School of Toronto Dance Theatre, Krista has studied with renowned instructors in Israel, Taiwan, and across Canada. SOULPEPPER: First Métis Man of Odesa. THEATRE: Krista has performed in works by Heidi Strauss, Justine Chambers, Good Women Dance, Matthew MacKenzie, Gerry Morita, and Susie Burpee. OTHER: Krista teaches dance in public and private institutions, and has taught outreach workshops in Ontario, Alberta, and Taiwan. With a diploma in Arts and Cultural Management from MacEwan University, Krista is a part-time arts manager and arts advocate. She is a mom to Andy, Lily, and dog-child Louie.



**MATTHEW MacKENZIE** is a citizen of the Métis Nation of Alberta and proud father of Ivan (Eevan, Vanya, Vanichka). SOULPEPPER: First Métis Man of Odesa, and Baillie Artist-In-Residence in 2021. THEATRE: Artistic Director of Punctuate! Theatre, Matt is a two-time Dora winning playwright, a founding member of the Pemmican Collective, as well as Canadian Liaison of the Liberian Dance Troupe. Matt's plays include Bears, After the Fire and The Particulars.



**AARON MACRI** is an award-winning composer and sound designer based out of Edmonton, Alberta. SOULPEPPER: First Métis Man of Odesa. OTHER: Over his more than twenty year career he has created music and sound design for theatre, television, dance, & film. His works have been broadcast nationally, and Off Broadway.



**LIANNA MAKUCH** is a Ukrainian Canadian director, playwright, performer, co-Artistic Director of Pyretic Productions, and a producer with Punctuate! Theatre. SOULPEPPER: First Métis Man of Odesa. THEATRE: Lianna has travelled several times to Ukraine to research and develop her plays Barvinok and Alina, which have garnered her recognition such as the Shevchenko Foundation's REACH Award, an Edmonton Artist Trust Fund Award, Sterling Award nominations, shortlisted for the Alberta Playwriting Award, and as a finalist for the Gina Wilkinson Prize. Her work has been developed by Punctuate! Theatre, Pemmican Collective, Citadel Theatre's Collider Festival, Banff Centre for the Arts, and internationally by Wild Theatre and Izolyatsia Cultural Platform in Kyiv, Ukraine. Lianna's directorial debut, First Métis Man of Odesa, received a Dora Award for Outstanding Direction and has been seen on stages nationwide. Upcoming Directing: A Christmas Carol (Citadel Theatre). OTHER: Lianna is an avid activist in support of Ukraine, and has been recognized as one of 50 Canadian Fellows of Ukraine by the UDonation International NGO, Edify Edmonton's Top 40 Under 40, and her theatre work has been referenced in the House of Commons. Much love to Patrick. Слава Україні.



**DAWN MARIE MARCHAND** is a member of Cold Lake First Nation in Treaty Six territory. cîpêhcakwawêw-iskwêw (Blue Horse Spirit Woman) is a Cree and Métis artist, educator, advocate, author, writer, speaker, and mother. SOULPEPPER: First Métis Man of Odesa. THEATRE: Designer-in-Residence for Punctuate! Theatre. OTHER: She received an Aboriginal Role Model Award for Art in 2017, during her term as the Inaugural Indigenous Artist In Residence for the City of Edmonton. Facilitation of the Indigenous Artist Market Collective engagement and launch in 2018. An installation called The Longest Journey as part of the Nuit Blanche Festival in 2018. Since then she has created public art in the Stanley Milner Public Library and had artwork projected at Expo 2020 Dubai. Her Treaty 6 oral history recognition artwork 10 Sticks was projected with the Juno 2023 Land Acknowledgement in Edmonton



**DANIELA MASELLI** is a designer, artist and educator based in amiskwaîwâskahikan, Treaty 6 (Edmonton). SOULPEPPER: First Métis Man of Odesa, Kamloopa (2022). THEATRE: The National Arts Centre, The Stratford Festival, The Citadel, The Cultch, Workshop West, The Arts Club, The Belfry, Punctuate! Theatre, Akpik Theatre, Western Canada Theatre, Alberta Theatre Projects (etc.). OTHER: Assistant Professor, Theatre Production. MacEwan University. @dmaselli\_ (Instagram)



**MATT McGEACHY** An alumnus of the Toronto Arts Council/Banff Centre Leaders Lab, and president of LMDA Canada, Matt McGeachy is a Toronto-based dramaturg. SOULPEPPER: First Métis Man of Odesa. THEATRE: He spent 10 seasons with Factory Theatre leading the revitalization of that company's new work development program, and has also worked with the Guthrie Theatre, the Kennedy Center, Theatre Passe Muraille, Canadian Stage Company, and Ronnie Burkett Theatre of Marionettes, among others. OTHER: Matt currently works as head of government relations at the Toronto Symphony Orchestra.



**MARIA NELSON** is a Métis-Ukrainian woman from Redwater, Alberta. Beading is a way of building and maintaining the connection between her heritage, her past, and her identity moving forward. SOULPEPPER: First Métis Man of Odesa. OTHER: Maria began working on reconnecting with her community and heritage around the same time she began beading. Her family connections are primarily from Saskatchewan and Red River, and it was during her great-grandmother's generation that they entered Alberta. Maria is a Lavallee, Piche, Arcand, Poitras, Anderson, and many more. It has been an educating and rewarding experience to be able to rebuild connections to her past and heritage while also being able to build new connections in her present.



**SHEINY SATANOVE** is a Vancouver-born theatre and film producer who has lived in Treaty 6 amiskwaciwâskahikan for over 10 years. She is a proud founding member of Punctuate! Theatre, and currently serves as Managing Director. SOULPEPPER: First Métis Man of Odesa. OTHER: Sheiny has produced over twenty plays, including several world premiere productions. She is also a freelance producer and coordinator in the film industry, and has worked on several feature films and television shows across the country. Sheiny is thrilled to be touring with the Punctuate! team this year, and to be sharing such an important story. Much love to J & E.



**AMELIA SCOTT** is a Montreal based projection designer and instructor of Video Technology and Design at the National Theatre School of Canada. SOULPEPPER: First Métis Man of Odesa. THEATRE: The Master Plan, Stars: Together (Crow's Theatre), Towards Youth (Project Humanity/Crow's Theatre), Projet Polytechnique (Théâtre du Nouveau Monde/Porte Parole), The Assembly (Porte Parole), Alina (Pyretic Productions), Bonne Bonnes (Nervous Hunter/Théâtre aux Écuries), Si Jamais Vous Nous Écoutez (La Messe Basse/Théâtre Denise-Pelletier), Cockroach, To the Light (Alberta Theatre Projects), The Mountaintop (Citadel Theatre). TV & FILM: J'ai frôlé la mort (Chez Attraction), Pas d'chicane dans ma cabane (Forum Films/Téléfilm Canada/Axia Films), Le 11 septembre et moi (Picbois Productions/Télé Québec), L'Assemblée (Porte Parole/Déferlantes/Télé Québec). OTHER: Director: Romeo and Juliet (Vancouver Symphony Orchestra), Projection Design Associate: Pelléas et Mélisande (Santa Fe Opera), An Anatomy of Melancholy (The Barbican Centre), Electric Fields (LA Philharmonic), Macbeth (New Zealand Opera).

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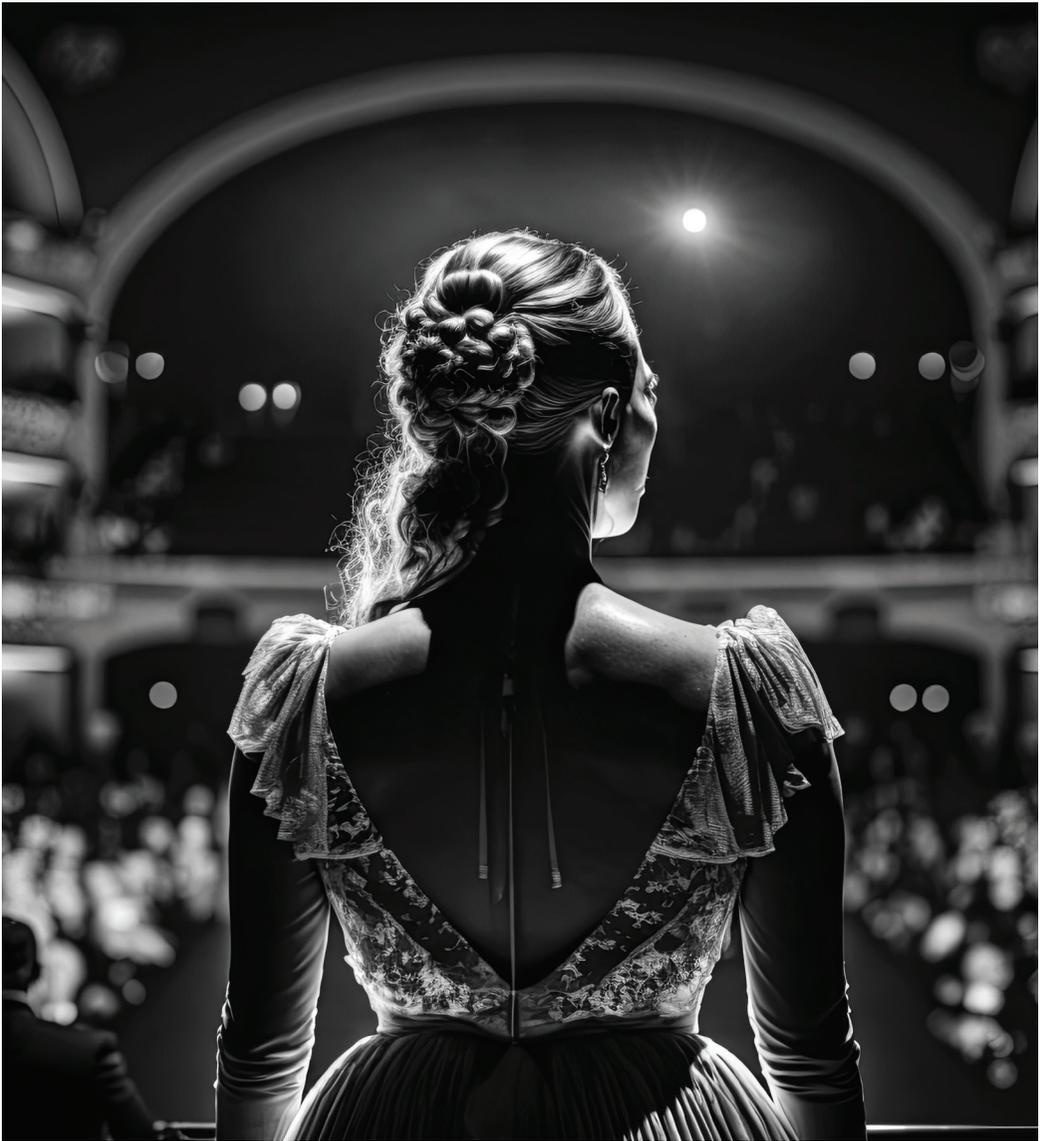
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[www.punctuatetheatre.com](http://www.punctuatetheatre.com)



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Olga Chorna  
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Luke Reece  
Weyni Mengesha

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Aaron Harrity  
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Erin Voaklander  
Edmonton Fringe Theatre Adventures  
Gabriel and Olenka Baron  
Julien Arnold  
Kiidra Duhault  
Megan Dart  
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Nestor Makuch  
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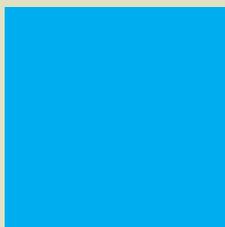
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