

TALISMAN
THEATRE

PRESENTS

ME AND YOU

Written by

TALIA HALLMONA & PASCAL BRULLEMANS

Translated by

ALISON BOWIE

Dramaturg

PATRICK LEROUX

Directed by

ARIANNA BARDESONO



www.talisman-theatre.com

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Dramaturg
PATRICK LEROUX

Directed by
ARIANNA BARDESONO

Set Design
LYNE PAQUETTE

Costume Design
FRUZSINA LÁNYI

Lighting
DAVID ALEXANDRE CHABOT

Sound Design
JESSE ASH

For more information on the team members biographies visit www.talisman-theatre.com

World English-language Premiere of
ME AND YOU

May 18 to 21 , 2016 MAI (Montréal, arts interculturels)

Montreal Arts Council on tour 2018:

February 27, Roxboro- Pauline-Julien Theatre

March 13, Saint-Laurent, Émile-Legault Theatre

April 13, Montreal-North, Oliver Jones Theatre

April 20, Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, Iro Tembeck Theatre





WHAT MAKES A REAL QUEBECER?

A young actress recalls her childhood memories and her arrival in Quebec. As the story unfolds, she recounts her meeting with Julie Sirois, her best friend—a quebecois who dies in an accident. Denying this reality, Talia will interrupt the story and change the course of her destiny by giving her role to Julie. But she soon discovers that sharing her life with others has risks, especially when it comes to uniting two cultures that everything dissociates. Autofiction where reality and freedom are scrambled, *Me and You* portrays a friendship that defies conventions and looks at the identity of the immigrant, posing the question : Do we acknowledge The Other for what he gives us, or for what takes from us?

Me and You is written by Pascal Brullemans and Talia Hallmona were awarded the Louise-LaHaye prize for *Moi et l'Autre*. This award recognizes the excellence of a play for young audience.

The main themes of the play are integration, intercultural friendship, multiple identities, the need to be Quebecois, love, uprooting, arrival in a new country, Quebec ...

Julie: “Being Quebecois, it happens in the heart, so you do not need a script and not as you need me, and she tears the script ... “

“Being Quebecois means whining about the winter, whining about the rest of Canada, whining about the Habs’ coach....”

— Talia

“Being Quebecois, it happens in the heart, so you do not need a script and not as you need me, and she tears the script ... “

— Julie

AUTHORS' NOTES



TALIA HALLMONA, co-author

My name is Talia Wagih William Wassef Hallmona. I was born in Egypt but my name is Greek. In fact, my father is Egyptian and mother is original Italian and Greek. When you look at me, no one has the impression of admiring a young Middle Eastern woman with enigmatic charms. When I speak, you do hear the Mediterranean sing. In fact, I can easily make myself pass for a girl from Lac-Saint-Jean.

Being an immigrant, you know, it's not simple.

But worst, is being integrated, a floating state between two countries, two languages, two cultures ...



PASCAL BRULLEMANS, co-author

Even as a Quebecois Talia realizes she cannot reconcile what she is. What we discovered is that, in fact, having an identity problem is perhaps the most Quebec way of life!

We do not give an answer in this play *Me and You*, but we have something to build from it ...

Ultimately, primary schools today are filled with immigrants and children of immigrants, reality changes. The relation to the Other is not the same, but everyone still has to find its place.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE



ALISON BOWIE

The first time I read through *Me and You* I was struck by the complexity of its language and its story. The play is a journey, across time, space, and cultural boundaries; it is a story about finding one's identity. It is a world where we are constantly being asked to reassess our understanding of our own heritage and our own use of language. The play is a deep emotional journey, but the playwrights have skilfully woven humour into the story, allowing us the chance to breath and reflect. The story revolves around the idea of the Other, so placing it in a new language adds an additional layer of intricacy that needs to be negotiated not only by the characters in the play, but also by the audience. This funny, and profoundly moving story raises questions that anyone living in a multi-cultural or multi-lingual community will face at some point in their life. The play brings people together to help each other find answers.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

ARIANNA BARDESONO

I am an immigrant. I left my country in 1999.

Once you leave the land that gave birth to you, whether willingly or not, you forever earn the citizenship of a fictitious country I call limbo. You will never be from here and won't ever again be just from there. You're in limbo. In an in between. In a no man's land that escapes simple definitions.

At first it is uncomfortable, you experience anxiety and the deep urge to belong. Later, you learn that the place you're dying to call home is carried in you, on your shoulders, across your skin and in your heart. And that little building of yours has been shaped just as much by your life experiences and your inherited DNA, as by the many significant people you encountered so far.

This is where *ME and YOU* lives. In the shift from my story and my identity to the awareness of how the Other makes Me who I am. And vice versa.

ME and YOU is one step after integration. It is a renegotiation of the idea of identity itself. It is a joyful exercise in empathy, an honest search that cares to ask important questions and a generous act of sharing.

A native of Italy, Arianna is a graduate of the Directing Program at the National Theatre School of Canada. She has directed for various theatre companies in Montreal (Repercussion, Teesri Duniya, Infinitheatre and Théâtre du Quat'Sous) and for Cuatro Milpas Teatro in Mexico. Arianna has been a resident artist at the Stella Adler School of Acting in NYC, as well as at La Tohu in Montreal. As a puppeteer with Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia she has toured extensively throughout North America and in Singapore.

Arianna has been the co-founder and co-artistic director of the independent theatre company Odelah Creations, whose mandate has been to create original daring work, committed to innovation both in form and content. Odelah's creations have been presented both in Montreal and Toronto. Since 2011 Arianna has been a mentor and teacher both at the National Theatre School of Canada and Dawson College. She is currently the Associate Artist at Imago Theatre while pursuing her Master's studies in écriture scenique at UQÀM. Arianna has been awarded the John Hirsch Prize in 2013, which selects and celebrates emerging theatre directors with great potential.



ABOUT THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



LYNE PAQUETTE, Artistic Director, Talisman Theatre;
Set Design for *Me and You*

Lyne is a founder of Talisman Theatre. A graduate of the National Theatre School (2005), theatrical set and costume design is Lyne's second career; prior to this she had worked as a professional engineer for international consultancies since graduating from McGill (1987). Beginning as an Assistant Designer at the Stratford Shakespeare Festival, and an internship with Michael Curry Designs, Lyne has since designed for many theatre, dance, puppet, and opera productions in Montreal. She has designed set and costumes for Talisman productions since 2005.

ABOUT TALISMAN THEATRE

Talisman has a vibrant, living mission: to produce English-language premières of Québécois plays in translation for Montreal's public and students. We have two unique strengths that allow us to bring Québécois plays to English-speaking theatre-goers: we retain the essence of traditional Québécois theatrical practice as part of our hybrid development process; and we have developed a talented bi-lingual team with its own distinctive artistic approach. (www.talisman-theatre.com)

Since 2006 Talisman Theatre productions include Daniel Danis' *That Woman* (2006 & 2007), *Down Dangerous Passes Road* by Michel Marc Bouchard (2008) (both translated by Linda Gaboriau) which won for the Prix de la critique 2008 for best English production. 2009 was the stunning production of Marilyn Perreault's *Rock, Paper, Jackknife...* (translated by Nadine Desrochers), *The Flood Thereafter* 2010's moment of grace by Sarah Berthiaume (translated by Nadine Desrochers), *Coma Unplugged* (2011) by Pierre Michel Tremblay, *The Medea Effect* (2012) by Suzie Bastien (META winner for Best Actress and Best Translation 2012) (translated by Nadine Desrochers), *The Aeneid* by Olivier Kemeid (winner of the 2014 Montreal English Theatre Award for Best Indie production – METAs), *Billy (The days of Howling)* (2015) by Fabien Cloutier and last year's *Province* by Mathieu Gosselin (translated by Nadine Desrochers).

Videos

Trailer *Me and You* (4 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f0Tz8fMOz5M>

Full length video (55 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yYbYCTGabm0&feature=youtu.be>

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