



why not
theatre

LADY M (MARGARET)

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY
RAMESH MEYYAPPAN

AUGUST 5-12, 2023
FRANCO BONI THEATRE
THEATRE CENTRE

PART OF THE
2023 SUMMERWORKS FESTIVAL



Canada Council
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TD READY
COMMITMENT



Lindy Green
Family Foundation

1s1 THEATRE PRESENTS THE PREMIERE OF
LADY M (MARGARET)
THE INAUGURAL PRODUCTION OF 1s1 THEATRE
WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY RAMESH MEYYAPPAN
CO-PRESENTED BY WHY NOT THEATRE

CAST

DAWN JANI BIRLEY *Lady Margaret*

STURLA ALVSVÄG *Macbeth*

JOSHUA BOSWORTH *Duncan*

CREATIVE AND PRODUCTION TEAM

RAMESH MEYYAPPAN *Playwright and Director*

ANDRÉ DU TOIT *Lighting Designer*

JENNA GEEN *Sound Designer and Composer*

JUNG-HYE KIM *Set Designer*

CARLYN RAHUSAAR ROUTLEDGE *Costume Designer*

JULIA DICKSON *Producer*

PATRICK LYNN *Production Manager*

MICHELLE SOICHER *Stage Manager*

SALLY ROBERTS *Assistant Stage Manager*

DANIEL LEVINSON* *Fight Director*

DALE SHARP JR *Head Carpenter*

KATE LEWIS, SHEILA JOHNSTON, HELEN MCLEOD, GLORIA BRIFOGLIO *ASL-English Interpreting Team*

VANESSA FLOROS *ASL and Deaf culture Instructor*

Additional producing and development support by Michelle Yagi and Miriam Fernandes

Additional recordings by Adrian Russouw (upright bass) and Brandon Bernstein (bagpipes)

Rigging support by Micah Champagne

Cover Photo taken by Mona Kumzaite, edited by Alice Lo

ASL and Deaf Culture Instruction by Vanessa Floros, Script ASL translation by Dawn Jani Birley and Ramesh Meyyappan

**Engaged with permission of the Canadian Actors Equity Association*

Lady M (Margaret) has been made possible through the generous support of: Canada Council for the Arts, Ontario Arts Council, Toronto Arts Council, Canadian Heritage, Lindy Green Family Foundation, TD Ready Commitment.



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RUNNING TIME: 60 minutes, no intermission.

Please turn off your cell phones before the performance. The taking of photographs or video and use of any kind of recording device is prohibited in the theatre.

AUDIENCE ADVISORY: This production features mature themes, including references to infant mortality and sexual assault, and violence depicted onstage. Loud noises including gun shots, as well as haze, fog, and fake blood will be present. The prop rifles used in our production are solid rubber and cannot fire. There will be absolutely no blank firing props used in this production. Please be aware that during the production the performers may point these props in the direction of the audience.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

1s1 produces theatre on land that has held stories and storytellers for thousands of years. Tkaronto is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples. The region is covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit, and the Williams Treaties signed with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa bands. We acknowledge we are privileged to create work on this stolen land. As a company, we are striving to be accountable to these lands and their original caretakers across all of Turtle Island.

We would like to specifically call attention to the many sign languages across the land that have been used and are still in use today by Indigenous Deaf community members. These languages include Plains Sign Language, Plateau Sign Language, Inuit Sign Language, and many other languages that have existed, recorded and unrecorded.

The settlers and newcomers in the organization commit to interrogating the colonial practices that continue to oppress Indigenous peoples in our community; we are working collectively to identify our actions moving forward with this goal. We recognize the enduring presence of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples on these lands, and all those who have come before— acknowledged and unacknowledged. For a place to start, we encourage looking into the work of Shawna Joynt, who helms the Canadian Association of the Deaf, and will be leading their first National Indigenous Cultural Gathering this October. You can donate to the cause by reaching out to shawna.joynt@cad-asc.ca, and learn more about Deaf Indigenous research by reaching out to Shawna at shawnajoynt1981@gmail.com.

THANK YOU!

Michelle Yagi, Miriam Fernandes, Ravi Jain, Karen Tisch, Sarah Newkrik, Yvonne Lu Trinh, Keshia Palm, Karishma Bristy, The Paprika Theatre Festival, Rapier Wit, and the SummerWorks Festival Team including Michael Caldwell, Morgan Norwich, Emma Westray, Patricia Vinluan, Brandon Crone, and Peter Kelly.

A NOTE FROM RAMESH MEYYAPPAN, PLAYWRIGHT AND DIRECTOR

Shakespeare's *Macbeth* has been a favourite play of mine for quite some time, it offers so much in terms of themes and ideas for exploration; power, ambition, violence, murder, guilt, nightmares, betrayal to name just a few. This has not been my first opportunity to direct an adaptation of *Macbeth* - a play that 24 years ago was my first attempt at adapting a text to create a purely visual narrative. The recent experience with this creative group has allowed me to explore another (often overlooked) quote from Shakespeare's text:

**"I have given suck, and know
how tender tis to love the babe that milks me
I would, while it was smiling in my face
Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums
And dashed the brains out (1.7)"**

This quote provided an interesting starting point for looking at the character of Lady Macbeth a little differently. She has often been played and portrayed as the scheming and ambitious wife, but here we have an opportunity to consider what else drives her or has happened to her. When considering writing this adaptation, I asked myself a few questions given this quote; Is Shakespeare saying that Lady Macbeth was a mother? What happened to her baby? Motherhood and becoming a mum for some women is an ambition or is considered as an inevitability (I don't mean this to sound like a stereotype), being a mum is about being that person who has created the family - the family is everything. This idea is one I wanted to explore - Lady M (Margaret) will do anything to keep her family - this is her driving force, her ambition!

To continue the idea of the Scottish Play, we have set the play during the First World War, Macbeth (Margaret's husband) is a private (1st class) returning to Scone on leave. As he returns from war, he finds a new war at home as home becomes a battlefield.

Being deaf, I have communicated visually all my life – this is something I'm fairly well versed in – but as a theatre maker, the challenges have been to find a more shared visual language as not everyone will converse or indeed understand sign language. What I've spent much time doing is creating a specific visual theatrical vocabulary for each piece of work, choosing the elements that are visual and that support the storytelling and the narrative. I create stories that have shared, universal themes and ideas, that transcend words, speaking to everyone, wherever they live and whoever they are.'

A NOTE FROM DAWN JANI BIRLEY, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF 1s1

My goal is simple. I want Deaf people and hearing people to come and enjoy theatre together, however, the journey to get here to make that happen was arduous. Theatre is a place where imagination can run wild but many of my people have never set afoot in a theatre let alone perform. My love for theatre started in my grandmother's closet, however, as culturally and linguistically Deaf I was often told that I cannot be an actor because I do not hear like everyone else. I have lost count how many times I was told NO and every time it happens, I took it as a motivating factor to work twice or thrice as hard to prove otherwise. After seeing how profound the impact Prince Hamlet with Why Not Theatre has made on Deaf and hearing audiences alike as well as in our theatre communities, I realised that I need to take lead to generate opportunities and possibilities to push for positive changes in our society. As a Deaf-led theatre company, we challenge how stories are often told and to create new theatrical languages at the intersections of the Deaf and hearing worlds. To create theatre for a hearing audience is one thing, to design theatre for a Deaf audience is another, but to put both together is where the excitement is! Ramesh is internationally well-known for his "Showing, Not Telling" so it is truly a honour for 1s1 Theatre to have him share his magic of visual storytelling as playwright and director for our inaugural production. May this new visual experience bring all of us together regardless of signing ability and allow our imaginations to run wilder.

ABOUT 1s1

1s1 is founded and led by Dawn Jani Birley (*Prince Hamlet, Canadian Stage*) and was established with the goal of bringing balance in how to tell a story and whose stories are told. To create theatre for a hearing audience is one thing, to design theatre for a Deaf audience is another, but to put both together is where excitement is.

whynot.theatre/work/1s1/ | Instagram: @1s1theatre
#1s1LadyM

1S1 Theatre is created in collaboration with Why Not's SHARE stream of activities. SHARE projects are partnerships with other independent artists and companies to help produce, present or tour their work.

ABOUT WHY NOT THEATRE

Why Not Theatre is an international theatre company based in Toronto, Canada, operating at the intersection of art, innovation and social change. Rooted in values of community and collaboration, Why Not challenges the status quo, rethinking how stories are told and who gets to tell them. Since its inception, the company has developed and produced 50+ new plays to critical and public acclaim. These works have toured to over 50 cities and garnered over 40 awards and nominations. Why Not is led by Founder and Co-Artistic Director, Ravi Jain, Executive Director, Karen Tisch, and Co-Artistic Director, Miriam Fernandes.

www.whynot.theatre | [@WhyNotTheatreTO](https://www.instagram.com/WhyNotTheatreTO)

VIEW THE PROGRAM IN ASL



COMPANY BIOGRAPHIES

DAWN JANI BIRLEY (she/her) LADY MARGARET

Dawn Jani Birley is an award-winning Canadian-Finnish actor with a strong background in physical theatre. Her versatile acting led to her variety of roles, most memorably, Horatio in *Prince Hamlet*, Canada earning her the Toronto Theatre Critics Award for Best Actress in a Play and Sarah in *Sanaton Rakkaus (Children of Lesser God)* opposite Santeri Kinnunen, Finland. She starred in *The Black Drum*, signed musical, Canada, selected as featured performance, Clin d'Oeil Festival, France, 2019.

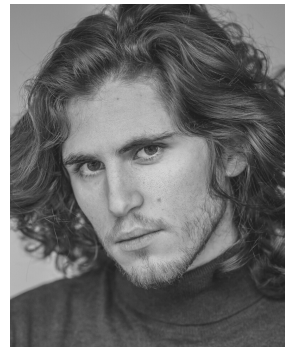


Born in Saskatchewan to a third generation Deaf family, Birley identifies herself as culturally and linguistically Deaf. Fluent in 5 sign languages with an uncanny ability for storytelling, she established 1s1 Theatre bringing Deaf-led stories to the stage. Birley stars in *I am Puff*, Finnish children's cartoon series, adapted by 1s1 with Why Not Theatre combining live-action, animation, American Sign Language, spoken English, and captioning online.

www.dawnjanibirley.com & <https://whynot.theatre/work/1s1/>

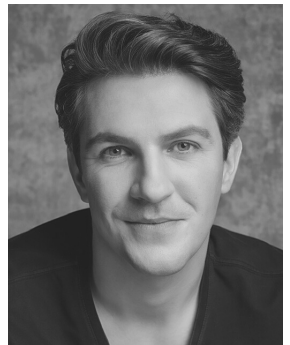
STURLA ALVSVÅG (he/him) MACBETH

Sturla Alvsvaag is an actor and theatre-maker from Bergen, Norway. Selected works include: *Traversée de la Rivière* (Collectif 2222, France), *Il Turco In Italia* (Bergen National Opera) and *Wendy and Peter Pan* (The National Theatre of Norway), *Telavåg* (West Coast Theatre, Norway), *What You Won't Do for Love* (Why Not Theatre), *The Nose* (commissioned by the MiniMidiMaxi Festival), and *The First Time I Saw the Sea* (Frontlosje-festivalen). Sturla is working with 1S1 Theatre on a new play called *Lady M* and performed in Why Not Theater's *Prince Hamlet* in fall of 2022.



JOSHUA BOSWORTH (he/him) DUNCAN

Joshua Bosworth is a proud Yorkshireman and no stranger to the stage. Born in the UK, he studied Theatre in Leeds and Acting in London. In England he performed in plays such as an adaptation of Kafka's *The Trial*, Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* and Edward Bond's *Saved*. Since emigrating to Canada he has performed numerous times in the Impact International Theatre Festival. In terms of screen work - his most anticipated film is *The Pine Still Whisper*, which will run the film festival circuit later this year. Joshua lives in Guelph with his wife and two wee lads and is immensely thankful for their constant support.



CREATIVE AND PRODUCTION TEAM

RAMESH MEYYAPPAN (he/him) PLAYWRIGHT AND DIRECTOR

Ramesh Meyyappan is a theatre maker who develops performances using an eclectic mix of visual and physical theatre styles. Ramesh continually seeks to develop and extend his theatrical visual vocabulary, for example incorporating; circus techniques, bouffon, puppetry and illusion within his work. He enjoys the challenge of creating strong narrative visual work.



Ramesh is something of a pioneer, he has continually explored visual styles that allow him to make work entirely accessible while raising awareness of deaf performers and directors, since he moved to Scotland in 2006, he played an important role in raising awareness of deaf to the Scottish theatre community. He was involved in the programme design team for the BA Performance in BSL (British Sign Language) and English at the Royal Conservatoire Scotland where he continues to teach the Visual Theatre module.

Over the years, his solo performances and collaborations have toured nationally and internationally to much critical acclaim. He has been commissioned to devise, write and direct plays for other companies internationally. His work has been nominated five times for Best Actor at the Life! Theatre Awards (Singapore) and awarded the accolade twice. In Scotland he was nominated for a CATS (Critic Award Theatre Scotland) – Best Male Performance for Off Kilter.

Love Beyond (Act of Remembrance) is his most latest work – written, created and performed by him, it sees Ramesh present for the first time a piece of work that he wrote that incorporates both sign and spoken word, these he combined masterfully with his unique visual style. *Love Beyond* has been nominated for 3 awards including Best New Play and Outstanding Performance and won Best Music & Sound Designer and Best Technical Presentation.

ANDRÉ DU TOIT (he/him) LIGHTING DESIGNER

André du Toit is a lighting designer for live performance based in Toronto, although his designs have been seen across Canada and beyond. He has received five Dora Mavor Moore Awards for Outstanding Lighting Design. His recent designs include *Prince Hamlet, What You Won't Do For Love* (Why Not Theatre); *Broken Shapes* (Theatre Centre); *Maanomaa, My Brother, Love and Information* (Canadian Stage); *The Cave, Le Grand Continental* (Luminato); *R+J* (Stratford Festival of Canada) *Getting Married, The Orchard* (Shaw Festival); *The Queen in Me* (Canadian Opera Company/Nightwood Theatre/Theatre Gargantua); *Now You See Her, Mouthpiece* (Quote Unquote Collective); *Jerusalem* (Outside the March/Company Theatre); *Animal Farm, A Delicate Balance, Vimy, The 39 Steps*, (Soulpepper); *Italian Mime Suicide, Paolozzapedia, The Double* (Bad New Days); *Oraltorio* (Obsidian/Soulpepper); *and on air* (adelheid).



JENNA GEEN (she/they)
SOUND DESIGNER AND COMPOSER

Jenna Geen is a devised theatre creator, performer, and musician. her practice is centred around experimental music, vocal-music, and playful risk-taking in art of all mediums. She is curious about sound as a spectrum—not only what we may hear, but sound frequencies that are physical vibrations that we can feel in our bones. As a composer, Jenna draws from all types of genres; always exploring from a place of curiosity.



past/recent credits: *Niizh* (Native Earth—Sound Designer); *Fairview* (Canstage—Asst. Sound Designer); Paprika Festival Sound Design Lab participant 2021-22.

Upcoming: you can watch Jenna perform as an improvising vocalist in *Exit Points* on September 29th, 2023.

JUNG-HYE KIM (she/her)
SET DESIGNER

Jung-Hye is a Toronto based set and costume designer. Her recent design credits include *The Chinese Lady* (Studio 180, Dora award for outstanding costume design), *The Nightingale of A Thousand Songs* (CCOC), *Hamlet-911* (Stratford Festival), *An Imm-Permanent Resident* (Nautanki Bazaar and Why Not Theatre), *Hilot Means Healer* (Cahoots Theatre), *Dry Powder* (Evermore Theatre), *Now You See Her* (Quote Unquote Collective, Dora nomination for outstanding costume design)



Upcoming: *Guilt* (Tarragon Theatre)

CARLYN RAHUSAAR ROUTLEDGE (they/she)
COSTUME DESIGNER

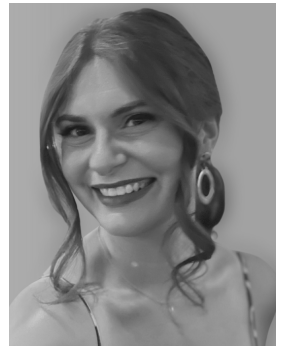
Carlyn is an artist who predominantly works as a costume and set designer for Toronto theatre. However, “work” may not be the right word - creating art is a joy for her. Telling stories, metaphors, emotions, and even secrets through tactile things, such as a costume or prop, is what Carlyn is all about. They are so grateful to have been a part of such a beautiful, raw, and unique production. Working on shows, such as *Lady M*, keeps the joy and art alive in Carlyn’s work.



Select Credits include: *Morning After* (A Front Company - Costume Designer); *Antigone Lives, Seph, TomorrowLove*, (RISERx - Costume Designer); *Redbone Coonhound* (Tarragon Theatre - Cutter/stitcher); *Overruled* (Shaw Festival - Wardrobe Coordinator); *A Few Words* (WeeFestival - Costume/Set Designer); *Everything is Different in this Moment* (Frantic Assembly and TMU - Set Designer).

JULIA DICKSON (she/her)
PRODUCER

Julia Dickson is an arts manager and producer currently based in Tkaronto, the place in the water where the trees are standing. Current: General Manager - Paprika Festival; Artistic Producer - Single Thread Theatre Company. Previous: *Martyr* (ARC - Producer); *Romeo and Juliet and Action* (Shakespeare in Action - Production Manager); *Ladies Day* (New Stuff Theatre - Production Manager) *Society of Hometown Historians* (Single Thread Theatre Company - Producer/Production Manager); *UTC* (Theatre Passe Muraille - Producer/Production Manager); *Rupture* (Kingston Fringe - Production Stage Manager); *OK Ladies* (Off Key Productions - Production Manager).



Julia also works as a freelance arts administrator and educator, and has worked with companies such as Studio 180 Theatre, Young People's Theatre, Theatre Passe Muraille, and County Stage in Prince Edward County. She has a post-graduate certificate in Arts Administration and Cultural Management from Humber College, and a Bachelor of Education with a focus on Artist in the Community Education from Queen's University.

PATRICK LYNN (they/them)
PRODUCTION MANAGER

Patrick Lynn is a queer performance professional living in Toronto, working primarily as a freelance production manager and stage manager for dance, theatre, and live events. Having grown up in Fredericton, NB, they moved in 2017 to pursue their BFA, Performance: Production at TMU. They have been privileged to work with such companies as Aluna Theatre, ARC, BoucharDanse, Buddies in Bad Times, Factory Theatre, Théâtre français de Toronto, Transcen | Dance Project, and more.



MICHELLE SOICHER (she/her)
STAGE MANAGER

Michelle Soicher works in live art as a stage manager, director, and creator. Select credits include *Birthmark* (Co-Direction with Liz Valdez, Teesri Duniya), *Presence* (Production Stage Management, Peggy Baker Dance) and *The History of Sexuality* (Stage Management, Talking Dog Productions). Michelle studied Theatre at Concordia University, and is a proud alumn of the Black Theatre Workshop Artist Mentorship Program, the Segal Centre's Jewish Arts Mentorship and the Toronto Fringe Theatre Entrepreneur Networking and Training Program. Michelle has produced two original shows with her company Michegas Theatre at the Montreal Fringe Festival: *Games I Don't Want to Play* and *Spiral*. In her original work Michelle's practice is playful, interdisciplinary, and responsive. Her creative process is inspired by Jewish traditions of debate, resilience, and joy.



SALLY ROBERTS (she/her)
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

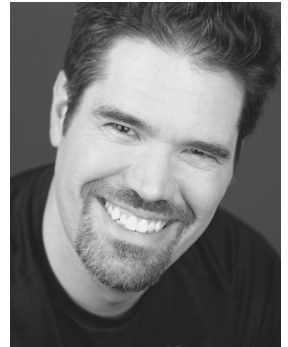
Sally Roberts is excited for this ASM opportunity with 1s1 Theatre on Lady M. Sally usually works as a freelance Production Manager and is a member of Means of Production Collective. She is also a technician and member of IATSE local 58 and local 873, primarily in lighting. Previously, she was the Head Technician of the Baillie Theatre at Canadian Stage for 4 years. Sally was Production Manager on *Perceptual Archaeology* (Fire and Rescue with Crow's Theatre) and, *The Black Drum* (Canadian Cultural Society for the Deaf, with the support of Soulpepper Theatre.) Associate PM and Surtitles Operator for *Ultrasound* (Cahoots Theatre with Theatre Passe Muraille.) Occasionally, she moonlights as a Lighting Designer for T.Y.T. Theatre's family-friendly shows at Wychwood Theatre. In September, Sally will start her third year of the ASL-English Interpreting program at George Brown College. (Photo by Dahlia Katz).



DANIEL LEVINSON (he/him)
FIGHT DIRECTOR

Daniel Levinson has been performing, directing and teaching stage combat professionally since founding Rapier Wit in 1991. Rapier Wit is Canada's oldest stage combat school and production company. Daniel is a certified fight master with Fight Directors Canada. FDC is Canada's only nation wide, internationally recognized stage combat fight association. Daniel has created fights for companies such as The Stratford Festival (5 seasons), Canadian Stage, *Jesus Christ Superstar* on Broadway, Volcano Theatre, Actors Repertory Company, Second City, A.C.T. Productions, Shakespeare In the Square, Factory Theatre, Shakespeare in the Rough, Theatre Aquarius, The Actor's Repertory Company, Theatre Passe Muraille, The Tarragon Theatre and The Guild Festival Theatre. Daniel is extremely excited about working with the cast and crew of Lady M. It is a pleasure working on such a fantastic project with such exceptional people.

Daniel Levinson is engaged with permission of the Canadian Actors Equity Association



DALE SHARP JR. (he/him)
HEAD CARPENTER

Dale was born and raised in Toronto and started carpentry when he was a teenager, and has been working in the field for the past 31 years. Sharp specialised in framing and renovation and owned a business building custom homes in Alberta. After moving back to Ontario, Dale worked as a handyman with his father, which honed his craft in the trade. Dale is now retired from carpentry but continues to enjoy doing small projects. His son, Dale III, followed in his footsteps and became a carpenter; Dale hopes to will join his son in Alberta supporting his business. It is Dale's first time building a set for theatre so he is truly honoured to be a part of 1s1 Lady M creative team.



KATE LEWIS (she/her)
ASL-ENGLISH INTERPRETER

Nationally certified (COI) with over 25 years experience.



SHEILA JOHNSTON (she/her)
ASL-ENGLISH INTERPRETER

Nationally certified (COI) with over 25 years experience.



HELEN MCLEOD (she/her)
ASL-ENGLISH INTERPRETER

Nationally certified (COI) with over 25 years experience.



GLORIA BRIFOGLIO (she/her)
ASL-ENGLISH INTERPRETER

Nationally certified (COI) with over 25 years experience.



VANESSA FLOROS (she/her)
ASL AND DEAF CULTURE INSTRUCTOR

Vanessa Floros has been teaching ASL and Deaf Culture to this awesome cast & crew. Vanessa was born Deaf and raised in Toronto, Ontario, attending Ernest C. Drury School for the Deaf in Milton. She graduated from the ASL and Literacy Instructor Program (ALIP) at George Brown College in 2011. Ever since, she has been teaching and tutoring ASL and Deaf Culture to hearing students in which she enjoys very much. She still enjoys volunteering and being involved in the Deaf community in many different ways.



