

SOUND OFF: A Deaf Theatre Festival is presented by Workshop West Playwrights' Theatre in collaboration with Chinook Series, running February 7 - 17, 2019 at the ATB Financial Arts Barns

The land on which we gather is Treaty 6 territory - a traditional meeting ground and home for many Indigenous peoples, including Cree, Saulteaux, Blackfoot, Métis, and Nakota Sioux Peoples. We are grateful for how we benefit from our presence on this land.

# Songs My Mother Never Sung Me

MUSIC & LYRICS by Dave Clarke

DIRECTED & DRAMATURGED BY Mieko Ouchi\* & Caroline Howarth

**FEATURING** 

Susan Gilmour as MOM's VOICE\*
Elizabeth Morris as MOM\*
Kieran Martin Murphy as NARRATOR\*
Luc Tellier as BOY\*
MUSICAL DIRECTOR & PIANIST Erik Mortimer

ASL COACH & DEAF CONSULTANT Amorena Bartlett
DEAF CONSULTANT & OUTREACH Connor Yuzwenko-Martin
INTERPRETERS Andrea Konowalec, Brooke Wigmore, Nicole Sander

STAGE MANAGER Sang Sang Lee\*
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR Kelsie Acton
SET & PROP DESIGNERS CM Zuby & Lynette Maurice
PROJECTION DESIGNER Kim Clegg
SOUND DESIGNER Bobby Smale
LIGHTING DESIGNER Patrick Beagan
GRAPHIC DESIGNER Curio Studio
PUBLICIST Catch the Keys

CARPENTERS Tim Moreland, Stephane Drouin-Moreland, Donnalyn Carson VENUE TECHNICIANS Selina Painchaud & Meghan Wearne

\*Concrete 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

The use of unauthorized recordings or photographs of this production is strictly prohibited.

## Co-Director's Notes

We have been on a wonderful journey bringing this piece to the full production you are seeing today. Back in 2008, we asked Dave a simple question. Could he write a short fifteen minute play for our *Sprouts New Play Festival for Kids*? As a jumping off point, we asked if he could find a story that would explore his cultural background in any way that he wanted, and this extraordinary fictionalized story of his childhood emerged. We knew from the first notes of that very first song, that it was honest, moving and completely unique – something very special. And we knew this story needed to be told but how to do that? How could we work with Dave to create a theatrical experience – an opera - accessible to kids, families and people of all ages – hearing and Deaf? Those questions have taken us 10 years as a team to discover and answer.

Along the way, we have traveled this road with many incredible, generous artists. There are so many people to thank – first and foremost Dave for sharing this deeply personal story and music, all the many folks who worked on workshops along the way: Tracy, Nadien, Ryan, Ashley, Nick, Michelle, Jeremy, Eric, Faye, Mary, Scott, Thom, Cathy, Tamara, Diane, Gina, Andrea, Marquesa, Chris, Richard and Kristen. The many funders, sponsors and organizations who have supported this innovative new work: the Edmonton Community Foundation, the Stollery Charitable Foundation Small Grant Fund, the Allard Foundation, Allstar Show Industries, NICA, APN, the Banff Playwrights Lab and so many amazing individual donors.

Finally, we have huge thanks to this incredible cast – Elizabeth for her talent and patience with all us hearing folks, Susan, Luc and Martin for their work taking on the daunting challenge of singing and signing – two languages – at the same time and all the incredible folks from NICA – Nicole, Brooke and Andrea, and our fantastic and supportive Deaf Cultural Consultants Connor and Amorena, with special thanks to Amorena for also working as our intrepid ASL Coach! Also huge huge hugs to our design and production team: Erik, Sang Sang, Bobby, Patrick, Kim, Cindi and Lynette, Kelsie and of course our GM Mary-Ellen and our Board. And huge thanks to Chris Dodd and the SOUND OFF Festival for having us!

While the journey for *Songs* is far from complete, we are so thrilled you are able to join us for this chapter. Dave has created something complex, multi-lingual and multi-layered but at its heart, very, very simple.

It is the story of a boy and his mom.

Caroline and Mieko

# Playwright's Notes

The written words "Sing" and "Sign" are so close. That's weird and cool.

I was born in the U.K. to Deaf parents and grew up with British Sign Language. "Songs" is based on my personal experience. One day, an old upright piano was delivered to our small house. Big furniture! Some of the music in *Songs My Mother Never Sung Me* was composed on that piano when I was a boy.

When I came to Canada I lived in Montreal. My parents – Hazel and Brian – visited me and we met people using different Sign Languages. Multiple Sign Languages we didn't know. We were amazed.

Among other things, I am a musician, composer and sound designer. When people discover my parents are Deaf, they express interest. It's a contradiction. That's how *Songs* came about.

I was asked to write a fifteen minute version for the Sprouts Festival. I was reluctant. Too personal; too hard to integrate the Signed and the Sung. Staged at the Festival, I was encouraged by the positive response. It spoke to a range of people. Unexpected.

Songs grew. Through workshops I had the unique opportunity to meet people who brought their experience and skills. There are many (A LOT!) of folks who deserve thanks. You are all part of this. Most important, the kindness and patience of Concrete Theatre's Caroline Howarth and Mieko Ouchi.

Deaf culture and communication is literal and (refreshingly) direct. Spoken language is evasive; about hiding as much as communicating. As I worked on *Songs*, the Sung language became more direct and the Sign became more lyrical.

The workshops and rehearsals for *Songs* have involved all the types of interpretation imaginable. With support and time, what seem like barriers become permeable. Music – "Vibration" – to the Deaf. Gestural and spatial language – "Words in the Air" – to the hearing. That said, there are moments during *Songs* you won't understand what is being Sung or Signed. That's on purpose.

Many Signs are more expressive (to me) than the Sung equivalent. For example, the Sign for the word "express" is literally the Signer giving you an imagined object from their core, from their gut.

This is the story of how my Mom helped me find my voice.

Dave Clarke, February 2019



#### Kelsie Acton – Assistant Director

Kelsie is a neurodivergent choreographer, dancer and Co-Artistic Director of CRIPSiE, Edmonton's integrated dance company. She is also a PhD Candidate at the University of Alberta researching timing, access and integrated dance. Kelsie's participation is made possible with funding from the Canada Council for the Arts.



#### Amorena Bartlett – ASL Coach & Deaf Consultant

Amorena is originally from British Columbia and moved to Edmonton in 2009. She is a strong Deaf community member who has been involved in various roles within different organizations. She is currently an ASL sessional instructor at MacEwan University and works at Alberta Deaf Sports Association as Administrative Assistant. She has a degree in Criminology and is currently completing her diploma in Paralegal Studies at MacEwan University. Her goal with her studies and various roles within the Deaf

community is to become a strong advocate for Deaf rights within the criminal justice system. Along with being an advocate and teacher, she absolutely enjoys being a Deaf consultant and getting involved with theatre and productions. She has a passion and drive to embrace new things and loves opportunities that come her way that allow her to explore the world outside her comfort zone.



#### Patrick Beagan - Lighting Design

Born in Lethbridge, Patrick is a proud halfbreed of Nlaka'pamux and Irish Canadian heritage. He is a graduate of Red Deer College with Diplomas in both Theatre Technology and Performance. He has previously designed for Concrete Theatre for *Consent* and *Paper Song* (lighting design), *Bello* (production design), *Under Cover* (lighting design), *The Antyssey* (Production Design), *I Am For You* (Set/Projection Design), and lighting for the last few years of the

Sprouts New Play Festival for Kids. Other recent credits include lighting designs for *Pinocchio* (Alberta Opera), *Honour Beat* (Theatre Calgary), *Major Barbara* and *Legally Blonde: the Musical* (Red Deer College), and co-directing *Reckoning* (Article 11). pbeagan.com





#### Dave Clarke – Music & Lyrics

Dave is an Edmonton musician, writer, actor and sound designer. He has composed music for theatre, film, dance and multi-media for three decades. He worked for seven years on CBC Radio's *The Irrelevant Show*. His play for young audiences *That's Danger!* (Alberta Workers' Health Centre) continues to tour junior high schools. Dave looks forward to composing music for *The Tempest* 

(Citadel Theatre) featuring hearing and Deaf actors, in April 2019.

Previous composition for Concrete Theatre include *Consent, Paper Song, Jeremy Fisher, Smokescreen, Offensive Fouls, Under Cover, Routes, The Shape of a Girl, I Am For You,* and the Sprouts New Play Festival For Kids.

Recent designs include *The Cardiac Shadow* (Northern Light Theatre), *The Comedy Company* (Shadow Theatre), *Constellations* (Alberta Theatre Projects) and *The Comedy of Errors* (Freewill).



#### Kim Clegg – Projection Design

Kim is "Head Rat" at Rat Creek Design, an Edmonton based company specializing in Motion Graphics and Animation. He started Rat Creek in 1996 and over the last 2 decades has worked as a hands-on motion designer/compositor and as Art Director and Media Consultant on team-based cross platform projects.

Highlights include Director of Animation on *Anash and the Legacy of the Sun-Rock*, a combination animation and live action FX based half-hour series for APTN; Lead Animator on *Home Fire*, an AMPIA award

nominated series of animations for Native Counselling Services of Alberta and recent works for Full House Lottery, Calder Bateman, BBC GEL, ATB and Alberta Health Services. Rat Creek also collaborates with local artists and filmmakers on animation & MGFX for short films or in performance based productions, such as Concrete theatre's *Routes* and Laura Krewski's *The Yellow Wallpaper*.

Kim won the Innovation in the Arts Award at the 2005 Mayor's Evening for the Arts, was the recipient of a 2006 Distinguished Alumni Award from MacEwan for his work in the Edmonton Production community, and won an AMPIA award for Best Animation for AADAC's *Firepit*.



#### Susan Gilmour - MOM's VOICE

Susan has performed in theatres in Edmonton, Toronto, Stratford, throughout Canada, and Internationally on Broadway, in Los Angeles, throughout the US, in Asia and South Africa. Selected credits: Fantine in *Les Miserables*, Eva Peron in *Evita*, Margaret Johnson in *Light in The Piazza*, Delores in *The Wild Party*, Witch in *Into the Woods*, Lady of the Lake in *Spamalot*, Lottie Child in *Crazy* 

for You, Miss Andrew and Bird Woman in Mary Poppins, Bernice Trimble in Gravitational Pull of Bernice Trimble, Mother Superior in Sister Act, Vi Moore in Footloose, Muzzy in Thoroughly Modern Millie, Marilla in Anne of Green Gables, Drowsy in Drowsy Chaperone, Marmee in Little Women, Baroness in The Sound of Music, Grizabella in CATS, Narrator in Joseph and the Amazing.., Pirate Jenny in Three Penny Opera, Reno Sweeny in Anything Goes, Aldonza in Man of La Mancha, and Nancy in Oliver!

Susan is delighted to be here with this wonderful company!



#### Caroline Howarth - Co-Director/Co-Dramaturg

Caroline is a founder of Concrete Theatre directing numerous projects including *The Early Bloomer, The Shape Of A Girl, Are We There Yet?*, *Sprouts* and the original production of *Paper Song*. She is Chair of Fine Arts at Concordia University of Edmonton where she teaches acting, directing and Theatre for Young Audiences. She has directed many productions for Concordia including *The Glorious 12th, The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui, Unity (1918), the musical* 

Seussical and the opera Dido and Aeneas. Last season she directed the Edmonton premiere of Mieko Ouchi's The Dada Play at Concordia. Caroline is thrilled to be working with Mieko, Dave and the team on this great story. Thank you to all the folks who have contributed to the development of Songs and lots of love to my family.



#### Andrea Konowalec – ASL/English Interpreter

With 15 years of signed language interpreting experience, Andrea has developed strong roots in the Edmonton-based communities. Working closely with several inclusion providers and artists, Andrea has been an integral partner in making strides to opening many doors to theatrical performances. Andrea continues as an ally to ensure full inclusion in the Edmonton and Alberta arts and cultural sectors.



#### Sang Sang Lee – Stage Manager

Previously, Sang Sang has worked on *The Antyssey* and *Sprouts* for Concrete Theatre. Elsewhere, she has worked on *Redpatch*, *Hadestown, Mamma Mia!*, *Sense and Sensibility, Million Dollar Quartet, West Side Story, Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?, Avenue Q, One Man Two Guvnors, Make Mine Love, Clybourne Park, Monty Python's Spamalot, <i>Private Lives, The Sound of Music, The Rocky Horror Show, A Christmas Carol, Billy Bishop Goes to War, As You Like It* (Citadel Theatre); *Honour Beat* (Theatre Calgary); *Salt Baby* 

(Globe Theatre); Hamlet, Comedy of Errors, Merchant of Venice, Merry Wives of Windsor, A Midsummer Night's Dream, King Lear (Freewill Shakespeare Festival), Don Giovanni (COSI), Hunchback (Catalyst Theatre), The Super Groovy 70s and Dirty Rotten Scoundrels (Mayfield Theatre). She is a graduate of Grant MacEwan's Theatre Production program.



#### **Elizabeth Morris - MOM**

Elizabeth is a graduate of OCAD University, with MDes in Inclusive Design. Her award-winning research was based on creating live theatre more accessible and inclusive for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, including their families and friends.

As a professional actor, she became Stratford Festival's first Deaf signing actor in *The Madwoman of Chaillot* in 2017. She has toured with the National Theatre of the Deaf (Hartford, CT) and Quest for

Arts (Washington, D.C.), and is co-founder of Deaf Spirit Theatre in Kingston, Ontario (*Three Dynamic Deaf Women Show*). She performed in *Ultrasound* (Cahoots Theatre), and *Bird Brain* (Young People's Theatre) which was nominated for a Dora Award for Outstanding Production.

Credits as an American Sign Language (ASL) coach: Love You Forever and More... and Bird Brain (Young People's Theatre), Tribes (Canadian Stage), A Midsummer Night's Dream (Stratford Festival), The Spirit (Native Earth Performing Arts), and an episode of Flashpoint (Avamar Entertainment). As a Deaf Interpreter: Up to Low and Alice Through the Looking Glass (National Arts Centre), Selfies, The Secret Garden and Munch's Time (Young People's Theatre).

Her goal is to set up a business exploring, consulting, and educating: developing creative ways of making live theatre more accessible and inclusive.



#### **Erik Mortimer – Musical Director & Pianist**

Erik is a pianist, composer, and music director based in Edmonton. He has been recognized with Sterling award for his Composition of *Sleeping Beauty* (Capitol Theatre) and music direction, on *The Last Five Years* (Theatre Network), and was nominated on four other occasions for *Peter and the Starcatcher* (Citadel Theatre) *Women on the Verge*, *Drat the Cat* (Plain Janes) and *Honk* (Grindstone Theatre). He has composed scores for many productions, including 4 musicals at the Capitol Theatre and others including productions of Thou Art

Here's and *Ron Pearson's Mystery Wonder Show*. He has worked with many of Edmonton's finest artists and companies including the Mayfield Dinner Theatre, Teatro la Quindicina, Concrete Theatre, Alberta Opera, Thou Art Here, Andrea House, Citadel Young Company and Rapid Fire. Erik is a versatile player who works as a studio musician, Jazz pianist and is rehearsal pianist at Edmonton Ballet.





#### **Kieran Martin Murphy - NARRATOR**

Kieran has had the pleasure of working in Canadian Musical Theatre for 2 decades. Some of the stand out roles have been Jean Valjean in *Les Miserables*, King Arthur in *SPAMALOT* and Gus the Theatre Cat in *CATS*. He appeared on CBC's Irrelevant Show for 4 seasons and spent a little time doing a little Television; most notably Damnation for AMC on Netflix. Having been part of the workshop

for Songs My Mother Never Sung Me he is especially excited to be a part of this full professional run and to reprise the Narrator role. It's a show that requires a lot of concentration, but there is so much heart in it that it is the kind of work that just fills you up. Selected Credits: Les Miserables, Buddy Holly, Rock of Ages (Arts Club), SPAMALOT, All Shook Up, J.C. Superstar (Stage West), Hamlet (U of A), CATS (Theatre Calgary), Oliver (Citadel), The Pavilion (Shadow Theatre), Songs My Mother Never Sung Me (Concrete Theatre), Two Good Knights, J.C. Superstar, The Wizard of Oz, Gypsy (Mayfield), Crescendo (John Cameron Productions).



#### Mieko Ouchi - Co-Director/Co-Dramaturg

Actor, writer, director and filmmaker, Mieko Ouchi received her professional training through the U of A BFA Acting Program. Mieko's award winning plays include *The Red Priest (Eight Ways to Say Goodbye)*, *The Blue Light, Nisei Blue, I Am For You, The Dada Play, Consent* and *The Silver Arrow*. As a co-founder and the current Artistic Director of Concrete, Mieko has directed productions of *Consent, Bello, Paper Song, The Antyssey, The Early Bloomer, I Am* 

For You, Smokescreen, Under Cover, Routes, Apples and Oranges, Nami Namersson, The Incredible Adventures of Mary Jane Mosquito, Are We There Yet?, The Plum Tree and Naomi's Road for the company. Last season, Mieko was recognized with a Sterling Award (Artistic Achievement TYA) for her work as playwright and director of Consent. Mieko had a wonderful time beginning her ASL studies this year through NICA. She is thrilled to be working with this talented team on this amazing new inclusive opera.



Nicole Sander - Executive Consultant & ASL/English Interpreter
Nicole has been a performing artist since childhood and deeply
active in creating ASL Accessible Performances since 2010 with
musicians, dancers and multiple theatres. Recent works of immense
pride are Jezebel at the Still Point, Evacuated, Pretty Goblins (6
Sterling Nominations, 1 Award), Black Girl Magic, Selassie Drah &
the PEI, and Unwoven.

Consultation, editing perspective and ASL services to TV productions include THE A.G. BELL STORY, STREET LEGAL & THE

CLASS OF '96, along with multiple TV Interviews and News segments. She has been a professional Interpreter since 1990 and partnered as CEO to established NICA Consolidated in 2009 to better serve the Deaf, Deafblind, Deaf-Plus and hard-of-hearing communities throughout Canada. Having extensive skills in project management and international networking, Nicole's team at NICA provided indepth services and supports for SOUND OFF: A Deaf Theatre Festival, along with the expert curation of fully inclusive services for the entire Chinook Series 2018, making it THE most inclusive and accessible festival series ever in Canada. Nicole is a staunch advocate for equity, diversity and inclusion for all people, and embraces the building of ally-ships to further create welcome spaces in our world.



#### **Bobby Smale – Sound Designer**

Bobby is a sound designer based in Edmonton, Alberta. Design credits include sound design for *The Dream Catchers* (Confederation Centre for the Arts) *Peter and the Starcatcher, Bitter Girl* (Citadel Theatre). *HMS Pinafore, The Magic Flute, The Mikado, Pirates of Penzance* (Edmonton Opera), *Angels in America (Keyano Theatre)*. Sound and Video design for *The Blue Light (Keyano Theatre)*. He also

builds custom guitars and stringed instruments from exotic hardwoods and found objects. His instruments can be found in the hands of musicians, on display in galleries and at guitar trade shows. To see and hear more check out <a href="https://doi.org/10.2016/journal.com">bobbysmale.com</a>



#### Luc Tellier - BOY

Luc played The Boy in the 2017 workshop of *Songs My Mother Never Sung Me*, and he's beyond delighted to be back for more. His work as an actor and director has been seen across Edmonton, and his favourite credits include Mark in *Cleave* (Tiny Bear Jaws), Robin/Lady Capulet in *Shakespeare In Love* (Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre/Citadel), Gus in *Arcadia* (Citadel), Juliet in *Shakespeare's* 

R+J (Kill Your Television), Flute in A Midsummer Night's Dream (Freewill Shakespeare), Norman Bates in mote, and directing Legoland and Never Swim Alone (Blarney Productions). He is a three-time Sterling Award nominee. Up next, Luc returns to the Citadel for the world premieres of The Party and The Candidate by Kat Sandler. He extends big love to Mieko and Dave for this opportunity, to his ASL instructor Christian Fontaine, and to Mama Liz!



#### **Brooke Wigmore – ASL/English Interpreter**

At the commencement of her interpreting career, Brooke is excited to be working with Concrete Theatre on the premiere of *Songs My Mother Never Sung Me*. Her interest in theatrical interpreting stems from her background in musical theatre, dance, and her appreciation for the arts. Brooke has spent countless hours interpreting and prepping for theatrical productions over the course of her practicum and career as a professional Interpreter in Edmonton and surrounding areas. She hopes gaining more

knowledge and experience in this field will aid in her goal of providing equitable access and inclusion for all.



#### Connor Yuzwenko-Martin - Deaf Consultant & Outreach

Connor has nurtured a lifelong passion for theatre and accessibility, and you'd be hard-pressed to find him working on one part without the other. Recent accomplishments include playing the lead in TRIBES (Studio Theatre, 2015), and serving as the Deaf Consultant for The Citadel's cross-national *The Tempest* production (2018-19). Connor supports several local organizations in improving their engagement with the Deaf community through consultations and

**Prop Designer** 

creating informational subtitled vlogs in ASL. Connor completed a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science at the University of Alberta (2014), and is currently pursuing a Public Relations diploma at MacEwan University with the ultimate aspiration of working with organizations in Edmonton and Alberta to improve their inclusivity and help them discover new ways of communicating. Connor is humbled and grateful to accomplish his work on Treaty 6 Territory.



#### C.M. Zuby **Lynette Maurice Set Designer**

C. M. & Lynette are artists, mask makers and puppeteers who have developed, designed, produced and created for theatres, parades, festivals and events, specializing in creative play areas for children. Their work has included developing and presenting entertaining and



educational programs through puppetry and art. Their company,

Zū-Ma: Talent to Amūz, finds the two of them working on many interesting and fun projects – painting at U of A, lanterns at Flying Canoe Volant, set design for Shadow Theatre, New Year's Eve for the City of Edmonton - to name a few.



## About Concrete Theatre

Concrete Theatre is an award-winning professional theatre company committed to creating, developing and producing artistically excellent and culturally diverse Theatre for Young Audiences that explores issues relevant to the lives of young people and their families. They tour their work across Alberta and Canada and are presented by other professional theatres in cities from coast to coast. They also work in schools doing Artist in School Residencies and produce the annual *Sprouts New Play Festival For Kids*. Concrete Theatre is a member of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres (PACT) and engages, under the terms of the Canadian Theatre Agreement, professional artists who are members of the Canadian Actors' Equity Association. Concrete Theatre is a non-profit organization and a registered charity.

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Mieko Ouchi

**Artistic Associate** 

Caroline Howarth

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Mary-Ellen Perley

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#### And those who donated directly to this production:

Russ Farmer, Pauline Farmer, Alex and Joan Hawkins, Andrew G Howarth Professional Corporation, Barbara Howarth, Mieko Ouchi



Concrete Theatre is excited to be part of Shaw Birdies for Kids presented by AltaLink! All donations are **matched up to 50%** making your gift go further! Head to their website and you'll find Concrete Theatre in the drop down menu labelled 'Participating Charity'.

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www.unclejohnsfireworks.com for pricing, location, and details

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