

# buddies

IN BAD TIMES THEATRE CANADA'S HOME FOR QUEER CULTURE

## ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

a proud theatrical tradition since 1979



### MISSION STATEMENT (Revised Feb 2004)

Buddies in Bad Times Theatre strives to fulfill the role of the leading alternative facility-based theatre in Toronto. We are committed to work that challenges the boundaries of theatrical and social convention. As a company we celebrate difference and question assumptions. Buddies in Bad Times Theatre is committed to theatrical excellence which it strives for through its play development programs, strong volunteer base, youth-mentorship initiatives and ever increasing wealth of Canadian Queer Talent.

### MANDATE (Revised Feb 2004)

Buddies in Bad Times Theatre is a not-for-profit, professional theatre company dedicated to the promotion of Queer Canadian Culture. We are dedicated to producing, developing, and supporting queer theatrical works that speak to one, or both, of the following criteria:

1. **QUEER, referring to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered identity**, encapsulates the core of our organization. Buddies in Bad Times Theatre is a queer-run organization committed to representing the LGBT community by supporting its artists, and by telling its stories.
2. **QUEER, referring to anything different or outside of the norm**, represents the nature of artistic work presented at 12 Alexander Street. Buddies in Bad Times Theatre is dedicated to work that is different, outside the mainstream, challenging in both content and form. (This second definition of Queer is not LGBT-specific)

## ABOUT BUDDIES

Established in 1979, Buddies in Bad Times Theatre is a Canadian, not-for-profit professional theatre company dedicated to the promotion of gay, lesbian and queer theatrical expression. During the past 30 years, it has evolved from a small, roaming troupe into the largest queer theatre company in the world. Buddies has made an unparalleled contribution to the acceptance and celebration of queer lives while supporting some of Canada's most innovative and important cultural artists.

### RECENT AWARDS

Both the arts community and the gay and lesbian community have recognized Buddies for its contributions to Canadian culture.

In 2009, Buddies swept the General Theatre Division with six Dora Mavor Moore awards for Waawaate Fobister's Agokwe. The world premiere of Agokwe marked the first time that one of Buddies' mainstage presentations had been entirely developed through all stages of Buddies' Queer Youth Arts Programme.

At the 2008 Dora Awards, Buddies won Outstanding New Musical for Arthouse Cabaret created by Buddies' Artistic Director, David Oiyee, and Artistic Producer, Jim LeFrancois. Jim LeFrancois, was also awarded with the

inaugural Leonard McHardy and John Harvey Award – a new annual award that recognizes the important work of theatre, dance and opera administrators.

In 2007, Buddies took home three Dora Awards for Outstanding Performance by a male in a principal role (Daniel MacIvor for *Here Lies Henry*), Outstanding Lighting Design (Andy Moro for *Here Lies Henry*), and finally Outstanding performance by a male (Ryan Kelly for *Will The Real J.T LeRoy Please Stand Up?*).

In past years, Buddies has received, among others, the Lieutenant Governor's Award for the Arts (for organizational strength), the Michael Lynch Award for Queer History, a Dora Mavor Moore Award for Outstanding New Musical (*Real Live Girl*, 2002) and numerous Dora Mavor Award nominations.

## **A BRIEF HISTORY**

Buddies was one of the first expressions of LGBT life in Toronto. Before Xtra! newspaper, the Inside Out Film Festival, Pride Toronto and even before AIDS activism, Buddies was challenging the status quo by making queer art and queer voices part of the city's cultural landscape.

The daring of Buddies' early visionaries was matched equally by the enthusiasm and contributions of its supporters. The financial support of a wide range of individuals, companies and funders contributed to Buddies development and its ability, in 1994, to give Queer Canadian Culture a permanent home at 12 Alexander Street.



With a space to call its own, a new incarnation of Buddies was born. The combination of Buddies' challenging artistic vision, a powerful community spirit and a permanent, flexible space meant that Buddies would become a theatre like no other.

## **CREATIVE INNOVATION AND EXCELLENCE**

In fulfilling its mission of presenting art that celebrates diversity and challenges assumptions, Buddies has been a home for the burgeoning talents of some of Canada's most renowned theatre artists. Many have started their journeys at Buddies and returned later in their careers to flex their creative muscles. **Daniel MacIvor, Daniel Brooks, Don McKellar, Diane Flacks, Brad Fraser, Sky Gilbert, Damien Atkins, Atom Egoyan and Ann-Marie MacDonald** (and many more) have all participated in *the grand experiment*.

## **A HOME FOR ARTISTS**

In recent years, Buddies has provided a creative outlet for more than 500 artists annually through its mainstage productions, festivals, special events and youth programs. In the past few years Buddies has acknowledged the vital yet understated role of women in the arts by providing hundreds of female creators the opportunity to shine at the annual Hysteria festival. Each season Buddies extends its artistic collaborations to include partnerships with some of the most exciting independent theatre companies in the city.

## **BUDDIES' AUDIENCE**

Buddies' primary constituency is Toronto's (and the surrounding area's) gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered communities. Buddies also draws an urban alternative theatre-loving audience – gay and straight. As with all theatre audiences, Buddies tends to attract educated people who have a passion for art and culture. Buddies has an audience base upwards of 45,000 annually.

While geographically located in the heart of Toronto's queer community, the variety of Buddies' artistic activity (both hosted and produced) means that Buddies catchment area includes all parts of the city and Ontario. The cultural diversity of Buddies' mandate/vision, combined with the high level of the art taking place within its walls, ensures that Buddies serves and has relevance to a diverse, varied and strong audience.

## **BLENDING ART AND COMMUNITY**

For almost fifteen years, 12 Alexander has played host to a vast culture of individuals that come through its doors for reasons beyond the substantial offerings of its mainstage. On Wednesdays LGBT youth attend free workshops and shows as part of Buddies' youth program; every weekend Buddies welcomes hordes of younger community members for late night revelry and raunchy performance in Tallulah's Cabaret; a group of six playwrights meet every two weeks to work on new scripts; and come festival-time hundreds of artists and audience members alike converge for a little Hysteria, Rhubarb! or Pride.

## **DEDICATED MANAGEMENT**

Buddies in Bad Times Theatre has been an increasingly important cultural and artistic presence in Toronto and Canada for more than a quarter of century. This longevity is due to the dedication of the people who have worked at Buddies over the years. At this time, all but one of the members of the management team, have been at Buddies for seven years or more. The staff's commitment to Buddies comes from the pride they feel in working to support Buddies unique mandate.

## **OVERVIEW OF ANNUAL ACTIVITIES**

Initiatives undertaken by Buddies in Bad Times Theatre are quite broad. In addition to our mainstage subscription series and play development programmes, we have a strong community focus that involves a breadth of activity from our youth programmes and community-based festivals, to our year-round late night stage and full roster of special events.

## **STRATEGIC PLANNING**

Planning occurs throughout the year, with initial discussion of strategy for the coming fiscal years beginning in January of the current fiscal. Success is evaluated based on financial achievement and strides in profile and community presence, including: single ticket and subscription sales, corporate and community partnerships, involvement of co-producers, and demand for the facility by renting companies.

## **CONTRIBUTION TO COMMUNITY**

We provide consistent development and employment opportunities for artists, technicians, administrators, and students. Youth initiatives provide an artistic home base for members of that often-disenfranchised community, while effectively developing future artists and audience members. Our theatre spaces are available year-round at an accessible rate for independent theatre productions, and community events and fundraisers, and the Buddies' season offers numerous performances with affordable ticket prices, ensuring accessibility to all communities.

## **BUILDING/FACILITIES**

Buddies' 12 Alexander Street facility, located in the heart of Toronto's gay village is comprised of 3 spaces: the flexible 350 seat Chamber (a black box theatre), the 125 seat Cabaret (which also houses a full-service bar), and the 50 seat Ante Chamber (primarily used as a lobby space for Chamber productions). All spaces have a full complement of lighting, sound and seating equipment. Buddies and Alexander are signatories to a lease with the City of Toronto to act as tenants/operators; this lease expires in 2033.

# SUMMARY OF OUR CURRENT YEAR'S PROGRAMMES (09-10)

## MAINSTAGE SUBSCRIPTION SERIES

revolutionaries, innovators & provocateurs

**Buddies in Bad Times Theatre announces programming for its 2009/10 Season: an exceptional line-up of some of Canada's most significant independent performers, award-winning artists and groundbreaking queer creators.**

From the carnal drive that beckons us into less respectable houses of worship, to the irresistible, siren-calls luring us to the extremes of personal transformation, this season we set our sights on our appetites, fetishes, secret desires and darkest fears - evoking our humanity and inspiring reflection. Titillating, sophisticated and unnerving - this is a journey you will not want to miss.

This season, as we celebrate 30 years of innovative, provocative art, we reflect on three decades of heights conquered, storms weathered, bad times and good. We continue to question our identities, excavate meaning, and venture undaunted into the unknown - with humour and heart. This is the vibrant and dangerous territory in which we thrive and we wouldn't have it any other way.

### Highlights of Buddies in Bad Times Theatre's 2009-2010 Season include:

- Buddies pops the cork on its 2009/10 Season with **Neon Nightz**, a sensational and salacious work by Toronto's premiere burlesque troupe, **The Scandelles**.
- Local transsexual celeb and queer art goddess **Nina Arsenault** delivers a powerful and intriguing tell-all in **The Silicone Diaries**.
- After a sold-out run in Montreal, Buddies proudly presents the English-language premiere of **The Salon Automaton**, an exceptional work from one of Montreal's foremost solo artists, **Nathalie Claude**.
- Nominated for 3 Dora Awards, and dubbed "one of the top ten shows of 2008" (- Globe and Mail), Buddies is thrilled to present a remount of the **Independent Aunties'** highly acclaimed and unnervingly intimate production **Breakfast**.
- The **Hysteria** and **Rhubarb** festivals continue to offer up innovative, outrageous, and inspired multi-disciplinary theatrical experiences; curated by **Moynan King** and **Erika Hennebury**.
- Guest Companies **Sore for Punching You**, **Aluna Theatre**, **Cabaret Company** and **hum** join the 09/10 line up.
- Buddies welcomes back the brash and sassy **Maggie Cassella** for the 13th incarnation of North America's premiere queer comedy festival, **We're Funny That Way**.
- And then we dance...**Buddies in Bad Times Theatre's 2010 Pride Festivities** – the best place to be at Pride. Toronto Pride just isn't complete without a cocktail served up by **Patricia Wilson**, a turn on the dance floor, and a night of raucous cabaret, at Buddies in Bad Times Theatre.

For the complete 09/10 Season line up, go to: [www.artsexy.ca](http://www.artsexy.ca), Shows, Current Season.

## **LATE NIGHT CABARET**

Every weekend we proudly present the work of eclectic, alternative, and ultra-queer urban artists as part of Tallulah's Cabaret, our late night stage. From drag to rock and roll, the Tallulah's stage provides an outlet for alternative queer talents hard-pressed to find a welcoming stage for their work.

## **SPECIAL EVENTS**

From our annual fundraising auction to Halloween and New Year's Eve, we program a full-roster of one-night events for Toronto's queer community over the course of the season.

## **THE QUEER YOUTH ARTS PROGRAMME**

Every Wednesday Night, Buddies invites queer youth to participate in our Queer Youth Arts Programme. Participants will have the opportunity to see shows, attend workshops with some of Canada's finest theatre artists and get onstage. As part of the Queer Youth Arts Programme, Buddies also hosts Queer Cab, a monthly youth open mic, giving participants a chance to strut their stuff onstage. The programme culminates in a youth cabaret (Pride Cab) created by the participants and performed as part of Buddies' annual *Pride Festival*.

## **THE YOUNG CREATORS UNIT**

Associate Artist, Evalyn Parry, works with a smaller group of queer youth throughout the season, with an eye to developing their creative voices and new creations in development.

## **THE ANTE CHAMBER UNIT**

4-6 Artists meet bi-weekly to develop new works over the course of the season.