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A CO-PRODUCTION  
WITH VERTIGO THEATRE

# A KILLING at LA CUCINA

A Lucia Dante Mystery

By Thomas Morgan Jones

**FEB 25–MAR 9 / 2025**

Murder is served & only  
Lucia Dante can solve it.

**PTE.MB.CA**

# welcome TO THE SHOW

Who doesn't love a good mystery? As a teen, I remember devouring Nancy Drew and Agatha Christie novels. The recipe always worked: combine a smart and witty detective with a quirky group of suspects, add a sidekick confidante, and mix it all together in an exotic locale with a sprinkle of danger — always a winning combination.

We are so pleased to co-produce *A Killing at La Cucina* by Thomas Morgan Jones with Calgary's Vertigo Theatre. Led by Artistic Director Jack Grinhaus, Vertigo specializes in presenting theatre of intrigue and mystery, and I know that Jack, the cast and the creative team have cooked up a fun and thrilling recipe in the futuristic kitchen invented by Thomas. We are particularly excited to welcome back Winnipeg artists MJ Dandeneau (Sound Designer) and jaymez (Lighting Designer) as part of the creative team, along with a number of new and familiar Calgary artists on the production. Theatre is always a collaborative mélange of creative minds, and we have enjoyed working with Jack, Thomas and Vertigo Theatre as we collectively present this entertaining mystery.

There is one very important mystery, however, that will stay under wraps until March 14. I've now been PTE's new Artistic Director for about 3 months and have spent much of that time selecting the ingredients for our 2025-26 season — my first! All of us at PTE are eagerly awaiting the day when we will serve up an exciting selection of theatre choices we know you will love. We've planned a varied and delectable menu of fantastic theatre for you and can't wait to tell you about it. It's going to be a season of terrific theatre, I promise.

I wish I could tell you more, but until our announcement on March 14, our 2025-26 season must remain...a mystery.

Happy sleuthing!



**Ann Hodges**  
Artistic Director



We create and gather on Treaty 1 Territory, the traditional lands of the Anishinaabeg (Ojibway), Ininewuk (Swampy Cree), Anishininewuk (Oji-cree), Dakota Oyate, and Dene peoples, and the homeland of the Red River Metis. As we gather to tell stories today, we so appreciate the original storytellers and stewards of this land.

PRAIRIE THEATRE EXCHANGE IS PROUD TO PRESENT

# A KILLING AT LA CUCINA (A Lucia Dante Mystery)

by Thomas Morgan Jones

A CO-PRODUCTION WITH VERTIGO THEATRE

WORLD PREMIERE

## FEATURING:

**LAUREN BROTMAN** *Lucia Dante/Isabella Rouge*

**BRADEN GRIFFITHS** *Actor 2*

**JACK GRINHAUS** *Director/Dramaturge*

**STEVEN CONDE** *Assistant Director*

**NARDA McCARROLL\*** *Set & Props Designer*

**JOHN IGLESIAS** *Costume Designer*

**ANDY MORO** *Video & Projection Designer*

**JAYMEZ\*** *Lighting Designer*

**MJ DANDENEAU** *Sound Designer & Composer*

**DANELLE WHITE** *Assistant Sound Designer*

**JOHN KNIGHT** *Fight Director*

**LAURANN J. BROWN** *Voice & Dialect Coach*

**JAVIER VILALTA** *Choreographer*

**SARA TURNER** *Stage Manager*

**CHANDLER ONTKEAN** *Assistant Stage Manager*

**RUN TIME:** Two hours, ten minutes, including one intermission

\*Indicated designers on this production are represented by the Associated Designers of Canada, IATSE Local ADC659.

Prairie Theatre Exchange is a not-for-profit theatre and an active 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.

# DIRECTOR'S NOTES

When Thomas Morgan Jones and I discussed creating a new mystery play, I was overjoyed. He and I have, at our cores, a passion for both new Canadian works and the mythologizing of Canadiana. We thought, 'hey, let's invent a new world-renowned hero detective'. Lucia Dante was born. We also were keenly aware of the world today, as the digital universe seems more and more to be merging, blending, and blurring with our own. Even from the time we began writing this play, the questions around AI and VR life have already advanced, beyond the state we were seeing at the time. So, this play seems to speak to a certain universal oeuvre as well.

There is also the power of intrigue and mystery theatre. As Canada's preeminent theatre for the mystery and intrigue, genre is our focus at Vertigo. What feels most exciting about genre theatre that people seem to connect with, is not only our obsessions with true crime, not only our amazement at human behaviours so contrary to our own, but the JUSTICE we know we will witness and get from coming to a play like that. In a world that seems often devoid of justice, here, audiences can get it, while also being entertained through a highly theatrical and exhilarating experience. We, at Vertigo, are so proud to be partnering with PTE on this world premiere of this new mystery and now, finally, we are so very proud to share it with you.

Enjoy the show!

-Jack Grinhaus

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## FOR VERTIGO THEATRE

### **Head Of Wardrobe**

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### **Assistant head of Wardrobe**

Hannah-Lee Harris

### **Head of Props**

Nicole Logan

### **Assistant Head of Props**

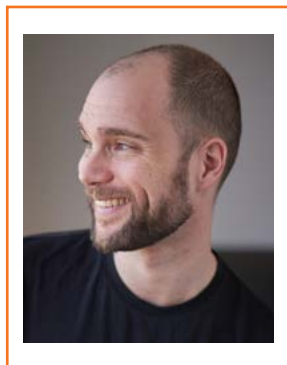
Stephanie Travis

### **SFX Makeup Artists**

Lisa Floyd and Heath Van Severen

### **Hairstyling**

Rachelle Quinn



## MEET the PLAYWRIGHT

Thomas' work as a playwright, director, dramaturg, movement coach, and instructor has been seen nationally and internationally. Other plays include: *A Wrinkle in Time* (adaptation of the novel by Madeleine L'Engle, Stratford Festival), *The Forest In My Room* (Carousel Players), *Arianna* (Charlottetown Festival), *My Neighbour, My Saviour* (Cia Enviezada, Brazil), *You Play Beautifully* (Theatre New Brunswick), *A Sunday Affair* (with Richard Lee and Gabrielle Houle, TNB and Théâtre populaire d'Acadie). A former artistic director of Theatre New Brunswick and Prairie Theatre Exchange, Thomas is currently the Executive Artistic Director of The National Theatre School of Canada English Section in Tiohtià:ke/Montreal.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

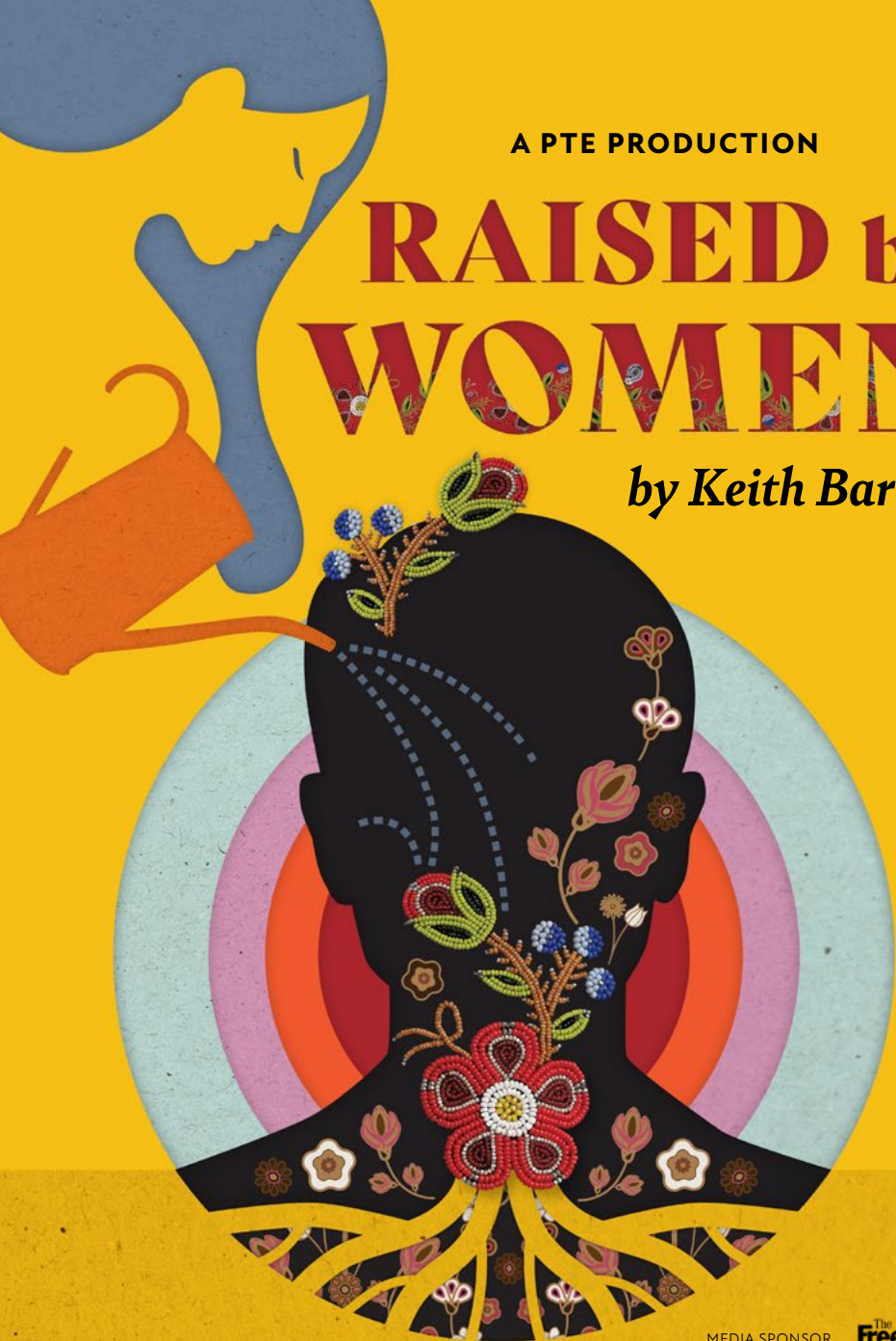
#### **For their contributions to the writing process, heartfelt thanks to:**

Josie Marasco, Lisa Li, Matthew Paris-Irvine, Haley Vincent, Lauren Brotman, Andy Moro, Narda McCarroll, Toby Hughes, Jeff Palamar, Allison Kilgour, Jane Helbrecht, Kaleb Alexander, Braden Griffiths, Steven Conde, John Iglesias, Jaymez, John Knight, Javier Vilalta, Laura Couch, Jennifer Neales, Ann Hodges, Elisa Rocca, Sara Turner, Chandler Ontkean. Endless thanks to the teams at PTE and Vertigo, and the team on the production, for their support of the play and production. Special thanks to Jack Grinhaus for his dramaturgy and friendship throughout.

A PTE PRODUCTION

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*by Keith Barker*



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# MEET the ARTISTS



**Lauren Brotman** (*she/her*)

Lucia Dante/Isabella Rouge

Lauren has performed at theatres and worked with celebrated directors across Canada and Europe. **Selected Awards:** Dora Mavor Moore Award, Christopher Plummer Fellowship Award (Shakespeare's Globe, UK) and the Jessica Fraser Award (Outstanding Contributions for TYA). As a creator,

her company Bound to Create (B2C) has partnered with Obsidian Theatre, Tapestry New Opera, Native Earth Performing Arts, Talking Stick, Theatre NorthWest, Canadian Stage and Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre, receiving multiple Dora nominations and various awards. **Upcoming:** As playwright: *She Carries Me Again* (TBA). As Actor: *Mary Stuart* (Sage Theatre). Full bio: [www.boundtcreate.com](http://www.boundtcreate.com)



**Braden Griffiths** (*he/him*)

Actor 2

Prairie Theatre Exchange debut. **With Vertigo:** *Black Coffee*, *Columbo Takes the Rap*, *Travels with My Aunt*, *Shear Madness*, *Dial M for Murder*, *Turn of the Screw*, *Sherlock Holmes and the American Problem*, *Sherlock Holmes and the Raven's Curse*, *Cipher* (Arts Club production, also playwright), *Gaslight*, *Sleuth*. **Elsewhere:** Braden has

performed in (a few plays shy of) 100 professional productions throughout Canada; he is a published playwright and has recently been a puppeteer for The Jim Henson Company on *Fraggle Rock: Back to the Rock*. **Awards:** Braden has been nominated for fourteen Betty Mitchell Awards, winning in '09 and '15.



**Jack Grinhaus**

Director/Dramaturge

Jack is an award winning and nominated theatre artist. He was the Artistic Director for Theatre NorthWest (2014-2019), the Indie hit company Bound to Create Theatre (2005-2020), was part of the inaugural Canadian Stage BASH Directors Residency and Director's Lab North and is the current Artistic Director of Vertigo Theatre.

**Selected Directing:** *The Girl on the Train*, *Gaslight* (Vertigo Theatre); *Isitwendam* (Native Earth Performing Arts/B2C/Talking Stick/four Dora Mavor Moore Nominations); *ART* (Persephone Theatre/Nomination Outstanding Direction/SAT Awards); *Hedda Noir*, *Million Dollar Quartet*, *Half Life*, *The Secret Mask* (Theatre North West); *dirty butterfly* (Obsidian Theatre); *Phaedra's Lust* (Tapestry New Opera); *Taming of the Shrew* (Grand Theatre HSP); *Macbeth* (Classical Theatre Project).



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# MEET the ARTISTS



**Steven Conde** (*he/him*)

**Assistant Director**

Steven is a director/actor from the Philippines and has been professionally engaged in theatre across Asia. **Elsewhere (selected):** Director: *Kensuke's Kingdom* (Storybook Theatre), *Good as Gold* (FlipSide Theatre), *The Underlings* (Wagonstage); *Sideshow*, *Madagascar* (Atlantis Theatrical); *My Name is Asher Lev*, *Suicide Incorporated*, *Dog Sees God: Confessions of a Teenage Blockhead*, *Wit* (Twin Bill Theatre). Assistant Director: *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* (Stratford Festival); *The Seafarer* (Alberta Theatre Projects); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Theatre Calgary); *Matilda*, *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches*, *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, *The Band's Visit*, *Waitress* (Atlantis Theatrical). **Affiliations:** Artistic Director (FlipSide Theatre), Board member (Theatre Alberta). **Online:** @calgarydirector



**Narda McCarroll** (*she/her*)

**Set & Props Designer**

Narda is a set, lighting and costume designer based in Calgary. This is her PTE debut. She was last in Winnipeg designing the set for *The Wizard of Oz* at Rainbow Stage. Her work has been seen in theatres across the country including: The Stratford Festival, NAC, Tarragon, Grand Theatre, Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre, Persephone, Globe Theatre, Catalyst, Citadel Theatre, Edmonton Opera, Theatre Calgary, ATP, Vertigo, Calgary Opera, and Arts Club. Narda was the costume designer for Edmonton's Shakespeare in the Park for 16 seasons. See images of her work at [narda.ca](http://narda.ca)



**John Iglesias**

**Costume Designer**

John is thrilled to be at PTE & Vertigo this season. With a background in independent theatre production and design, John contributed to the Auburn Developments Stage, previously known as the McManus Studio, from 2008 to 2013. His portfolio includes *A Brimful of Asha*, *God of Carnage*, and the remount of *Evil Dead: The Musical*. In 2012-2013, he served as the Associate Executive Director at the Grand Theatre. In 2015, he produced and directed *Ching Chong Chinaman*. In 2017, he designed the costumes for *Half Life* at Theatre NorthWest. John credits his artistic and creative journey to his wife, Becca. This show is dedicated to Tomo.

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# MEET the ARTISTS



## Andy Moro

### Video & Projection Designer

Co-founder/Artistic Director of ARTICLE 11 with Tara Beagan.

**Recent:** *Raven Mother* (Dancers of Damelahamid); *šəgatəm* (Royal Winnipeg Ballet/New York City Centre); *Ring Cycle* (Edmonton Opera); *Strategy of War* (Downstage); *Rise, Red River* (ARTICLE11/PTE/Théâtre Cercle Molière); *Last Epistle of Tightrope Time*

(Neptune/Tarragon/NAC), *PISUWIN* (Atlantic Ballet), *Extractionist* (Vertigo); *Ministry of Grace*, *Reckoning*, *ROOM*, *Declaration*, *Deer Woman* (ARTICLE 11); *Honour Beat* (Theatre Calgary); *Post Mistress*, *Rez Sisters* (RMTC); *Unnatural & Accidental Women* (NAC); *The Third Colour*, *The War Being Waged*, *Space Girl* (PTE); *SkyDancers* (Anowara), *BloodWaterEarth*, *Blood Tides*, *Mush Hole* (Kahawi Dance). **Film/Video:** *RECKONING* (ARTICLE 11); *The Road to Hasalala Danxalax* (Chan Ctr/Marion Newman)



## jaymez (he/him)

### Lighting Designer

With a diverse background in visual art, dance, theatre, opera, and music, jaymez brings a unique and multifaceted approach to design, refined over nearly two decades of professional practice. He has worked as a production designer, crafting dozens of lighting, video, and sound designs for a wide array of directors, choreographers,

artists, and musicians. His artwork and designs have garnered international recognition across multiple continents and two Winnipeg Theatre Awards. Currently based in Winnipeg, he actively serves on the board of directors and is a proud member of IATSE Local ADC659. Website: [ifitmoves.net](http://ifitmoves.net)



## MJ Dandeneau

### Composer & Sound Designer

**Prairie Theatre Exchange:** *Katharsis*, *The War Being Waged*, *Space Girl*, *Ponderosa Pine*. **Elsewhere:** *Charlie Brown's Double Bill*, *Torn Through Time*, *Tiny Treasure*, *Frozen River* (MTYP); *Bittergirl: The Musical*, *Yaga* (RMTC); *La Liste*, *On Maronne!*, *Ô Canada, tē qui?*, *Un Peu Partout* (Théâtre Cercle Molière); *Rise, Red River* (Théâtre Cercle

Molière /PTE); *Women of the Fur Trade* (National Arts Centre); *Songide'ewin* (Sarasvati); *The Diviners* (Stratford Festival). **AWARDS:** Kevin Walters Legacy Award, Indigenous Full Circle Award and The Rise Award. **ET CETERA:** MJ is a Métis/Anishinaabe woman from the Red River Nation Treaty 1. Over the past 20 years, her tours, studio and composition work have literally taken her all over the globe. Her mother's side comes from the Métis Red River Valley and her father's side comes from the Métis Nation/Anishinaabeg people of Penetanguishene, Treaty 61. Miigwech giga-waabamin poor ma faamiii.

# MEET the ARTISTS



**Danelle White** (*she/her*)

**Assistant Sound Designer**

**For Prairie Exchange:** Debut. **Elsewhere:** *Mary's Wedding* (Confederation Theatre & Third Draft Theatre), *Innocence Astray* (Third Draft Theatre), *Each and Every Song* (DIY Theatre). Danelle White is a Moh-kins-tsis (Calgary)-based artist passionate about storytelling. She has worked as a Sound Designer for 7+ years

and is entirely self-taught. She holds a BFA in Drama from the School of Creative and Performing Arts at the University of Calgary, and works as a Sound Designer, Producer, Director and Prop Builder. When Sound Designing, Danelle follows the philosophy that silence is where the juiciest moments lie: "Theatre is silence interrupted".



**John Knight** (*he/him*)

**Fight Director**

John is a Mokhinstsis/Calgary-based theatre artist and educator. He is a Certified Instructor and Fight Director with The Academy of Fight Directors Canada. **Prairie Theatre Exchange:** debut.

**Elsewhere:** *Ms. Holmes & Ms. Watson—Apt 2B*, *The Girl on the Train*, *Sleuth* (Vertigo Theatre); *Escape to Margaritaville*, *Little*

*Women* (Theatre Calgary); *Carmen*, *Filomena* (Calgary Opera); *Proving Up* (Ammolite Opera); *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Julius Caesar* (The Shakespeare Company); *Between Us* (Handsome Alice); *Hookman* (Chromatic Theatre & SCPA); *Shakespeare in Love*, *A Monster Calls*, *Illegal Entry*, *This is War* (U of C, SCPA), *No One's Safe* (Banff Centre & Against the Grain); *Wolf on the Ringstrasse*, *Fifteen Minute Hamlet* & *All In The Timing*, *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Spiritfire Theatre). He thanks Eva for all of her love and support.



**Laurann J. Brown** (*she/her*)

**Voice & Dialect Coach**

**For Vertigo Theatre:** *Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde*, *Sleuth*, *Heist*, *Girl on the Train* (2023); *Woman in Black*, *Murder on the Links* (2024).

**Recent credits** [selected]: UK (2010-2020): *Newsies*, *Titanic* (ArtsEd); *Jess and Joe Forever* (Orange Tree Theatre); *Guys and Dolls* (New Wolsey Theatre); *Lion in the Streets* (Rose Bruford

Acting School). The Shaw Festival (2009-2013): *Come Back*, *Little Sheba*; *Drama at Inish*; *When the Rain Stops Falling*; *His Girl Friday*; *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*; *Ragtime*; *Light in the Piazza*. Laurann also coaches privately in-person and online through her Calgary-based company Speak with Confidence.

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# MEET the ARTISTS



**Javier Vilalta** (*he/him*)  
**Choreographer**

Javier is a Mexican-Canadian visual performance creator, stage director, and movement choreographer. As a stage director and movement choreographer, he has collaborated with companies around Canada and has earned two Betty Mitchell nominations. In 2005, he co-founded the visual performance ensemble 8ROJO.

With this group, he has devised five interdisciplinary creations, with which he has travelled as far afield as Mexico, Czech Republic, Sweden, France, Taiwan, UK, and Iceland. With 8ROJO, he was awarded the 'Innovation in Performance' award at the 2016 STOFF Festival in Stockholm, Sweden, and he was a finalist for a 2021 Off West End Award in London, UK.



**Sara Turner** (*she/her*)  
**Stage Manager**

This is Sara's first time at PTE! Previous shows for Vertigo: *Sleuth*, *Gaslight*, *Cipher*, *Strangers on a Train*, *The 39 Steps*. Other select stage management: *Charlotte's Web*, *The Black Bonspiel of Wullie MacCrimmon*, *Cowgirl Up*, *The Red Priest* (ATP); *Naked Radio*, *Canada 151*, *Million Dollar Quartet*, (Drayton Entertainment);

*Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*, *Priscilla Queen of the Desert*, *Legends of Country* (Stage West); *A Christmas Carol*, *The Louder We Get*, *The Secret Garden*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Audience* (Theatre Calgary); *Naughty But Nice Too*, *Crossing Swords* (Forte Musical Theatre); *Sensory Box*, *Giant* (Ghost River Theatre). Much love to her incredible family.



**Chandler Ontklean** (*she/her*)  
**Assistant Stage Manager**

Select Credits Include: *The Girl on the Train*, *Whispers in the Dark*, *Deathtrap*, *The Lonely Diner*, *Undercover* (Vertigo Theatre); *Shark Bite*, *Home for the Holidays* (Lunchbox Theatre); *The Lehman Trilogy*, *A Christmas Carol* (2023, 2024), *Noises Off!*, *Mary and Max* (Theatre Calgary); *Screwball Comedy*, *Elvis Has Left the*

*Building* (Stage West); *The Birds and the Bees*, *Cowgirl Up* (Alberta Theatre Projects). When not working in theatre, Chandler works in film costuming, watches LOTS of movies, and admires sloths. Thanks to her family, roommates, and local movie theatre employees who keep her sane and feed her popcorn.

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Special thanks to Louis B. Hobson



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