

The Cultch

The Chop Theatre (Vancouver)
In collaboration with The Elbow Theatre
(Vancouver)



HOW TO DISAPPEAR COMPLETELY



"BALANCES
HUMOR, BEAUTY, AND
TRAGEDY WITH THE
EXPERTISE OF A
TIGHTROPE WALKER"
PORTLAND MONTHLY

**HISTORIC
THEATRE**

**By Itai Erdal with James Long,
Anita Rochon & Emelia Symington Fedy**

MAR 15–

MAR 22, 2025

PHOTO // MERY ERDAL & ITAI ERDAL; BY THE CHOP THEATRE



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HOW TO DISAPPEAR COMPLETELY

The Chop Theatre (Vancouver)

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By Itai Erdal

In collaboration with James Long, Anita Rochon & Emelia Symington Fedy

MAR 15–22, 2025

HISTORIC THEATRE

Approx. 60 minutes, no intermission;

Talkback to follow each performance

This production examines mature themes.

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Performed by

Itai Erdal

Director

James Long

Lighting Design

Itai Erdal

Video Design

Jamie Nesbitt

Sound Design

Emelia Symington Fedy

Original Composition

Andrea Young

Dramaturge

Anita Rochon

Stage Manager

Donna Soares

Technical Director / Production
Manager

Itai Erdal

Assistant Director

Samantha Levy

The Cultch stage crew, box office, and
front of house staff are members of

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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Cultch acknowledges that it is on unceded territories of the
xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliwətaʔt
(Tsleil-Waututh) nations.

A MESSAGE FROM HEATHER & NICOLE

Welcome and thank you for being here!

The shows we are presenting this March are a powerful mix: personal stories like *Beauty and the Beast: My Life*, from Niall McNeil who identifies as an artist with Down Syndrome, and *How to Disappear Completely*, Itai Erdal's intimate story of his experience with his mother's death. And then there are two starkly different plays by two of our country's leading Indigenous theatre makers: Kevin Loring's irreverent and hilarious satire *Little Red Warrior & His Lawyer*, and Corey Payette's story of the resilience of a family torn apart by residential schools, *Children of God*.

Each of these shows provides an opportunity to create meaningful dialogue, something we all need more of these days. Some of them have built-in post-show conversations after each performance (*How to Disappear Completely* and *Children of God*) and we hope you will stay with us and be a part of them.

Theatre has always been a space where we can connect, reflect, and understand one another on a deeper level, and now — perhaps more than ever — that role feels vital. We need stories to remind us of our shared humanity, to make us feel less alone, and to spark conversations that can change us.

We are here. We are together.

XO,

Nicole McLuckie
Associate Executive Director

Heather Redfern,
Executive Director



Photo // Heather Redfern & Nicole McLuckie by Lisa Wu

Twenty-two years ago, I took care of my mother in the last nine months of her life. She told me: "This is not a tragedy. It would've been a tragedy if it were the other way around, if I had to bury you." She said: "I would like to throw a big party to say goodbye to all of my friends and family and then commit suicide, like Socrates did."

But she didn't. She died at home at the age of 57, with only me next to her. I held her in my arms and I could feel her pulse getting further and further away until it was nothing but a memory. I am not a religious person, I am not even particularly spiritual, but I swear I felt her soul leave her body.

Creating this show with James Long, Anita Rochon and Emelia Symington-Fedy, was the most intense and exciting thing I've ever done. Performing it for over a decade has been extremely rewarding. You would think that reliving the toughest event of your life on stage every night would be daunting — but it's a joyous experience.

When I was a teenager, I always knew I had the coolest mom, and that if I brought my friends over, they would all love her. She's been gone for 22 years but I still bring my friends over, and they still love her. This is the gift my mother and theatre have given me, and for that I am very grateful.

Itai Erdal

ABOUT THE CHOP THEATRE

Founded in 2006 in Vancouver, BC by Emelia Symington Fedy and Anita Rochon. The Chop is recognized for work that is sophisticatedly "simple" — that is, the artistic propositions are spare and clear so that complexities come from the depth of the investigation. Productions are characterized by an intentionally live and direct connection with the audience.

We are not afraid of social commentary, usually using satire and comedy as our way in. Most interesting to us are true stories told by the people who lived them, focusing on non-dominant identities. Some of our most popular shows include *Playing Fields*, *Kismet*, *Pathetic Fallacy* and *How to Disappear Completely*.

Now, led solely by Emelia Symington Fedy, The Chop has moved our main creation hub to the Shuswap in BC, where we run a PWYC artists residency. With 20 new works toured nationally and a strong international profile for our "carbon lite" programming, we're enjoying this new role as a rural artistic support system.

The Chop is proud to live and work between the unceded (stolen) traditional territory of the Secwepemc People and the unceded (stolen) traditional territory of the Coast Salish peoples. thechoptheatre.com

ABOUT THE ELBOW THEATRE

The Elbow Theatre dissects the human condition. We develop shows that question accepted truths. Our productions engage our audiences with the realities of our world. Through process and production, The Elbow presents theatre that promotes caring for and understanding each other.

The Elbow Theatre was founded in 2012 by Itai Erdal in order to produce and present theatre about social and political subject matters. Some of the Elbow shows include: *Soldiers of Tomorrow* (winner for the 2023 Lustrum Award at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival), *A Very Narrow Bridge* (Jessie Richardson nomination for composition for Talia Erdal), and *This Is Not A Conversation* (which toured to Victoria, Kitchener and the North American Culture Lab in upstate New York).

BIOGRAPHIES



ITAI ERDAL

An award-winning lighting designer, writer and performer, and the founder of The Elbow Theatre, for whom he co-wrote and performed in *Soldiers of Tomorrow*, *Hyperlink*, *This Is Not A Conversation* and *A Very Narrow Bridge*. Itai has designed over 350 shows all over North America and Europe. He won six Jessie Richardson Awards, Toronto's Dora Mavor Moore Award, a Winnipeg Theatre Award, the ADC's Jack King Award, Victoria's Spotlight Choice

Award, Edinburgh's Lustrum Award, the Stratford Festival's Guthrie Award and the Design Award at the Dublin Fringe Festival. He was shortlisted to the Siminovitch Prize in 2018 and 2024. itaierdal.com, theelbow.ca



JAMES LONG

James is a director, actor, writer and teacher whose creative practice occurs in a wide variety of interdisciplinary and collaborative contexts, including as a founding Artistic Director of Theatre Replacement (2003-2022) and as an independent artist working in live performance, community engaged practice and public art. James's work has been presented across North America, Europe, and Asia. His projects include (in no particular

order): *Weetube*, *Footnote Number 12*, *Clark and I Somewhere in Connecticut*, *Town Criers*, *BioBoxes: Artifacts of Human Experience*, *King Arthur's Knight*, *How to Disappear Completely*, *Morko*, *Winners and Losers*, among others. In 2019, he and Maiko Yamamoto were awarded the Siminovitch Prize for their work with Theatre Replacement and as freelance artists. Long graduated from Simon Fraser University's Theatre Program in 2000 and earned a Master's degree in Urban Studies in 2018. He serves on the board of Vancouver's Russian Hall, a multi-purpose performance and gathering space, and is an Assistant Professor in Theatre and Performance at SFU's School of Contemporary Arts.



ANITA ROCHON

Anita is a director and theatre maker. From 2006-2024, she was the artistic co-director of The Chop, a company she co-founded with Emelia Symington Fedy. As a freelance director, Anita has worked at The Shaw Festival, Electric Company Theatre, Bard on the Beach, Theatre Replacement, Vertigo Theatre, Belfry Theatre, Théâtre la Seizième, Elbow Theatre, Globe Theatre and Vancouver Opera. She is a graduate of Studio 58 (Acting) and the

National Theatre School of Canada (Directing). She is the recipient of the Ray Michal Prize for an Outstanding Body of Work by a New Director, a Mayor's Arts Award (awarded by Donna Spencer) and the Siminovitch Protégé prize (awarded by Kim Collier). She's taught at the National Theatre School, Ottawa University, UBC and Studio 58. Since June 2024 she's been the artistic director at Green Thumb Theatre, a company that produces and tours work for young audiences.



EMELIA SYMINGTON FEDY

A theatre artist, broadcaster and author. Founded with Anita Rochon, Emelia is Artistic Director of The Chop, and has toured their works to global acclaim. A writer and co-writer on over thirty new Canadian theatre productions, Emelia has also been a contributing essayist to CBC radio for twenty years, telling personal stories about motherhood, addiction, grief, and other forbidden topics- in public.

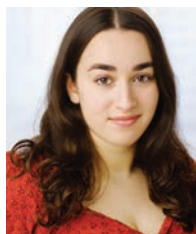
Emelia's first novel 'Skid Dogs' was on the BC Bestseller list for 16 weeks and was nominated for a BC and Yukon Book Prize in 2024. Emelia is a graduate of Studio 58, The SFU Writer's Studio, and SFU's Creative Writing Graduate Program. She lives in the woods with her family.



DONNA SOARES

A theatre artist based on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) nations. She works in many different capacities in theatre. As a performer, she spent four seasons at the Shaw Festival and has performed and created work with local companies such as: Theatre Replacement, A Wake of Vultures, vAct, Gateway Theatre, and Rumble. Donna is the Event

Coordinator for VocalEye Descriptive Arts, an organization that provides live description services for blind or partially sighted audiences. As a Producer, she has worked with the PuSh Festival, Mammalian Diving Reflex, and The Chop. Donna rarely stage manages, but when her friend Itai calls, she answers. Donna is a graduate of Studio 58.

**SAMANTHA LEVY**

Samantha fell in love with the stage at the age of five and never looked back! She is now a theatre artist and works primarily as a performer, director, deviser, and teaching artist. Her art reflects her love of clown, improvisation, music, and classic text. Born and raised in Tiohtià:ke (Montreal), Samantha is now based in K'emk'emelá'y (Vancouver). As an actor, she is both a Jessie Richardson Award nominee (*Le merveilleux voyage d'Inès de l'Ouest*,

Emilie Leclerc, Théâtre La Seizième) and an OVATION! Award nominee (*Spring Awakening*, Wells / Besse / Grant / Makelki, Delta Players Theatre). As an emerging director, some things Samantha has helped create include *Bitches with Baggage* (Vancouver Fringe Festival / Roomie Productions) and *Next to Normal* (Marianopolis Theatre Company). She is a recent graduate from the Acting program at Studio 58 and a former Riotous Youth with Bard on the Beach. A huge thank you to the *How To Disappear Completely* team for welcoming her and teaching her! Dedicated to my dad, Michael Ian Levy; I think you about every day.

The Cultch

The Search Party
(Vancouver)



DANCE NATION

WARRIOR FESTIVAL



"BLAZINGLY
ORIGINAL &
UNSETTLINGLY
FAMILIAR"
THE NEW YORK TIMES

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APR 23–
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PHOTO // AMANDA SUM, NATHAN KAY, RUKIYA BERNARD; EMILY COOPER PHOTOGRAPHY

As Vancouver's most diverse and innovative arts and cultural hub, The Cultch has created meaningful, impactful connections across communities for over 50 years.

As a presenting theatre, we curate unique, intimate, and diverse performances from Vancouver, Canada, and across the globe—offering dynamic contemporary programming in theatre, dance, music, circus, and visual arts.

We host vibrant gatherings and lively conversations around the issues, topics, and ideas that are presented in our shows.

We remove barriers to access by providing ASL Interpretation performances and free tickets to those for whom cost is prohibitive.

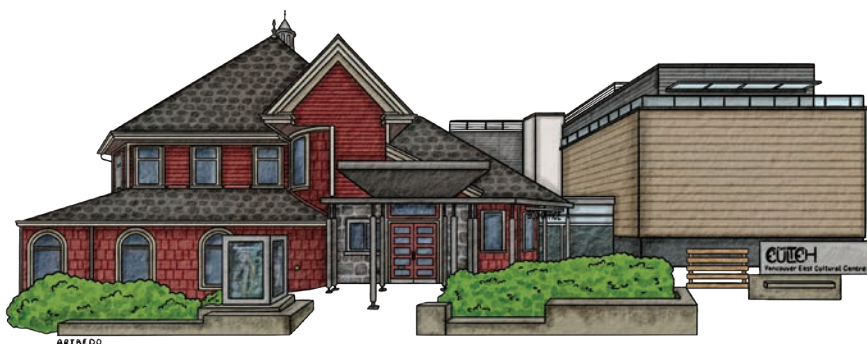
We are connectors, facilitators, culture changers, and we are committed to providing the highest level of service and care we can offer.

We activate this work in our three theatres—the Historic, the Vancity Culture Lab, and the York—a gallery, and various multi-use spaces in the heart of East Vancouver, as well as our Cultch Online digital presentations that reach international audiences.

We welcome everyone who loves live performance into our spaces and invite them to make The Cultch their home.

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COMING SOON AT THE CULTCH

DANCE NATION, APR 23–MAY 11, 2025

Dance Nation is the latest production by The Search Party, an award-winning Vancouver theatre company. Clare Barron's Pulitzer Prize Finalist for Drama (2019), which The New York Times called "a blazingly original play", follows an army of fiercely competitive pre-teen dancers as they train for National Dance Competitions.

Photo // Amanda Sum by Emily Cooper Photography



Q&A WITH MINDY PARFITT, DIRECTOR OF *DANCE NATION*

Your company, The Search Party, is known for its hard-hitting productions of some of the most exciting contemporary plays. What drew you to *Dance Nation*?

It's a very compelling story; it's funny but also heartfelt. There's this beautiful juxtaposition between these big glorious moments of dance and these intimate exchanges between characters. I also really love the discussion it is having around success and the tension that exists between individual ambition and the collective endeavor.

What can we expect from the casting?

Dance Nation is a big ensemble piece. It follows a pre-teen dance troupe as they fight their way to nationals. Barron requires that the cast not be teenagers, but rather actors of a variety of ages and dancing capabilities. So we have actors in their early twenties to mid-sixties with a wide range of dancing training who are coming together to tell this story. We had a tremendous response to our casting call—people are really excited to have this play in our city. We've been able to cast this incredible group of actors that I feel very inspired and excited to work with. Matching them with the design team that has been assembled—it's an adventure I can't wait to go on.

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WARRIOR FESTIVAL

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