

lemonTree

CREATIONS



MANDATE

lemonTree creations is an equity seeking theatre company. We stage rarely told stories through a queer performance lens and support artists as they develop new work through our studio residency program in downtown Tkarón:to.

Artistic Producers Indrit Kasapi (Albanian-Canadian) and Cole Alvis (Métis) collaborate primarily with Artistic Associates Ryan G. Hinds, Jonathan Seinen and playwright in residence Donna-Michelle St. Bernard.

We maintain a rehearsal studio in Dish With One Spoon Treaty Territory and understand the original caretakers of these lands and waterways to be the Mississauguas of New Credit First Nation, the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee and Wendat peoples. Grappling with colonialism is part of our arts practice and we invite you to engage with us about how we can be good guests on these Indigenous territories.

HERSTORY

lemonTree creations was established by Indrit Kasapi in 2007 to produce his first play *THE RED DEVIL*, directed by Jonathan Seinen at the 2008 SummerWorks Theatre Festival (NOW Magazine, Outstanding Ensemble & Outstanding Direction). The play told the story of an Albanian family travelling illegally to Canada during the 1997 Albanian civil war.

Inspired by the success of that collaboration, Jonathan Seinen and Indrit Kasapi were joined by Cole Alvis (Dora Nominated Gorey Story) to participate in the 2009 Pride Toronto Festival with Jean Genet's *DEATHWATCH*. This gritty play about crime idolization and prison homoeroticism was performed to sold out audiences and rave reviews in the claustrophobic basement of XPACE Cultural Centre.

Following this, lemonTree created *STILL LIFE*, a devised theatre piece about love and loss in queer Toronto, which appeared at SummerWorks 2011. Consequently, lemonTree creations collaborated with Obsidian Theatre for our site-specific production of *DUTCHMAN* on a vintage TTC bus for SummerWorks 2012 and, that same summer, our production of Herbie Barne's *SOVEREIGN ALLIANCES* funded by the Chiefs of Ontario for the Assembly of First Nations premiered at the historic Elgin Theatre.

Our production, *MSM* [men seeking men], was a dance deconstruction piece inspired by online Grindr 'hook-up' culture. Premiering first as one of the top grossing productions at Toronto Fringe 2013, it went on to play two shows nightly during Toronto's WorldPride celebration in June 2014. The Charlebois Post called it: "At times frisky and fun, and at others violent and hard to watch. The remount of *MSM* is a great achievement."

lemonTree creations co-produced Jonathan Seinen's new play *UNKNOWN SOLDIER* with Architect Theatre at the 2014 SummerWorks Performance Festival, a play inspired by the actions of Chelsea (formerly Bradley) Manning, which received favourable reviews (including the only NNNNN review at SummerWorks from Now Magazine) and an Honourable Mention for actor Jeff Ho for the Spotlight Performance Award.

The company developed and co-produced with Buddies In Bad Times Theatre the much anticipated World Premiere of *BODY POLITIC* by Nick Green, during the 2015/2016 season. This Box Office Hit play received much critical acclaim and was nominated for 3 Dora Mavor Moore Awards and won Outstanding New Play for Nick Green.

COMMITMENT

lemonTree creations is an equity seeking theatre company.

We demonstrate these values through what we put on stage (or any performance venue) and the leadership structures within our ad hoc organization. When creating and producing theatre, we adhere to social justice models including anti-racist strategies and the pursuit of equity for Indigenous and culturally diverse communities.

We dismantle white supremacy by providing leadership roles for artists from the communities that our work represents on stage and other platforms on which we create.

At all times in the creative process:

We endeavour to create a safer space for respectful dialogue that works toward a shared understanding of complex experiences. We recognize the potential for failure in upholding these values within our organization and our art. We welcome feedback and respect the bravery required of our collaborators and communities to address oppression via direct and indirect communication.

We acknowledge our performance and art creation is challenging and can discomfort, particularly when we engage with sexuality on stage directly. We commit to creating a rehearsal and creative space where artists are engaged and consent during every aspect of art-making; experience physical safety; and are treated with professionalism and respect. We commit to a zero-tolerance space, free of: sexual harassment/sexual assault; mental, physical, and/or emotional abuse; and bullying.

We prioritize: artist dignity; personal safety; respect of personage; and self-determination of boundaries.

Artistic Producers Indrit Kasapi and Cole Alvis take issues of cultural and artistic safety seriously and can be contacted via indrit@lemontreecreations.ca, cole@lemontreecreations.ca, or anonymously if desired.

If circumstances require, and if direct communication is not possible, we welcome and will participate in:

1. mediation via lemonTree artists:

Associate Artists Ryan G. Hinds & Jonathan Seinen and/or Resident Artist(s) Donna-Michelle St. Bernard,

2. third-party facilitation,

3. methodologies as recommended by the person bringing forth the concern (or their proxy).

This is a living commitment and will evolve as conversations continue and new realities emerge in our communities.