

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Young People's Theatre  
***A Million Billion Pieces***  
World Premiere Directed by Philip Akin

November 25 – December 13, 2019

Toronto, November 7, 2019 - [Young People's Theatre](#) (YPT) is excited to present the world premiere of [A Million Billion Pieces](#) - a moving story of love directed by one of Canada's most celebrated actors and directors, **Philip Akin** (Artistic Director, Obsidian Theatre). In this bold new production, two teens are isolated by a rare disease that could prove deadly if they make contact. Craving connection, they progress from flirty DMs to a precarious encounter, each with their own reason to test what it is to live – and love – like other people. It will be presented in the Studio from November 25 to December 13, 2019, for ages 13 and up.

Created by Playwright **David James Brock** and Composer **Gareth Williams**, *A Million Billion Pieces* began in 2013 as a multimedia project with Scottish Opera (*Breath Cycle*), and incorporates soprano vocals.

"This play is about making the time we have count," said Playwright David James Brock. "[The teens'] in-person meeting after a year of 'safe' online interactions is an act of defiance against science, rumour and time. As they wade into the unknown, they carry the weight of explorers to a new planet. Stepping into this new world is less about a fear of dying than it is about a fear of not living."

Each production in YPT's 2019.20 Season explores one of the [Seven Ancestral Teachings](#) of the Anishinaabe (Wisdom, Love, Respect, Bravery, Honesty, Humility and Truth), with *A Million Billion Pieces* embodying Love. "This is a play about love, in all its cheesy, logical, passionate and, yes, operatic forms," said Brock. This new work explores what it means to belong, our willingness to live, and the necessity of emotional and physical relationships.

*A Million Billion Pieces* features **Aldrin Bundoc**, **Simon Gagnon**, **Kate Martin** and **Jonelle Sills**.

Director: **Philip Akin**; Playwright: **David James Brock**; Composer: **Gareth Williams**; Set & Costume Designer: **Rachel Forbes**; Lighting Designer: **Kaitlin Hickey**; Projection Designer: **Daniel Oulton**; Dramaturg: **Stephen Colella**; Assistant Director: **Samson Brown**; Stage Manager: **Kate Porter**.

**Performances:**

Nov. 25 & 26 at 10:30AM | Nov. 27 & 28 at 1PM | Nov. 30, Dec. 1, 7 & 8 at 2PM | Dec. 3-5, 10-13 at 10:30AM & 1:15PM | Dec. 6 at 7PM

**Relaxed Performances:** Dec. 4 at 10:30AM and Dec. 8 at 2PM

**ASL Interpreted Performance:** Dec. 8 at 2PM and Dec. 10 at 10:30AM

Tickets: Youth & Senior: \$19; Adults: \$24 (plus HST & service charges)

Online: [youngpeoplestheatre.org](http://youngpeoplestheatre.org)

Box Office: 416.862.2222 x2

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**MEDIA OPENING:**

**Thursday, November 28 at 1PM or 7PM**

**Previews:** Nov. 25 & 26 at 10:30AM and Nov. 27 at 1PM & 7PM

**RSVP to Clare Hill:** [chill@youngpeoplestheatre.org](mailto:chill@youngpeoplestheatre.org)

Media Contact:

Clare Hill

Communications Officer, Young People's Theatre

416.363.5131 x215 | [chill@youngpeoplestheatre.org](mailto:chill@youngpeoplestheatre.org)

**Photos:** login **yptmedia** | password **yptphotos**

## CAST & CREATIVE

### **ALDRIN BUNDOC, Theo**

Aldrin is a Toronto-based, Filipino-Canadian actor, born in The Philippines and raised in Mississauga. His selected credits include: *Antigone: 方* (YPT, Dora Award Nomination for Best Ensemble); *Hilot Means Healer* (Cahoots Theatre); *Towards Youth* (Project Humanity/Crow's Theatre); *Meet Cute* (Roseneath Theatre, Dora Award Nomination for Best Ensemble); *Body Politic* (Buddies in Bad Times/Lemontree Creations); *Twelfth Night, All's Well that Ends Well* (St. Lawrence Shakespeare Festival); *Schitt's Creek* (CBC); *Killjoys* (Space); *Private Eyes* (Global).

### **SIMON GAGNON, Eagle19**

Simon is a Toronto based actor, born and raised in New Brunswick. Past theatre credits include: *Antigone: 方* (YPT, Dora Award nomination for Best Ensemble); *Prairie Nurse* (Lighthouse Festival Theatre); *The Rover, Threepenny Opera, A Midsummer Night's Dream* (National Theatre School); *Rose's Clothes* (Thousand Islands Playhouse). Huge thanks to all the lovely staff of YPT who are always so generous, and a big thank you to Philip for the belief, the insight and the persistence.

### **KATE MARTIN, Pria**

Kate is an actor and educator from rural Saskatchewan, based in Toronto. She has worked previously

with YPT, Untitled Productions, Badfox Theatre Collective, Styx and Stones Productions, and the InspiraTO festival. Up next, she'll be in a staged reading with Shakespeare BASH'd. Kate holds her BFA from Ryerson Theatre School.

**JONELLE SILLS, PrioSoprano**

Jonelle's Soprano credits include: *Vivier's Kopernikus* (Against the Grain); Mahler's *2nd Symphony* (Mississauga Symphony Orchestra); Rosalinda in J. Strauss' *Die Fledermaus*, Cecchina in *La Cecchina* and the title role in *Cendrillon* (The Glenn Gould School); Musetta in *La Bohème* (Muskoka Opera Festival); Micaëla in *Carmen* (Summer Opera Lyric Theatre); Female Chorus in *The Rape of Lucretia* (MYOpera). This fall: Mimì in Puccini's *La Bohème* (Against The Grain Theatre). This past summer she was a Resident Artist with Against the Grain Theatre at the Banff Centre's Opera in the 21st Century program. Jonelle completed her studies in the Artist Diploma Program (ADP) at The Glenn Gould School at The Royal Conservatory of Music.

**PHILIP AKIN, Director**

Laureate of the Premier's Arts Award for Excellence in the Arts (2018), Philip's additional awards include: Evie Award Nomination (Winnipeg) for Best Director (2018); William Kilbourn Award for the Celebration of Toronto's Cultural Life (2014); Life Membership Award from Canadian Actors Equity Association for outstanding contributions to the performing arts within our jurisdiction (2014); The Grid's #2 2013 Theatre MVP; Merritt Award Nomination (Halifax) for Outstanding Direction (2012); Dora Nominations for Best Director in the General Theatre Division 2008, 2011, 2012, 2016 and 2019 (winning in 2012, 2016); The Toronto Sun Performing Artist of the Year (2011); Playwright's Guild of Canada Women's Caucus Bra d'Or Award for supporting and promoting the work of Canadian women playwrights (2011); Mallory Gilbert Leadership Award (2011); Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts Silver Ticket Award for Outstanding Contribution to the Arts (2010). Upcoming: *Trouble in Mind* by Alice Childress (Shaw Festival).

**DAVID JAMES BROCK, Playwright**

David is a playwright, poet, and librettist whose work has been performed across Canada, the US, and the UK. As a playwright: *Wet* (Itsazoo Productions); *Centre of the Universe* (TheatreLab); *Snow Bride, The Lycanthrope & The Leprechaun* (Romantic Animal Posse). As a librettist: *Pandora* (FAWN Chamber Creative); *Breath Cycle* (Scottish Opera); *Pub Operas, Tap:Ex Metallurgy* (Tapestry New Opera); *Sewing the Earthworm* (Canadian Art Song Project); *The Sloans Project* (NOISE Opera); *Pretty Boy* (Paul Dresher Ensemble). David is the author of two collections of poetry, *Everyone is CO2* and *Ten-Headed Alien* (Wolsak & Wynn). He lives in Toronto. davidjamesbrock.com

**GARETH WILLIAMS, Composer**

Originally from Armagh, Gareth graduated from Queen's University in 1999. He went on to study his Masters I Composition at the RCS and was awarded his PhD in Composition from St Andrew's University in 2009. As a composer, his operas have been performed and broadcast all over the world. His compositions seek to find new participants, collaborators and audiences for new opera and music

theatre, to shed light on stories and communities that have been overlooked, and to explore ideas of vulnerability in vocal writing.

**RACHEL FORBES, Set & Costume Designer**

Rachel is a Toronto-based set and costume designer. Her work has been seen across the country with the Shaw Festival, Obsidian Theatre, Neptune Theatre, Centaur Theatre, Confederation Centre of the Arts, and Buddies in Bad Times. She is also a guest designer and design mentor at Ryerson University. Selected credits: *Risky Phil* (YPT); *Copy That* (Tarragon Theatre); *In The Abyss* (Citadel & Compagnie/Political Movement); *A Streetcar Named Desire, Brothers Size* (Soulpepper Theatre); *Victory, 1837: The Farmers' Revolt* (Shaw Festival); *Fences* (Grand Theatre); *School Girls* (Obsidian Theatre); *The Bridge* (Neptune Theatre/2b Theatre); *Ryerson Dances* (RSP); *Choir Boy* (Centaur Theatre); *Speaking of Sneaking* (Riser Project); *Other Side of the Game* (Obsidian Theatre/Cahoots); *The Dream Catchers* (Charlottetown Festival); *Black Boys* (Saga Collectif/Buddies in Bad Times).

**KAITLIN HICKEY, Lighting Designer**

Kaitlin Hickey works with people to tell stories. Her recent credits include: Co-Production Design - *Book of Life* (Volcano Theatre); Set & Lighting Design - *Knives in Hens* (Coal Mine Theatre); Set Design - *Kiinalik; These Sharp Tools* (Buddies in Bad Times); Production Design - *Empire Trilogy: Four Sisters*, Lighting Design - *Empire Trilogy: The Philosopher's Wife* (Paradigm Productions); Co-Video Design - *Now You See Her* (Quote Unquote Collective & Why Not Theatre); Set Design - *Noor* (Generous Friend, Aga Khan Museum); Lighting Design - *The Children's Republic* (Belfry Theatre). She is a graduate of the National Theatre School of Canada, and holds a B.Sc. from St. Francis Xavier University.

**DANIEL OULTON, Projection Designer**

Daniel is a Toronto-based, Nova Scotia-raised Designer and Stage Manager. For YPT: Projection - *Selfie*, SM - *Under the Stairs, One Thing Leads to Another*. Other selected credits include: Projection - *Let's Try This Standing* (Keep Good); *Messenger* (HomeFirst/EFT); *Unconscious at the Sistine Chapel* (2b); SM - *Mistatim* (Red Sky); *Reflector* (Theatre Gargantua); *The Dream Catchers* (Charlottetown Festival); *Constellations, Let's Try This Standing* (Keep Good); two tours of *When it Rains* (2b); ASM - *Cakewalk, In the Wake of Wettlaufer, Wing Night at the Boot* (Blyth Festival); *Anne of Green Gables* (Charlottetown Festival); *Frog and Toad, The Addams Family, A Christmas Story* (Neptune); PM - *We Are Not Alone* (Crow's/2b); two tours of *What A Young Wife Ought to Know* (2b).

**STEPHEN COLELLA, Dramaturg**

Stephen is the Associate Artistic Director and Dramaturg at YPT. Past projects include: Director/Dramaturg for *Selfie* (Dora Award - Outstanding TYA Play, PGC TYA Award) and Co-Director/Dramaturg for *Antigone: 方*; Dramaturgy for over twenty world premieres including: *Hana's Suitcase, i think i can* (Dora Award - Outstanding New Musical), *Scarberia, Sultans of the Street* (Dora Award - Outstanding TYA Play) and *Minotaur* (YPT/Polka Theatre/Theatr Clwyd); Co-adaptor of *Love You Forever...And More Munsch* (Dora Award - Outstanding TYA Production/Canada Council TYA Prize) and *Munschtime!*. Other work includes: Director - *Tiny Treasures* (Manitoba Theatre For Young People);

Dramaturgy - Alameda Theatre, Marionetas de la Esquina/Kennedy Center, fu-Gen Theatre, and The Paprika Festival. He is currently the President of ASSITEJ Canada. Upcoming: Dramaturg, *You and I* (YPT).

**SAMSON BONKEABANTU BROWN, Assistant Director**

Samson is a self-described “Jamal of all Hustles”, with a primary focus on trans advocacy and the arts. He uses the arts (acting, playwriting, stage and production managing) to create visibility for men of trans experience and to educate the general public on trans issues. Earlier this year, Samson starred in a now viral Gillette ad called "First Shave", which won two awards at the Cannes Lions. He most recently premiered his monodrama *11:11*, which was directed by his mentor, d'bi.young anitafrika, as part of Why Not Theatre's 2019 RISER Project at The Theatre Centre. He is excited to join the crew for *A Million Billion Pieces* as the Assistant Director and learn from Director Philip Akin.

**KATE PORTER, Stage Manager**

Previously at YPT, Kate has stage managed *The Princess and the Handmaiden* and *The Man Whose Mother Was a Pirate*. Kate divides her time between theatre and opera and has recently stage managed Robert Wilson's production of *Turandot*, at the Canadian Opera Company, as well as *La Bohème*, *The Elixir of Love*, and *Götterdämmerung*. Other recent opera credits include *No One's Safe* at Banff Centre, *Dead Man Walking* at Vancouver Opera, and *The Overcoat*, co-produced by Vancouver Opera, Canadian Stage and Tapestry Opera. Kate's recent theatre credits are *We Are Not Alone* for Crow's Theatre, *Harvest* and *Leading Ladies* at the Thousand Islands Playhouse, and *What A Young Wife Ought to Know* for 2b theatre company.