



# The Salty Scent of Home

A CELEBRATORY THEATRE PROJECT  
ABOUT NEWCOMERS TO CANADA

**October 9-18, 2025 | Phoenix Theatre**



**VICCIR**  
VICTORIA ISLAND COMMUNITY INITIATIVE  
FOR IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES



**Inter-Cultural  
Association**  
of Greater Victoria

**SSHRC CRSH**  
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada  
Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines du Canada



**University  
of Victoria**

# *The Salty Scent of Home*

## **Research Team**

Lead Investigator ..... **Dr. Yasmine Kandil**  
Co-Investigator ..... **Dr. Catherine Costigan**  
Co-Director ..... **Meghan Mergaert**  
Collaborators ..... **Dr. Monica Prendergast, Dr. Fred Chou,  
Adrianne Carter, Paulina Grainger**

## **Cast**

**Kiera Byrnes  
Isabella Derilo  
Janina Ferrer  
Kai Glass  
Mariah Madill  
Julia Patterson  
Peter Starr  
Gabby Blake (understudy)  
Gagan Leekha (voiceover narrator)**

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We would also like to recognize the contributions of  
**Ximena Garduño Rodríguez, Simran Kang,  
Stephen Markwei & Alynne Sinnema**, who were  
performers in earlier iterations of this work  
and helped shape the piece now being presented.

# Creative Team

Director .....	Yasmine Kandil
Assistant Director .....	Makayla Madill
Movement Consultant.....	Ming Hudson
Choreographer .....	Vitor Freitas
Music Composer .....	John Hutchinson
Costume Designer .....	Kiera Byrnes
Lighting Designer.....	Sasha Pisiak
Projections Designer .....	William Mackwood
Assistant Projections Designer .....	Logan Swain
Sound Designer .....	Jack Storwick
Stage Manager .....	Rosemary Sandell Evans

The performance is 70 minutes with no intermission

**ANY VIDEO AND/OR AUDIO RECORDING OF THIS PRODUCTION IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED.**

## Music Used

- “As the Darkness Falls” by Maxence Cyrin
- “Rush E” by Sheet Music Boss
- “Stellify” by Frederico Albanese
- “Zabumbazul” by Divan Gattamorta

This project is a collaboration between the UVic Departments of Theatre, Psychology, Curriculum & Instruction, Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies, the Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria, and the Vancouver Island Counselling Centre for Immigrants and Refugees.

We acknowledge and respect the Ləkʷəŋən (Songhees and Xwsepsəm/Esquimalt) Peoples on whose territory the university stands, and the Ləkʷəŋən and W̱SÁNEĆ Peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

## Project Description

This project is comprised of many team members who have come together to test the effectiveness of a method of practice developed by Yasmine, called “Celebratory Theatre”. The team hopes to test the ways in which this method creates social cohesion and belonging for newcomer immigrants and refugees.

Yasmine and her assistants delivered celebratory theatre workshops for a group of newcomers over a period of two months in 2024. Based on the stories and experiences shared in these workshops, Yasmine, with the participation of the original ensemble, devised this show to showcase the courage, strength and resilience of these participants through these five interwoven narratives. The theme of birds runs throughout as poems are narrated and staged, drawing parallels between the migratory journey of birds and our newcomer immigrants and refugees.

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## Complete this survey BEFORE the performance

We are interested in learning how audiences respond to The Salty Scent of Home, as well as audience perceptions of culture and migration. To help us, we would appreciate you completing this short anonymous survey before watching the performance by scanning this QR code.

Your participation is voluntary, and you may choose to enter a draw for one of fifty \$20 gift cards upon completing both the pre- and post-survey.

The survey can also be accessed at:  
[www.surveymonkey.ca/r/ssh2025pre](http://www.surveymonkey.ca/r/ssh2025pre)

More information about the project  
can be found here:  
[www.surveymonkey.ca/r/ssh2025consent](http://www.surveymonkey.ca/r/ssh2025consent)



## Yasmine Kandil - Director



Yasmine Kandil is an Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Theatre and the lead investigator of this research project. Originally from Egypt, Yasmine has been working with newcomer immigrants and refugees since the start of her research journey in 2006. She investigates how theatre can make a positive impact in the lives of newcomers. Yasmine is grateful for the

amazing collaborations she's had the privilege to enjoy in this project so far.

### Director's Note

Welcome to our remounted performance of *The Salty Scent of Home*, which was created in the summer of 2024, and recently toured Vancouver Island. What is remarkable about this process is that the team started out with nothing but our memory of the joy, vulnerability, and courage of our participants, which we witnessed during the seven weeks of workshops with this group.

This version of the show welcomes new and returning ensemble members, who have all jumped into the work and offered their beautiful hearts and presence in embodying these different experiences. The honesty, vulnerability, and courage that they have shown in this work is humbling.

It has been a joy to work with this group of performers. It has also been an absolute honour to have been gifted these stories by our participants, whose life experiences have shown us the power of their resilience, perseverance and strong will.

## **Complete this survey AFTER the performance**

Now that you have viewed the performance, we would appreciate hearing your perspectives on culture and migration once again. This will help us determine which views shift and which remain the same. We also provide the opportunity to share your thoughts about the performance itself in a few short open-ended questions. Please complete this short anonymous survey after watching the performance by scanning this QR code.

Your participation is voluntary, and you may choose to enter a draw for one of fifty \$20 gift cards upon completing both the pre- and post-survey.

The survey can also be accessed at:  
[www.surveymonkey.ca/r/ssh2025post](http://www.surveymonkey.ca/r/ssh2025post)

More information about the project  
can be found here:  
[www.surveymonkey.ca/r/ssh2025consent](http://www.surveymonkey.ca/r/ssh2025consent)



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The research team and ensemble wish to send a special thank you to our participant group of newcomers. Thank you for the time you've spent with us and for your generosity and strength. We hope you see in this work how much we appreciate and value your journey as newcomers.

## Cast & Creative Bios



### **Kiera Byrnes - Ensemble, Costume Designer**

Kiera is an artist working on the traditional territories of the Ləkʷəŋən Peoples, also known as the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations. She recently completed her BFA in Theatre, and in this production, she holds dual roles as a performer and costume designer. Kiera is excited to return for Phase 3 of this project and continue sharing these stories of resilience. Her passion is directing youth theatre, and she believes that educating children through art is the key to a more compassionate future.



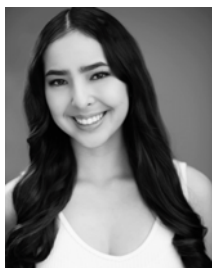
### **Isabella Derilo - Ensemble**

Isabella is a grateful guest on the unceded lands of the ləkʷəŋən speaking peoples. She is a multidisciplinary theatre artist with a love for applied theatre and improvisation. She would like to thank her grandparents and mother, who listened to their heart and knew it was time to fly.



### **Janina Ferrer - Ensemble**

Janina is a Filipino-Canadian actor and recent graduate of UVic's BFA Theatre program. She is overjoyed to be working on this project as an alumni! Past Phoenix credits: *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, *The Killing Game*, *SETYA*, *Spring Awakening*. Elsewhere: *Matilda the Musical* (TUTS), *Camp Goneaway* (Vancouver Fringe). Thank you for being here and for supporting live theatre. Enjoy the show!



### **Kai Glass - Ensemble**

Kai is grateful to be a part of a show with an important story to tell. She fell in love with the stage when she was five years old and has performed with various theatre companies since. In her spare time, she enjoys creating music with her band and exploring this beautiful island.



### **Mariah Madill - Ensemble**

Mariah is honoured to perform these beautiful stories of refugee and immigrant experiences; she is grateful to collaborate with this ensemble of bright hearts and the dedicated direction of Yasmine Kandil. As an Applied Theatre Master's student, she is exploring ways to bring awareness and appreciation of newcomers' transitions to Canada.



### **Julia Patterson - Ensemble**

Julia graduated from UVic's theatre performance program in 2024 and is excited to return to her alma mater. Coming from an immigrant background and growing up in South Africa, she feels very connected to the stories in this piece. Previous performance credits include *Mojada* directed by Carmen Aguirre, and *The Hot L Baltimore* directed by Peter McGuire.



### **Peter Starr - Ensemble**

Hailing from Nanaimo, BC, Peter began dancing at the Peter trained professionally at the Royal Winnipeg Ballet School, continuing on to the Canadian College of Performing Arts, Canada's National Ballet School and the School of Alberta Ballet. Peter has performed with Ballet Kelowna, Alberta Ballet, Dancers Dancing, and Move: The Company. He was the Principal Soloist for Israel's Kamea Dance company, and

Principal male dancer of Ballet Victoria, performing title roles such as 'Amadeus' and 'Dracula'.





### **Gabby Blake - Ensemble (understudy)**

Gabby Blake is a third-year Performance focused student in the Theatre Department at the University of Victoria. She is thrilled and honoured to be a part of *The Salty Scent of Home* project as she is an immigrant herself. As an immigrant from Jamaica, she is grateful for the opportunity to bring other immigrant stories to light and the stage. Some of her many passions include learning, Movement/Dance, Vocal Jazz, and Applied Theatre.



### **Makayla Madill - Assistant Director**

Makayla Madill is honoured to contribute to bringing these vulnerable and compelling stories to the stage with this collaborative and skilled team of artists. She is a current Applied Theatre Master's student who created and directed her own Applied Theatre production, *Stepping Out Of The Frame*. She is passionate about supporting theatrical projects that inspire new social perspectives and changes.



### **Ming Hudson - Movement Consultant**

Ming is a Vancouver based artist who pays rent on the lands stolen from the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations. For 20 years, she has worked as a freelance performer, devised theatre creator, collaborative director, independent producer, and teaching artist on the west coast, nationally, and abroad. A graduate of the Advanced Devising Practice program at LISPA (now arthaus.berlin), Ming also holds an MA in Ensemble Theatre (Rose Bruford), and a BFA in Acting (UVic). [www.minghudson.com](http://www.minghudson.com)



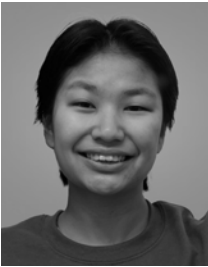
### **Vitor Freitas - Choreographer**

I am Vitor, a professional dancer, actor, and model from Brazil. My journey in the arts is a reflection of my passion for movement, expression, and storytelling. Through dance, I explore the rhythms and cultures that have shaped me, bringing my heritage to life on stage. My work is a celebration of creativity, culture, and the power of performance to inspire and transform.



## **John Hutchinson - Music Composer**

Based in the UK, John has worked with musicians and ensembles as diverse as the London Symphony Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, English National Opera, Jamiroquai, Elton John, Nick Cave, Samara Joy, Amy Winehouse, Joss Stone, Bruno Mars along with many other international artists. Compositions for theatre have been performed by the Royal Shakespeare Company, the National Theatre, the Old Vic Theatre, as well numerous credits in London's 'West End'.



## **Sasha Pisiak - Lighting Designer**

Sasha is a 4th-year Theatre Major focusing on tech and design. Some of their previous Phoenix projects include Assistant Lx on *Killing Game*, *My Own Sol* (SATCo), and Associate Lx on *Wedding Cheese Weekend* (SATCo). Their design credits may be small in number, but they have been active behind the scenes working in technical theatre for the past three years. They are excited to have this opportunity and hope you enjoy the show!



## **William Mackwood - Projections Designer**

William J Mackwood is Co-Artistic Director, alongside Gwenyth Dobie, of the innovative, multi-disciplinary company, Out of the Box Productions. William recently retired from faculty at York University, where he served as Graduate Program Director for the MFA in Dance program, taught Dance Production, Lighting Design for Dance and The Interactive Stage. Gwenyth and William are currently running the Woodland Farm Artist Residency on Salt Spring Island where they support the development of new works.



## Jack Storwick - Sound Designer

Jack is a Performer/Sound Designer who is honoured to be living, learning, listening, and gathering inspiration on unceded Lək'wəŋən territory. During this performance's process, Jack has completed his undergraduate degree (BFA Theatre, Minor in Music) at UVic, and he is honoured to call last summer's production of *The Salty Scent of Home* his first professional Sound Design. Past Sound Design credits include: *Twelfth Night*, *The Killing Game*, *The Hot L Baltimore* (Phoenix Theatre), *The Shop Around the Corner* (Blue Bridge Repertory Theatre, Sound Design / Foley), *Litigation Racket* (Victoria One Act Festival), *A Stranger Remains* (SATCo, Composition). Take the time to listen around you and enjoy the show.



## Rosemary Sandell - Stage Manager

Rosemary Sandell is a fourth-year Theatre and Indigenous Studies student at the University of Victoria. They are a multidisciplinary artist and have a passion for writing. Rosemary is honoured to have the opportunity to work on such a beautiful and relevant production.

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Operations & Production Manager .....	Timothy O’Gorman*
Production Stage Manager .....	Emma Beadman
Assistant Stage Manager (costumes) .....	Kiannah Brown
Assistant Stage Manager (props).....	Lucy Berg
Stage Management Mentor.....	Jen Swan*
Technical Director.....	Simon Farrow*
Assistant Technical Director .....	James Thurmeier*
Assistant Technical Director .....	Ziqi Wang
Show Electrician.....	Ferris Smart
Lighting Board Operator.....	Katrina Hayes
Sound Playback Operator.....	Robin Bozik
Head of Scenic Construction .....	Gregory Smith*
Properties Coordinator.....	Jenna Purnell*
Senior Props Coordinator .....	Kiera Byrnes
Assistant Head of Props .....	Emma Brown
Head of Wardrobe/Cutter .....	Katri Tahvanainen*
Hair Design/Hair & Makeup Coordinator .....	Kiera Byrnes
Marketing Manager .....	Bernadette McKelvey*
Marketing Assistants .....	Sadie Kupery, Stella Mattern
Videography .....	Solomon Wu & Liz Li
Poster.....	Vithoria Dill
Community Outreach Support .....	Paulina Grainger
Audience Services Manager.....	Sandra Guerreiro*
Audience Services Liaison .....	Rose Cory*
Senior Front of House Managers .....	Hayden Telford, Julian Woodgate
Box Office Assistant.....	Katie Stevenson
Box Office Staff.....	Kaitlyn Bergeron, Gabby Blake, Tarn Blakely, Wynter Clermont, Ava Harvey, Savannah O’Heany, Brionne Wilson, Julian Woodgate

And Theatre 105, 205, 305, 405, and work-study students | \*UVic Theatre Staff / Faculty

## Friends of the Phoenix

The theatre faculty, staff and students would like to thank the following for their support of the Phoenix Theatre's 2025-26 season.

Donations made between April 1, 2025- September 26, 2025

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**Our Town**

*Nov. 6-22, 2025*

**A Sudden Violent  
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**In My Day**

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