

LUMINATO



Luminato and The Theatre Centre announce Liza Balkan's *Out The Window* as the inaugural Residents Project

The Residents Project: a new partnership between Luminato and The Theatre Centre gives future life to works created through The Residency Program

Toronto, ON – On 24 June, [Luminato](#) and [The Theatre Centre](#) announced Liza Balkan's powerful documentary theatre piece *Out The Window* as the inaugural **Residents Project**, an annual initiative which will provide artists with the time, space and the means to revisit and develop works initially created through The Theatre Centre's Residency Program. Following a creative development period *Out The Window* will be presented as part of the 2018 Luminato festival.

Established in 2004, The Theatre Centre's award-winning Residency Program is a unique multi-disciplinary, long-term development opportunity that has led to the creation of many significant works by Canadian performing artists. Beginning in 2018, through The Residents Project, Luminato will provide a past artist from The Residency Program with the means to revisit their work and have it presented within the context of an international arts festival as part of Luminato's program.

Out The Window is a powerful piece of documentary theatre that charts playwright Liza Balkan's multiyear journey through the justice system and beyond after witnessing a man die during an altercation with Toronto police. The man's name was Otto Vass, and Liza witnessed his final moments from her apartment window in August 2000.

Sarah Garton Stanley (Associate Artistic Director, English Theatre, National Arts Centre) will direct this next stage in the life of this important and timely work that questions our relationship with authority and our understanding of the justice system

Out The Window uses compelling court transcripts, sound, video, and selections derived from countless interviews with top lawyers from both sides of the bench, a former Chief Justice, journalists, activists, artists, police force members, a police psychologist, mental health experts and family members of the deceased.

Out The Window began life as a solo performance installation presented at Factory Theatre's Lab Cab Festival and subsequently was developed in Residency at The Theatre Centre before its first production in March 2012. Highlighting the complex pathway to developing a theatrical work, over the years it has received support from the Lab Cab Festival, Crow's Theatre, Nightswimming, Nightwood Theatre, National Theatre School, Studio 180, Theatre Passe Muraille, and others.

Luminato is committed to making a meaningful contribution to the local cultural landscape, a commitment expressed through a range of pathways that offer opportunities to local artists to develop their practice and to support ambitions of innovation and scale. In addition to The Residents Project, other initiatives include: a

partnership with Directors Lab North; support for and presentation of works-in-progress; and a platform for emerging artists to have their work developed and presented. A new partnership with RBC in 2017 also sees the creation of the RBC Emerging Producer Program, under which a young producer will receive invaluable training and experience. The 2018 Residents Project at Luminato is supported by The Renette and David Berman Family Foundation.

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MORE INFO

About *Out The Window*

“.. an important piece of theatre... It should be seen” – Lynn Slotkin

“Docudrama can sometimes be dry theatre, but *Out The Window*, both well structured and well performed, strikes a nerve... *Balkan* spreads a wide net that examines the police, the SIU, our mental-health care system, accountability and the shifting nature of memory... *Out The Window* has a raw, powerful quality that distinguishes it from most other theatre: it will leave you with questions rather than answers.” – Jon Kaplan (NOW Magazine)

Out The Window is a documentary project created by performer/director Liza Balkan that investigates memory, policing, witnessing, accountability, perspective, mental health, law and theatre. It was created after Balkan witnessed the death of a mentally ill man during an altercation with the police in the west end of Toronto in 2000. The show integrates verbatim court transcripts, sound, video and text derived from interviews with top lawyers from both sides of the bench, as well as with journalists, activists, artists, police force members, a police psychologist, mental health experts and family members of the deceased.

Out The Window began as a solo performance installation an artistic response to this horrific event and its aftermath and a way for Balkan to begin to try to make sense of it. The work spent four years in Residency at The Theatre Centre. Scenographer Trevor Schwellnus, sound designer Thomas Ryder Payne and lighting designer Michelle Ramsay came on board as collaborators. In 2012, *Out The Window*, with a cast of 8 that included RH Thomson, David Ferry and Julie Tepperman, played to sold out houses at The Theatre Centre. It employed active audience involvement, as it strived to create a thrilling theatrical forum to investigate a highly charged and provocative subject.

For more information: <http://lizabalkan.com/work/out-the-window/>

Liza Balkan

Liza Balkan is an Ontario-based artist who has spent over three and a half decades working in the theatre. She first trained as a dancer in Montreal and Toronto and then as an actor in New York City, where she spent the first 8 years of her professional career, before returning home to Canada in 1986. She is an accomplished opera and theatre director, writer, librettist, educator, and Dora Award winning actor.

She has directed productions at Koerner Hall, Buddies in Bad Times, Lighthouse Festival, Canadian Opera Company, the Shaw Festival's Directors' Project, and Tapestry Opera, among many others. Liza has been a movement instructor for the Birmingham Conservatory at the Stratford Festival and has been a guest artist and director at the University of Windsor, Royal Conservatory of Music, Ryerson Theatre School, and Randolph School for the Performing Arts. She has acted in productions across Canada and in the US.

She is presently a resident artist with arc (Actors Repertory Company) and appeared in their recent Dora- award winning production of *POMONA* and Theatre Smash/arc/Canadian Stage's *KISS*.

Her writing projects include her early solo shows *BRANg*st and *Leftovers* and several short opera works that have been performed by Tapestry Opera, Bicycle Opera Project and others. Alongside composer Lembit Beecher, she created the

song cycle *Looking at Spring* which premiered in Vermont in 2013. Their new work in progress, *I Missed the Beginning*, was recently performed in NYC for the Five Boroughs Songbook 2.

In 2008, Liza was invited into the Residency Program at the Theatre Centre. There she continued to develop her documentary project *Out The Window*, which began as an Installation at Toronto's Lab Cab Festival in 2007. In 2012 The Theatre Centre and her Window Collective co - produced the show, which Liza directed. It played to sold out houses during its limited run.

Sarah Garton Stanley

Director, dramaturg and conversationalist, Sarah Garton Stanley is originally from Montreal, now lives in Kingston and works from Ottawa. She is the Associate Artistic Director of English Theatre at the National Arts Centre, as well as Curator for *The Collaborations*, leader for *The Cycle(s)* and was Interim Facilitator for Indigenous Theatre. A creative catalyst for *SpiderWebShow*, she is also a former Artistic Director of Buddies in Bad Times Theatre. In the course of her award-winning career Sarah has worked across Canada and overseas. Most recent directing credits include *Kill Me Now* (Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre production in collaboration with NAC English Theatre); *Bunny* (Stratford Festival); *Helen Lawrence* (Canadian Stage, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Munich Kammerspiele and elsewhere) and *We Keep Coming Back* (Jewish Culture Fest, Krakow, Poland and Ashkenaz Festival, Toronto). Sarah received the 2016 Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas' Elliot Hayes Award for her focus on the Indigenous body of performance work in Canada.

ABOUT THE THEATRE CENTRE

The Theatre Centre is a nationally-recognized live arts incubator that serves as a research and development hub for the cultural sector. It provides space, subsidy, and mentorship to nurture the development of new works by the next generation of artistic leaders.

With a focus on long-term support for cross-disciplinary artistic work, they are unique within the landscape of contemporary live performance in Toronto and across Canada. They foster a culture of innovation by embracing risk and giving artists the opportunity to explore, devise, and test their ideas in traditional and non-traditional formats.

The Theatre Centre is also a destination for audiences who are passionate about original work and the creative process behind it. Their facility serves as a cultural and community hub where people of all ages and heritage can access and participate in civic engagement and performance.

ABOUT LUMINATO

Luminato is Toronto's international multi-arts, multi-platform festival dedicated to performance, visual art, music, theatre, dance, and programming that cuts across traditional art form boundaries. The 2018 festival runs June 6 to 24. Founded in 2007, its first decade, Luminato became one of the preeminent international arts festivals in North America, having commissioned close to 100 new works of art, with more than 3,000 performances featuring 11,000 artists from over 40 countries.

Curated by Artistic Director Josephine Ridge and led by CEO Anthony Sargent CBE, Luminato is a charitable, not-for-profit, globally connected cultural organization proudly based in Toronto.

Luminato gratefully acknowledges the generous support and vision of its Founding Luminaries, Pillar Supporters, SuperNova Supporters, our annual members and our co-founding partner, the Province of Ontario.

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