

For Immediate Release

CELEBRATING A BOLD & JOYFUL NEW FUTURE Announcing our 2022.23 Season in New Spaces

TORONTO, ON (June 1, 2022) – This fall, [Young People's Theatre \(YPT\)](#) is beyond thrilled to re-open its doors to reveal a transformed YPT, and present a highly anticipated 2022.23 playbill of onstage productions. In this first in-person season for Artistic Director **Herbie Barnes**, audiences will enjoy two world premieres – Barnes' heroic First Nations tale ***Bentboy*** and a ground-breaking, magic-filled adaptation of Canadian astronaut **Chris Hadfield's** bestselling children's book, ***The Darkest Dark***, co-written and directed by **Jim Millan**. YPT's holiday production is an exhilarating and humorous new take on ***Snow White***, directed by **Aurora Browne** (co-creator and star of CBC's *Baroness von Sketch Show*) in its Canadian premiere.

"This season, perhaps now more than ever, YPT is about bringing back joy," says Barnes. "While the world spins around us with uncertainty these days, it's our goal to remind our young people that joy can always be found. As we prepare to re-open our stages after 3 years and welcome the next generation to brand new spaces, we're reminded of the pure delight of experiencing a story well told, in the company of others."

The season will include the historic unveiling of YPT's \$13.5 million *Room for Imagination* [renovation and expansion](#), with a brand new education centre across the road at 161 Frederick Street. YPT has refreshed its lobbies, increased accessibility, created new production shops, and upgraded the theatrical equipment capabilities of its 450-seat Mainstage and 115-seat Studio. Patrons will discover greener and innovative spaces at what has become Canada's largest theatre complex for young people. YPT is thrilled to recognize a *Room for Imagination* leadership gift from the Slight Family, with the renaming of the company's Mainstage to the **Ada Slight Stage**.

"The redevelopment of YPT's facility has been more than 10 years in the making," says Executive Director **Nancy Webster**. "It is a long-anticipated improvement that will allow YPT to fully serve the 150,000 young people who participate annually."

The season opens in October with the world premiere of Herbie Barnes' ***Bentboy***, directed by **Eric Coates** (former GCTC Artistic Director) – an epic Indigenous tale about an unlikely warrior, told through movement, dance and myth. In a playful re-imagining of ***Snow White*** for the whole family, two whip-smart performers portray all 14 characters. Award-winning writer, actor and comedian Aurora Browne directs a merrymaking double cast featuring comedian and actor **Ken Hall** (*The Umbrella Academy*, *People of Earth*), and YPT's own Artistic Director Herbie Barnes.

From the imaginations of Canada's most famous astronaut, Chris Hadfield, co-writers Jim Millan and **Ian MacIntyre**, and world-renowned magician **David Ben** comes ***The Darkest Dark***. Inspired by Hadfield's childhood experience of the Apollo Moon landing in 1969, this cutting-edge production weaves magic, flight, movement and multimedia with theatre arts to create an enchanting planetary playground. More than five years in the making, *The Darkest Dark* received substantial investment from the **National Arts Centre's National Creation Fund**, and this early spring staging is supported by Production Sponsor **Space Place Canada**.

You and I returns to the Studio for a very special limited engagement for "walking babies" (ages 18 months to 3 years). From Winnipeg's MTYP comes ***Frozen River (nîkwatin sîpiy)*** – a timely new play about learning from those who have protected and honoured our waterways for centuries. Productions for teen audiences include Geordie Theatre's ***Celestial Bodies***, directed by **Mike Payette** (Tarragon Theatre Artistic Director) – a play about a young girl's struggles with body image and owning the space she's in – as well as Green Thumb Theatre's international hit

Cranked: The ReMix – an incisive view of addiction and celebrity culture in an era of TikTok fame.

In addition to onstage programming, YPT's 53-year-old [Drama School](#) re-establishes itself at YPT's new education centre, as well as two other locations throughout the GTA, offering fun-filled year-round programming for babies to teens of all abilities and levels.

YPT continues to provide a broad range of educational experiences for schools and community groups, with in-person play companion workshops (subsidized options available), and the return of its popular [Indigenous Artists in Schools program](#). In these engaging workshops, teachers and students learn about Indigenous culture directly from Indigenous artist educators through oral storytelling, dance and visual art.

Accessible performances will include ASL Shadow Interpreted Performances, Relaxed Performances and Audio Described Performances.

Tickets and packages to the 2022.23 season are now on sale for YPT patrons and schools, and to the general public beginning July 4. Tickets can be purchased online at youngpeoplestheatre.org. For questions about ticket purchases, please email yptboxoffice@youngpeoplestheatre.org or leave a message at 416.862.2222.

2022.23 SEASON

YPT's 2022.23 season is proudly supported by **BMO as Season Presenting Sponsor**.

BENTBOY | World Premiere

ADA SLAIGHT STAGE • Oct. 3 – 23, 2022 • Recommended for Ages 5-12 | SK-Gr. 6

Written by Herbie Barnes

Directed by Eric Coates

Hunched and hobbled by his curved back, Bentboy is cast aside by his village. Until one day, he is chosen by an elder as the unlikely warrior to embark on a quest to save the village from grave danger. Along the way, Bentboy is joined by an uninvited companion and both are transformed by the obstacles they confront on their journey.

SNOW WHITE | Rollicking Fun for the Whole Family! Canadian Premiere

ADA SLAIGHT STAGE • Nov. 21, 2022 – Jan. 7, 2023 • Recommended for Ages 6+ | Gr. 1-6

Adapted by Greg Banks

Original Music by Victor Zupanc

Directed by Aurora Browne

This clever twist on the beloved fairy tale is a two-actor take that's irresistibly playful and oh-so smart. With lightning quick switches, the duet morphs into 14 characters, retelling (along with a song or three!) the story of Snow White, all seven dwarves, the prince, queen and her madcap crew.

CELESTIAL BODIES | One Girl's Cosmic Journey

STUDIO • Nov. 28 – Dec. 9, 2022 • Recommended for Ages 13+ | Gr. 7+

Written by Jacob Margaret Archer

Directed by Mike Payette

Produced by Geordie Theatre

Having just started high school, Stella's goal is to lay low and hope that no one notices that she's an awkward, anxious space geek. But when that plan goes supernova and explodes, she scrambles to cope with normal teen challenges, like bullying, casual binge eating, and... accidentally becoming an ice hockey goalie?

THE DARKEST DARK | World Premiere

ADA SLAIGHT STAGE • Feb. 20 – Apr. 2, 2023 • Recommended for Ages 6-12 | Gr. 1-6

Based on the book by Chris Hadfield with Kate Fillion

Adapted for the stage by Jim Millan and Ian MacIntyre

Directed by Jim Millan

It's 1969 and Apollo 11 is about to land on the moon. Nine-year-old space-loving Chris spends his days dreaming of becoming a brave astronaut. But at bedtime, the night closes in and so too does his fear of the dark. For Chris,

watching history being made hinges on conquering his fear – and embracing the unknown. Weaving theatre, multi-media and magic, *The Darkest Dark* reveals a universe where anything is possible.

YOU AND I | A Playful Experience for Walking Babies

STUDIO • Mar. 11 – 26, 2023 • Recommended for Ages 18 months – 3 years

Created by Maja Ardal

Created by celebrated theatre veteran Maja Ardal, *You and I* is a multi-sensory, playfully interactive adventure specially designed for “walking babies”. This much-loved, one-of-a-kind experience engages little explorers (and their adults!) in discovery through colour, sound, touch and movement.

FROZEN RIVER (nīkwatin sīpiy) | Broken Promises and Reconciliation Spanning Centuries

ADA SLAIGHT STAGE • Apr. 17 – 28, 2023 • Recommended for Ages 5-12 | SK-Gr. 6

Co-written by Michaela Washburn, Joelle Peters and Carrie Costello

Directed by Katie German

An MTYP and Castlemoon Theatre Co-Production

Grandmother Moon tells the story of two eleven-year-olds, born under the same blood moon, but in different parts of the world. *Frozen River* follows their stories as they meet in a forest, and that of their descendants who meet in present-day Manitoba. A broken promise from the past can be righted when there is finally an openness to learn from those who have protected and honoured the waterways for centuries.

CRANKED: THE REMIX | The International Hip Hop Sensation, Remixed

STUDIO • May 8 – 18, 2023 • Recommended for Ages 13+ | Gr. 8+

Written by Michael P. Northey

Directed by Rachel Aberle

A Green Thumb Theatre Production

Stan, a.k.a. “Definition”, was a rising freestyle MC until his life’s passion lost out to his drug habit. Now on the road to recovery and preparing for a comeback, Stan confronts his demons and recounts the wild highs and deep lows of addiction. Featuring a live DJ and hip hop, this pulse-pounding sensory experience reveals the realities of addiction and the redemption that can lie in recovery.

For more information, visit youngpeoplestheatre.org.

About Young People’s Theatre

Young People’s Theatre (YPT) launches the next stage in the company’s 57-year history, co-led by Indigenous artist and new Artistic Director Herbie Barnes, and Executive Director Nancy Webster. This new era also marks the unveiling of YPT’s expanded and renovated theatre complex, more than 10 years in the making. As Canada’s largest and oldest professional theatre for young audiences, the company produces and presents a full season of theatre and arts education programming, serving approximately 150,000 patrons annually. With the purchase of a multi-use building across the street from its historic theatre, YPT has expanded its footprint, increased its accessibility, refreshed its lobbies, and upgraded the theatrical equipment capabilities of its 450-seat Ada Slight Stage and 115-seat Studio. United in vision, the two facilities now anchor the corner of Front and Frederick Streets in downtown Toronto creating Canada’s largest theatre complex for young people.

Connect with Young People’s Theatre



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