

A MILLION BILLION PIECES



**YOUNG
PEOPLE'S
THEATRE**

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Artistic Director

NANCY J. WEBSTER
Executive Director

SEASON PRESENTING PARTNER

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IN THE STUDIO NOV. 25 - DEC. 13

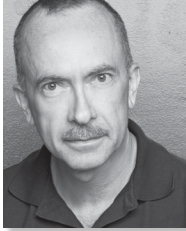
A Message from the Artistic and Executive Directors

We are so pleased to present the world premiere of *A Million Billion Pieces* by David James Brock with music by Gareth Williams, commissioned and developed at YPT. David has been an instructor in our Drama School's Writers' Bloc program for aspiring playwrights, and this brand new script is inspired by work he and Gareth did with youth in Scotland.

The theme of this season's programming at YPT is the Seven Ancestral Teachings of the Anishinaabe, one of which is Love (alongside Respect, Bravery, Humility, Honesty, Wisdom and Truth). In *A Million Billion Pieces*, as you will see, Love is important.

The youth in this play have good reason to feel that few people could understand what their life is like — given their particular illness. But, like all teens who feel marginalized at one time or another, isolation is debilitating. Therefore, connecting with another human being in a meaningful way becomes a necessity of life. But at what price? Craving contact - love - raises the question: can you love another if you don't love yourself?

We hope you enjoy this delicate story about human touch. And we look forward to welcoming you again later in the season at our other show for teen audiences, *CARTOGRAPHY*.



Allen Macinnis

ALLEN MACINNIS
Artistic Director



Nancy Webster

NANCY J. WEBSTER
Executive Director

Young People's Theatre is a member of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres and engages, under the terms of the Canadian Theatre Agreement, professional artists who are members of Canadian Actors' Equity Association.

YPT is situated on lands and waterways that have known human activity for more than 15,000 years. We acknowledge the ancestral lands of the Dish with One Spoon Territory, and more recently Treaty 13. This includes the Mississaugas of the Credit who are part of the Anishinaabe Nation, the Wyandot Nation, also the Haudenosaunee Confederacy of Six Nations, and any other Nation, recorded or unrecorded. Miigwech, Nya-weh, Thank you for letting us gather here today.

For more information on Indigenous learning at YPT, please visit YOUNGPEOPLESTHEATRE.ORG/ABOUT-YPT/INDIGENIZEUS

YOUNG PEOPLE'S THEATRE

PRESENTS THE WORLD PREMIERE OF

A MILLION BILLION PIECES

By David James Brock
Music by Gareth Williams
Directed by Philip Akin

CAST

Theo	Aldrin Bundoc
Eagle19	Simon Gagnon
Pria	Kate Martin
PriaSoprano	Jonelle Sills

CREATIVE TEAM

Set & Costume Designer	Rachel Forbes
Lighting Designer	Kaitlin Hickey
Projection Designer	Daniel Oulton
Dramaturg	Stephen Colella
Assistant Director	Samson Bonkeabantu Brown
Stage Manager	Kate Porter

YPT would like to thank and acknowledge those individuals who additionally contributed to the workshop development of *A Million Billion Pieces*: Christopher Allen, Maev Beaty, Noah Beemer, Anna Chatterton, Jeff Ho, Meher Pavri, Caroline Toal, Jeffrey Wetsch and Bahareh Yaraghi.

Photo, video or audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited.

The performance will run approximately 70 minutes, followed by a Q&A.

Playwright's Note

In *A Million Billion Pieces*, Pria and Theo are both afflicted with the same lethal genetic disorder. Both grow up “mired in precautions” believing they won’t reach adulthood, that even being in a room with someone who has the same disease will cause them to instantly explode into “a million billion pieces.” As far as I know, no such disease exists, but I think their feelings of fragility and isolation are familiar ones to a lot of us—as is the intense desire to be around people who understand us.

Pria and Theo want to fit everything into the seconds they believe they have left. When they don’t immediately explode (what a short play that would be), it’s enough for them to start doubting the mythologies they live by. To challenge the truths we hold about ourselves is no easy business.

This play is about making the time we have count. For Pria and Theo, their in-person meeting after a year of “safe”, online interactions is an act of defiance against science, rumour and time. As they wade into the unknown, they carry the weight of explorers to a new planet. Stepping into this new world is less about a fear of dying than it is about a fear of not living. And as part of that *life*, this is also a play about love, in all its cheesy, logical, passionate and, yes, operatic forms.

While writing Pria and Theo, I was thinking about how to make each second for them as big as possible; as part of that bigness, I always knew that opera would be a part of the play, an integral part of the character identities. Opera is exceptionally good at magnifying emotions, and Gareth Williams, who I’ve worked with for a decade now, consistently wows me with music that is both intimate and intergalactic.

Though *A Million Billion Pieces* portrays a fictional chronic illness, it’s a creative extension of Gareth’s and my work on *Breath Cycle*, a community opera project we co-created to explore opera and voice for singers with Cystic Fibrosis. Gareth and I are indebted to vocal coach Marie Claire Breen, Scottish Opera and the entire medical staff at Gartnavel’s Respiriology Department (Glasgow) for their support. This play is dedicated to the original co-creators, singers and performers of *Breath Cycle*, not only for their artistic collaboration, but the reminder that big music inhabits single seconds. Finally, thank you to YPT for taking this chance on a “play with opera”, where at any moment, the two main characters might explode into a million billion pieces.



DAVID JAMES BROCK

Cast



ALDRIN BUNDOC

THEO

Aldrin is a Toronto-based, Filipino-Canadian actor, born in The Philippines and raised in Mississauga. His selected credits include: *Antigone*:

方 (YPT, Dora Award Nomination for Best Ensemble); *Hilot Means Healer* (Cahoots Theatre); *Towards Youth* (Project Humanity/Crow's Theatre); *Meet Cute* (Roseneath Theatre, Dora Award Nomination for Best Ensemble); *Body Politic* (Buddies in Bad Times/Lemontree Creations); *Twelfth Night, All's Well that Ends Well* (St. Lawrence Shakespeare Festival); *Schitt's Creek* (CBC); *Killjoys* (Space); *Private Eyes* (Global).



SIMON GAGNON

EAGLE19

Simon is a Toronto based actor, born and raised in New Brunswick. Past theatre credits include: *Antigone*: 方 (YPT, Dora Award nomination for Best

Ensemble); *Prairie Nurse* (Lighthouse Festival Theatre); *The Rover, Threepenny Opera, A Midsummer Night's Dream* (National Theatre School); *Rose's Clothes* (Thousand Islands Playhouse). Huge thanks to all the lovely staff of YPT who are always so generous, and a big thank you to Philip for the belief, the insight and the persistence.



KATE MARTIN

PRIA

Kate is an actor and educator from rural Saskatchewan, based in Toronto. She has worked previously with YPT, Untitled Productions, Badfox Theatre Collective, Styx and Stones Productions, and the InspiraTO festival. Up next, she'll be in a staged reading with Shakespeare BASH'd. Kate holds her BFA from Ryerson Theatre School.



JONELLE SILLS

PRIASOPRANO

Jonelle's Soprano credits include: *Vivier's Kopernikus* (Against the Grain); Mahler's *2nd Symphony* (Mississauga Symphony

Orchestra); Rosalinda in J. Strauss' *Die Fledermaus*, Cecchina in *La Cecchina* and the title role in *Cendrillon* (The Glenn Gould School); Musetta in *La Bohème* (Muskoka Opera Festival); Micaëla in *Carmen* (Summer Opera Lyric Theatre); Female Chorus in *The Rape of Lucretia* (MYOpera). This fall: Mimi in Puccini's *La Bohème* (Against The Grain Theatre). This past summer she was a Resident Artist with Against the Grain Theatre at the Banff Centre's Opera in the 21st Century program. Jonelle completed her studies in the Artist Diploma Program (ADP) at The Glenn Gould School at The Royal Conservatory of Music.

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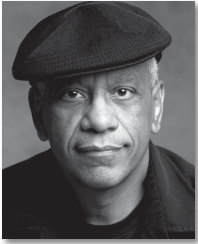


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Young People's Theatre

Creative Team



PHILIP AKIN
DIRECTOR

Laureate of the Premier's Arts Award for Excellence in the Arts (2018), Philip's additional awards include: Evie Award Nomination (Winnipeg) for Best Director

(2018); William Kilbourn Award for the Celebration of Toronto's Cultural Life (2014); Life Membership Award from Canadian Actors Equity Association for outstanding contributions to the performing arts within our jurisdiction (2014); The Grid's #2 2013 Theatre MVP; Merritt Award Nomination (Halifax) for Outstanding Direction (2012); Dora Nominations for Best Director in the General Theatre Division 2008, 2011, 2012, 2016 and 2019 (winning in 2012, 2016); The Toronto Sun Performing Artist of the Year (2011); Playwright's Guild of Canada Women's Caucus Bra d'Or Award for supporting and promoting the work of Canadian women playwrights (2011); Mallory Gilbert Leadership Award (2011); Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts Silver Ticket Award for Outstanding Contribution to the Arts (2010). Upcoming: *Trouble in Mind* by Alice Childress (Shaw Festival).



DAVID JAMES BROCK
PLAYWRIGHT

David is a playwright, poet, and librettist whose work has been performed across Canada, the US, and the UK. As a playwright: *Wet*

(Itsazoo Productions); *Centre of the Universe* (TheatreLab); *Snow Bride*, *The Lycanthrope* & *The Leprechaun* (Romantic Animal Posse). As a librettist: *Pandora* (FAWN Chamber Creative); *Breath Cycle* (Scottish Opera); *Pub Operas*, *Tap:Ex Metallurgy* (Tapestry New Opera); *Sewing the Earthworm* (Canadian Art Song Project); *The Sloans Project* (NOISE Opera); *Pretty Boy* (Paul Dresner Ensemble). David is the author of two collections of poetry, *Everyone is CO2* and *Ten-Headed Alien* (Wolsak & Wynn). He lives in Toronto. davidjamesbrock.com



GARETH WILLIAMS
COMPOSER

Originally from Armagh, Gareth graduated from Queen's University in 1999. He went on to study his Masters I Composition at the RCS and was

awarded his PhD in Composition from St Andrew's University in 2009. As a composer, his operas have been performed and broadcast all over the world. His compositions seek to find new participants, collaborators and audiences for new opera and music theatre, to shed light on stories and communities that have been overlooked, and to explore ideas of vulnerability in vocal writing.



RACHEL FORBES
SET & COSTUME DESIGNER

Rachel is a Toronto-based set and costume designer. Her work has been seen across the country with the Shaw Festival, Obsidian Theatre, Neptune Theatre,

Centaur Theatre, Confederation Centre of the Arts, and Buddies in Bad Times. She is also a guest designer and design mentor at Ryerson University. Selected credits: *Risky Phil* (YPT); *Copy That* (Tarragon Theatre); *In The Abyss* (Citadel & Compagnie/Political Movement); *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Brothers Size* (Soulpepper Theatre); *Victory, 1837: The Farmers' Revolt* (Shaw Festival); *Fences* (Grand Theatre); *School Girls* (Obsidian Theatre); *The Bridge* (Neptune Theatre/2b Theatre); *Ryerson Dances* (RSP); *Choir Boy* (Centaur Theatre); *Speaking of Sneaking* (Riser Project); *Other Side of the Game* (Obsidian Theatre/Cahoots); *The Dream Catchers* (Charlottetown Festival); *Black Boys* (Saga Collectif/Buddies in Bad Times).



KAITLIN HICKEY
LIGHTING DESIGNER

Kaitlin Hickey works with people to tell stories. Her recent credits include: Co-Production Design - *Book of Life* (Volcano Theatre); Set & Lighting Design - *Knives in Hens*

(Coal Mine Theatre); Set Design - *Kiinalik; These Sharp Tools* (Buddies in Bad Times); Production Design - *Empire Trilogy: Four Sisters*, Lighting Design - *Empire Trilogy: The Philosopher's Wife* (Paradigm Productions); Co-Video Design - *Now You See Her* (Quote Unquote Collective & Why Not Theatre); Set Design - *Noor* (Generous Friend, Aga Khan Museum); Lighting Design - *The Children's Republic* (Belfry Theatre). She is a graduate of the National Theatre School of Canada, and holds a B.Sc. from St. Francis Xavier University.



DANIEL OULTON
PROJECTION DESIGNER

Daniel is a Toronto-based, Nova Scotia-raised Designer and Stage Manager. For YPT: Projection - *Selfie*, SM - *Under the Stairs, One Thing Leads to Another*.

Other selected credits

include: Projection - *Let's Try This Standing* (Keep Good); *Messenger* (HomeFirst/EFT); *Unconscious at the Sistine Chapel* (2b); SM - *Mistatim* (Red Sky); *Reflector* (Theatre Gargantua); *The Dream Catchers* (Charlottetown Festival); *Constellations, Let's Try This Standing* (Keep Good); two tours of *When it Rains* (2b); ASM - *Cakewalk, In the Wake of Wettlaufer, Wing Night at the Boot* (Blyth Festival); *Anne of Green Gables* (Charlottetown Festival); *Frog and Toad, The Addams Family, A Christmas Story* (Neptune); PM - *We Are Not Alone* (Crow's/2b); two tours of *What A Young Wife Ought to Know* (2b).



STEPHEN COLELLA
DRAMATURG

Stephen is the Associate Artistic Director and Dramaturg at YPT. Past projects include: Director/Dramaturg for *Selfie* (Dora Award - Outstanding TYA Play, PGC TYA Award) and

Co-Director/Dramaturg for *Antigone: 万*; Dramaturg for over twenty world premieres including: *Hana's Suitcase, i think i can* (Dora Award - Outstanding New Musical), *Scarberia, Sultans of the Street* (Dora Award - Outstanding TYA Play) and *Minotaur* (YPT/Polka Theatre/Theatr Clwyd); Co-adapter of *Love You Forever...And More Munsch* (Dora Award - Outstanding TYA Production/Canada Council TYA Prize) and *Munschtime!*. Other

work includes: Director - *Tiny Treasures* (Manitoba Theatre For Young People); Dramaturgy - Alameda Theatre, Marionetas de la Esquina/Kennedy Center, fu-Gen Theatre, and The Paprika Festival. He is currently the President of ASSITEJ Canada. Upcoming: Dramaturg, *You and I* (YPT).



SAMSON BONKEABANTU BROWN

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Samson is a self-described "Jamal of all Hustles", with a primary focus on trans advocacy and the arts.

He uses the arts (acting, playwriting, stage and production managing) to create visibility for men of trans experience and to educate the general public on trans issues. Earlier this year, Samson starred in a now viral Gillette ad called "First Shave", which won two awards at the Cannes Lions. He most recently premiered his monodrama *11:11*, which was directed by his mentor, d'bi.young anitafrika, as part of Why Not Theatre's 2019 RISER Project at The Theatre Centre. He is excited to join the crew for *A Million Billion Pieces* as the Assistant Director and learn from Director Philip Akin.



KATE PORTER
STAGE MANAGER

Previously at YPT, Kate has stage managed *The Princess and the Handmaiden* and *The Man Whose Mother Was a Pirate*. Kate divides her time between

theatre and opera and has recently stage managed Robert Wilson's production of *Turandot*, at the Canadian Opera Company, as well as *La Bohème, The Elixir of Love, and Götterdämmerung*. Other recent opera credits include *No One's Safe* at Banff Centre, *Dead Man Walking* at Vancouver Opera, and *The Overcoat*, co-produced by Vancouver Opera, Canadian Stage and Tapestry Opera. Kate's recent theatre credits are *We Are Not Alone* for Crow's Theatre, *Harvest and Leading Ladies* at the Thousand Islands Playhouse, and *What A Young Wife Ought to Know* for 2b theatre company.



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About Young People's Theatre

YOUNG PEOPLE'S THEATRE is the oldest professional theatre company in Toronto and is a national producer and presenter of theatre for young audiences – the first and largest of its kind in Canada. Over the past 54 years YPT has staged many of the most important plays that form the canon of work for youth in our country. The enriched learning experiences of YPT's Education & Participation Department also provide young people with opportunities to develop their whole being. At Young People's Theatre we strive for a positive and lasting impact on the emotional, social and intellectual development of young people – giving them the chance to grow into the unique and wonderful people they were born to be.

Young People's Theatre is embarking upon *Room for Imagination* – a \$50 million comprehensive campaign to build a new home. YPT has been operating for the last four decades in a re-purposed Heritage building owned by the City of Toronto. Today, the company is bursting at the seams. It is time to create a child-friendly, state-of-the-art facility to ensure long-term sustainability for an already financially-successful children's charity. For more information, contact YPT's Executive Director, Nancy Webster: nwebster@youngpeoplestheatre.org

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- YPT is offering **Relaxed Performances** in connection with all of our productions this season! The Relaxed Performance of *A Million Billion Pieces* will be on Sun., December 8 at 2PM. Check out our website for more information.
- YPT is offering live **ASL Shadow Interpretation** of *A Million Billion Pieces* on Sun., December 8 & Tues., December 10, including a touch tour before the public performance. Check out our website for more information and to book.
- Children in Grades 1-6 can create a **Play in a Day** on all PA Days in the TDSB/TCDSB calendar year. Upcoming PA Days are Dec. 6 and Jan. 17. Register online to ensure your spot!
- Explore **At the Centre**, YPT's arts education blog – a resource for artists, teachers, artist educators and theatre practitioners: youngpeoplestheatre.org/at-the-centre

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For Discussion After the Show

- How did Theo's decision to meet Pria affect him? Why do you think he was afraid to meet her?
- Who is Priasoprano and what is the significance of her singing her lines?
- What does it mean to feel a sense of belonging?
- Do you think Theo and Pria love who they are? Do they love each other?
- How does the imagery of the canary relate to the beginning of the play?

Visit our website to see the Study Guide for this production:

youngpeoplestheatre.org/schools/a-million-billion-pieces-study-guide/

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