



Ghost River Theatre



GHOST RIVER THEATRE'S

GIANT



BY DAVID VAN BELLE & ERIC ROSE

PRESENTED BY THE FESTIVAL OF ANIMATED OBJECTS

MARCH 12 - 24, 2019

THE FLANAGAN THEATRE AT THE GRAND 608 1ST SW

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GIANT

by David van Belle & Eric Rose

The Cast

(In alphabetical order)

JAMIE KONCHAK
GENEVIÈVE PARÉ
MAKAMBE K SIMAMBA
JAMIE TOGNAZZINI
MORGAN YAMADA

Creative Team

Co-Creators/Playwrights	DAVID VAN BELLE & ERIC ROSE
Director	ERIC ROSE
Puppets, Sets & Props Designed	ROBERT LEVEROOS
Costume Design	PATRICK DU WORS
Lights and Sound Design	ANTON DEGROOT
Fight/Wrestling Director	BRIANNA JOHNSTON
Dramaturg	VICKI STROICH
Puppet Consultant/Coach	PETER BALKWILL
Assistant Director	LINDSEY ZESS

Production Team

Stage Manager	SARA TURNER
Assistant Stage Manager	MEREDITH JOHNSON
Co-Technical Director	MARK EUGSTER
Co-Technical Director	KATHRYN SMITH
Puppet Builders	ROBERT LEVEROOS
	STEPHANIE ELGERSMA
	JUANITA DAWN
	KIM BUSATO
	BRADEN GRIFFITHS
70s Strut Choreographer	DEANNE WALSH
Intern Puppet Builder	ANDREW BROWN
Costume Design Assistant	SKYLAR DESJARDINS
Wardrobe Construction Team	KIM JONSON
	WENDY EAKIN
	MAGZ ROSS
	ELAYNE FISHER
Hair Consultant	REBECCA TOON
Production Assistant	MICHAEL LUONG

ADDITIONAL CREDITS

Graphic Design - Kelsi Kalmer

For the 2018 Workshop:

Production Manager and Technical Director: Thomas Geddes

Stage Manager: Beth Grieve

Assistant Stage Manager: Michael Luong

Lighting Programmer/Operator/Crew: Patrick Fitzsimmons

Puppet Builder Intern: Andy Brown

Workshop Photography: Tim Nguyen, Citrus Photography

Volunteer Puppet Builders:

Andrew Cooper, Colleen Philipi, Erin Baskerville, Geneviève Paré,
Jamie Tognazzini, Janet Creaser, Jennifer Bain, Kim Busato, Kristy Benz,
Marcia Hedley, Monica Ila, Pat Rozitis, Mel Wolski, Mary Lou Ditta, Sara Mattsson,
Suzanne Belanger, Mark Eadie, Jennifer Lee Arsenault, Sara Mattsson,
Nathan Fawaz, Zoe Arthur



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Land Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge that we are in the Treaty 7 territory and the land in which we are gathered is the traditional territory of the Blackfoot Confederacy, Ktunaxa (Kootenay), Métis, and Tsuut'ina Peoples.

Playwrights' Notes

“...we are not comfortable with the thought that occasionally we look like threatening giants to our children, although we do.”

-Bruno Bettelheim, "The Uses of Enchantment"

It often happens that the spark of a new show comes in a flash. We have an idea that appeals to us for some reason, but we don't know why. The process of creating the show then becomes the progressive understanding of what that idea means. In the case of *GIANT* it was a basic theatrical choice: what if we took a giant protagonist, a character that couldn't adequately be cast in a traditional film or tv bio-pic, and asked a small woman to play him? How could we create a theatrical world around that character that evoked bigness and smallness?

And then: what meanings would unfold? Ghost River's work is always a collaborative effort of large teams of brilliant artists. We've been so fortunate to have gathered a smart, talented cast and a superb team of design, technical and production artists to express this surprising world. Along the journey we've been exploring the dynamics of a hypermasculine culture viewed through a female lens while also exploring the relationships of parents and children. These explorations have surprised us—as we write this during our rehearsal process we are discovering that these two elements—the intensely political and the deeply personal—are completely entwined.

Our hope, as a company of fathers, mothers, daughters and sons is that *GIANT* leads you to a new understanding of your own relationships, what you pass on to future generations and what you've received from those who have come before you.

And also, there's some kick-ass wrestling.

-David van Belle and Eric Rose, playwrights.



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The Festival of Animated Objects is proud to support Ghost River Theatre in the creation of GIANT.
puppetfestival.ca



CAST BIOGRAPHIES

In Alphabetical Order

Jamie Konchak



This is Jamie's third creative adventure with Ghost River Theatre having worked on the development of both *Something to do With Death* and *Reverie*. She is an award-winning actress and singer who has performed across Canada in theatres big and small, and she makes her home in Calgary by the Bow River with her husband, Graham and their Pomeranian Pepper. Some select theatre credits include: *The Virgin Trial*, *1979*, *Constellations*, *The Red Priest*, *The Apology* (ATP); *CRIME: Does Not Pay* (Downstage & Forte with H&M); *Making Treaty 7* (MT7 Society); *Miss Caledonia* (Lunchbox); *The Drowning Girls*, *Calamity Town*, *The Huron Bride* (Vertigo Theatre); *A Christmas Carol 2015-2018*, *The Great Gatsby* (Theatre Calgary); *The Floating Mouse* (The Green Fools); *Liberation Days*, *Nothing Less!*, *Joan: by fire*, *The Tempest* (Two Planks and a Passion); *Songs from Nightingale Alley* (Feast of Friends & OYR).

Geneviève Paré



Geneviève Paré (ensemble member and Puppet Captain) is in the practice and profession of building, shaping and performing live theatre. She is driven by a desire for a more connected community, and believes that storytelling is essential in the construction, renewal, and celebration of collective identity. Alongside her practice as a theatre artist Geneviève works as a wilderness guide and outdoor-arts facilitator with the Canadian Wilderness Artist Residency, where she takes artists down remote waters to explore a deeper connection to themselves, wild space, each other and their practice.

Makambe K Simamba



Makambe is a Zambian theatre artist who is thrilled to be practicing in Canada. Stage acting credits include *A Chitenge Story* (Handsome Alice) *Bea* (Sage Theatre), *SIA* (Pyretic Productions) *inVISIBLE* (Handsome Alice), and *Winners & Losers* (Chromatic Theatre). Directing credits include *inVISIBLE Too* (University of Lethbridge). She is a national award-winning playwright who was a member of the 2017 Banff Playwright's Lab. Her play *Our Fathers, Sons, Lovers and Little Brothers* will premiere at b current performing arts in Toronto in April 2019. Makambe's intention is to be of service to her community through her ability to tell stories. @artingwithmakambe.

CAST BIOGRAPHIES (CONT)

Jamie Tognazzini



Recently, Tognazzini appeared in Pam Tzeng's *That Ch*nk in Y/our Armour* @ Canasian Dance Kickstart Festival (Toronto), and Fluid Festival (Calgary). Select credits: Catalyst Theatre's *Fortune Falls* (YYC/ATP, YEG/Citadel), *Alice in The Drowning Girls* (YYC/Vertigo), and *One Yellow Rabbit's Moon, Moon No Moon, and Calgary, I Love You but You're Killing Me*. Jamie built puppets/props for the Old Trout Puppet Workshop's *Jabberwocky*. *GIANT* marks Jamie's first production with GRT, and it feels like an enthralling privilege to work with this extraordinary team. Huge thanks to E. Rose and DvB for their support and trust throughout the process!

Morgan Yamada



Morgan is so excited and grateful to be jumping into the ring as an ensemble member and Fight Captain with such a fantastic cast and crew of truly astounding artists! Morgan is an Edmonton-based actor, fight choreographer and graduate of the University of Alberta's BFA Acting Program. She is also an Advanced Actor Combatant with Fight Directors Canada. Select acting credits include: *Glory* (ATP & WCT), *Dead Centre of Town* (Catch the Keys Productions), *Bello* (Concrete Theatre & L'Unithéâtre), *Scent Bar* (Ghost River Theatre), *Peter and the Starcatcher* (Citadel Theatre). Many thanks to her family, friends, and Mac for their never ending love and support.

Ghost River Theatre Tours

We are now booking touring dates for *GIANT* into 2021. For more info or detailed requirements please contact our touring agent

Christy Offer

christy@magpieexchange.com

magpie exchange



arts management

CREATIVE TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

Co-Creator/Playwright/Director- Eric Rose



An award-winning director, deviser, playwright, educator and the Artistic Director of Ghost River Theatre. Selected GRT credits: concept/direction *Intuition Project*, *SCENT BAR*, *TOUCH*, *TASTE* and *Tomorrow's Child*; directing/co-writing *Last Voyage of Donald Crowhurst*, (Betty Award for Outstanding Production, Direction, New Play); directing/co-writing *Highest Step in the World* (Outstanding Production, CITT Award for Technical Achievement). Additional credits: directing-lab workshop of *Troilus & Cressida* for Stratford Festival; directing *Forbidden Sacrifice* for Kathy Knowles Theatre Company in Ghana. Rose is honoured to have been the Playwright-in-Residence at ATP, and the recipient of the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta Artist Award for his body of work as a live-performance innovator.

Co-Creator/Playwright David van Belle



David is a playwright, director and actor with a passion for devised creation. He has been a member of the creative ensemble of One Yellow Rabbit, a playwright-in-residence at Alberta Theatre Projects, writer-in-residence for the Edmonton Public Library system, and co-Artistic Director of Ghost River Theatre, where he currently serves as Creator-in-Residence. Writing credits: *Liberation Days* (Theatre Calgary), *The Last Voyage of Donald Crowhurst* and *The Highest Step in the World* (with Eric Rose, Ghost River/Alberta Theatre Projects). He is currently writing a new version of *A Christmas Carol* for Edmonton's Citadel Theatre, where he serves as an associate artist for new play development. David is very grateful to Vanessa Sabourin for solo parenting while he worked on *GIANT*.

Puppets, Sets & Props Designed by Robert Leveroos



Robert Leveroos is a Vancouver-based multidisciplinary artist and insatiable tinkerer. Under the moniker macromatter, Robert creates original performance pieces for all ages that have been presented in festivals and venues locally and otherwise. He also collaborates as a performer and scenographer with a number of Vancouver and Canadian companies. For ten years he trained with The Children's Theater Company in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and graduated from The National Theatre School of Canada in Montreal (acting 2008). He holds an MFA in Interdisciplinary Studies from Simon Fraser University School for the Contemporary Arts.

Costume Design by Patrick Du Wors



Patrick is an award-winning performance designer, working in a wide of range performance styles and scales of production. From site-specific opera, to texts from the classical canon, to contemporary devised work, Patrick's work has been recognized across Canada and internationally. Patrick designed and curated the Canadian Exhibition at the 2015 Prague Quadrennial and is a member of the international artistic leadership team for PQ2019. Patrick is a member of the faculty at the University of Victoria, Department of Theatre.

Lights and Sound Design by Anton deGroot



Anton is a set, light, and sound designer based in Calgary. Select credits include: *Brontë*, *HMS Pinafore*, *Treasure Island* (Stratford); *The Hollow*, *The Thin Man*, *Dracula: the Bloody Truth!* (Vertigo); *The Shoplifters*, *Mary Poppins* (Theatre Calgary); *Smoke*, *Good Fences*, *In the Wake*, *Sequence* (Downstage); *The Circle*, *Cockroach*, *Waiting for the Parade*, *Charlotte's Web* (ATP); *Jersey Boys*, *Drinking Habits 1 & 2*, *Baskerville!* (Stage West); *King Lear* (Shakespeare Company). Anton received the Betty Mitchell Award for Outstanding Light Design for *Macbeth*, *All's Well That Ends Well* (Shakespeare Company – 2016 & 2017), and *Nine Dragons* (Vertigo – 2018), and for Outstanding Set Design for *Travels With My Aunt* (Vertigo – 2014) and *Crime Does Not Pay* (Downstage – 2018). In 2017, Anton was named Top 40 Under 40 by Avenue Magazine. Next: *Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder* at Stage West. See more @an_tonD and adegroot.ca.

Fight Director/Wrestling Choreographer Brianna Johnson



Brianna is thrilled to be working with the incredible cast and crew of *GIANT*. An actor and fight performer, as well as certified Fight Instructor and Paddy Crean Award winner with The Academy of Fight Directors Canada, her favorite fight credits include: Fight Direction– *Peter Pan*, *Macbeth*, *The Three Musketeers* (CYPT), *Goodnight Desdemona...* (The Shakespeare Company), *Reasons to be Pretty*, *Bengal Tiger...* (Search Tower Company); Assistant Fight Direction– *Zorro* (ATP), *Deathtrap*, *The Thirty Nine Steps*, *Wait Until Dark* (Vertigo Theatre), *A Christmas Carol* (Theatre Calgary, 2016), *Julius Caesar* (The Shakespeare Company). Thanks and love to Logan for his undying support.

Assistant Director Lindsey Zess



Lindsey Zess is a Calgarian director, designer, mask maker, puppeteer, and drama educator. She holds an MFA in Directing from University of Calgary and a BFA in Performance from the University of Lethbridge. Lindsey's theatrical obsessions include gender, myth, and animated objects. She is passionate about women's stories and feats of theatre magic. Recent projects include *She Kills Monsters* (University of Lethbridge), *Gargantuan* (Swallow-a-Bicycle), *Legoland* (Urban Curvz Theatre), *FUGLY* (The Janes), *The Hudson Bay Epic* and *River: A Puppet Myth* (Mudfoot Theatre).

Dramaturg Vicki Stroich



Vicki Stroich is a dramaturg, facilitator and administrator. She is currently working in the environmental sector while continuing to dramaturge projects whenever possible. Recently she was Executive Director of Alberta Theatre Projects in Calgary, Alberta where she worked for over 16 years. Prior to leading Alberta Theatre Projects organizational vision she lead ATP's new play development programs. She has dramaturged over 45 new plays with ATP and companies across Canada. In 2018, she launched the National Playwrights Retreat with the Caravan Farm Theatre in Armstrong, BC. She has a BFA Drama from The University of Calgary. Vicki has received a Betty Mitchell Award for Outstanding Achievement for her work on new plays and is an Avenue Magazine Top 40 Under 40 alumna.

Puppet Consultant/Coach Peter Balkwill



Peter is a co-Artistic Director of the Old Trout Puppet Workshop and Education Director of the Canadian Academy of Mask and Puppetry. He has recently been appointed a faculty position at the University of Calgary in Acting/Drama and also curates the Festival of Animated Objects. Peter wrestles daily with the grand questions of life, he is bruised and trampled from the grand body slams that this activity lays on.

PRODUCTION TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

Stage Manager Sara Turner



Sara is excited to join the Ghost River team on this formidable piece! Select credits include: *It's A Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play*, *Ride* (Lunchbox Theatre); *The Thin Man*, *Our Man In Havana*, *Dial "M" For Murder*, *Vintage Hitchcock* (Vertigo Theatre); *Canada 151: Better Late Than Sorry*, *Million Dollar Quartet* (Drayton Entertainment); *The Secret Garden*, *The Audience*, *The Light In The Piazza*, *The Little Prince- The Musical*, *The Crucible* (Theatre Calgary); *Million Dollar Quartet*, *Rumors & Dreams* (Stage West Calgary), *Naughty But Nice Too!* (Forte Musical Theatre Guild). Sara has also taught stage management at the University of Lethbridge.

Assistant Stage Manager Meredith Johnson



Meredith is a Calgary-based theatre artist who is thrilled to be collaborating with this great team! Previous Stage Management Credits include shows with Vertigo Theatre, Lunchbox Theatre, Verb Theatre, The Shakespeare Company, Calgary Young People's Theatre, Alberta Theatre Projects, Major Matt Mason Collective, Calgary Opera and Quest Theatre. She just finished an 11 week tour of *Blind Date* with Spontaneous Theatre and The Arts Club Theatre Society throughout Vancouver and the lower mainland. She would like to thank a very special troupe of humans who made everyday an adventure.

Co-Technical Director Mark Eugster



Mark is a graduate of the University of Victoria's BFA theatre program. Always on the move, he is fascinated by the art of production and is continually working on new projects to develop a diverse perspective of the possibilities of live entertainment. Mark encourages the blending of multiple artistic disciplines by finding new and exciting ways to express himself creatively. His work has taken him from large theatres and arena concerts to site-specific performance spaces, unconventional venues, and everything in-between.

Co-Technical Director: Kathryn Smith



Kathryn is a designer, director, and creator who has worked across western Canada in puppetry, music, and clown. Apart from theatre, she is also an award winning singer songwriter under the name KP Smith. Select theatre credits: *inVISIBLE*, *A Chitenge Story* (Handsome Alice Theatre); *Benefit, Bottle Picker Monologues* (Downstage Theatre); *A Beautiful View* (Sage Theatre); *Brave Girl, Ride* (Lunchbox Theatre); *Million Dollar Quartet* (New West Theatre); *Amahl & the Night Visitors* (Calgary Opera); *Secret Garden* (Theatre Calgary: Design Mentee). She is also the 2018/19 RBC Emerging Director at Lunchbox Theatre. Much love to the Festival of Animated Objects!

Puppet Builder Stephanie Elgersma



Stephanie is a London/Vancouver actor, puppeteer, and puppet maker/director. Most of her puppet making is done in London (UK) where she has made puppets for The Old Vic, The Birmingham Rep and has worked on five projects with Nick Barnes Puppets. In Vancouver, Stephanie recently made an otter puppet for *A Brief History of Human Extinction* at the Cultch and has made puppets for various festivals. In 2017, Stephanie also created, directed, and designed *Zoetrope: Puppet Oddities* with Shizuka Kai (Studio 58). Stephanie is a Studio 58 graduate. www.stephelgersma.com

Puppet Builder Juanita Dawn



Juanita Dawn has focused her one wild and precious life into the pursuit of creating joy, through sculptural works, puppets and masks. Behind each of her whimsical, quirky creations is a story and it is these everyday human dramas that fuel the passion for Juanita's work. These are the stories that speak to the souls of all those who allow her in. Juanita opened and now operates The Long Grass Studio & Workshop with her husband Pat and together where they run classes and workshops. Juanita has been commissioned to make puppets for a variety of theatre companies across Canada. Juanita can be found running the shop at the bi-annual Puppet Intensive at the Banff Centre.

70s Strut Choreographer Deanne Walsh



For over two decades Deanne has been presented and commissioned as a performer, choreographer and educator throughout Alberta and across Canada. After completing her Bachelor of Arts Dance degree with distinction from the University of Calgary, she performed full-time with Decidedly Jazz Danceworks for eight seasons. She has held the role of Artistic Director of Alberta Dance Theatre for Young People and Artistic Associate for Dancers' Studio West. Deanne was a Sessional Instructor for the School of Creative and Performing Arts in Dance and the Faculty of Kinesiology at the University of Calgary, before recently completing her Bachelor of Education.

Thank You

**Ghost River Theatre would like gratefully acknowledge
the support of our donors:**

Ann Connors, Kodie Rollan, Charles Netto, Armin Karame, Kevin Moore, Pamela Tzeng, Rob McDowell, Lisa Jermus, Ellie Enderl, Eric Rose & Caitlin Gallichan-Lowe, Clarice Seibens, Kerry Clarke, Howard Jang, Julia Rose, Jeremy Mason, Kate & Cody Stadel, Tom McCabe, Cindy Amundson, Grant Burns, Stacey Smith, Pat Rozitis, Kathy Knowels, Dave Belcher, Jim Kerr, Chad Henry, Mary Card, Jason Carnew, Ian LaCouvée, Vanessa Porteous, Amy Hall, Anthony Black, Roger Swierstra, Arthur Kurylowicz, Joel Cochrane, Michelle McDonald, Patrick Forrest, Ayla Stephens, Hope Bishop, Ankur Mahajan, Adam Berti, Brian Pincott, Joel Smith, Gary Siegle, Chantal Barchad, Dave Gubbles, James Gottselig, Waldo Bezuidenhout, David Boyko, Roland Choi, Michelle Forrieter, Scott Holden, Tamara Krause, Curtis Marble, Kerry Lynn Okita, Cheyanne Olsen, Melanie Pituch, Stephen Ricketts, Jesse Stevenson, Emily Teoh, Ken & Myrna Waddell.

Ghost River Theatre would like to thank these people as well, as being generally awesome and helpful members of the Cultural Community.

Cameron Clowe, Pamela Lang, Calgary Boxing Club, Cody Stadel, Marc Lavalee, Long Grass Studios, Old Trout Puppet Workshop, Christie Offer, Ian La Couvée, The Festival of Animated Objects, Pete Balkwill, Stone Cook, Gwen Murray, Kelly Phelan, Cimmeron Meyer, Loft 112, George Wowk, Vanessa Sabourin, Saori Daiju, Danijel Margetic, Vertigo Theatre, CYPT, Green Fools Theatre, West Village Theatre, Norcal Group, UofC / SCPA, "The Weirdo Hero" Randy Myers, Catherine Power, Lindsey Miller, Dylan Miller, Mike Kovac, Louise Casemore, Savannah Harvey, Doug Curtis, Lisa Roberts (UofC), Laura Anderson, Antoine Paré-Poirier, Lauren Acheson, Harry X. Lin, Jamie Tognazzini, The Calgary Boxing Club, Andrew G. Cooper, and Xpose Beauty.

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Ghost River Theatre

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Body Politics

When Eric and David first shared their plan to stage a biography of André the Giant with a cast of women, my reaction was... let's say skeptical. That sounds like a gimmick. What are you trying to say, exactly? That it takes five women to equal one (albeit very large) man? As a practitioner whose work has largely focused on female-centric stories, I wanted to know more about the impulse to employ female bodies in an ostensibly male-centric narrative.

The company of collaborators and creators have discussed the matter at length throughout the process, and there is no singular meaning to pinpoint. One response is that this story isn't really about André, but rather a father and a daughter -- André's legacy cast a giant shadow over the girl he left behind. Another response is simply that it creates delight to subvert expectations and witness feats that certain bodies shouldn't be able to perform. Wrestling is a carefully constructed spectacle of power and strength; how can these female bodies re-create the spectacle of André's iconic wrestling matches? How can a hundred-pound woman possibly fill those size 24 shoes?

In a culture where "man" is used as a neutral term, women become inherently 'othered' (regarded as if outside of the norm). André similarly experienced that otherness: He wasn't a man, he was a giant. To counteract the restrictions that would be imposed by his otherness, he commandeered it. He consciously shaped the way his difference was addressed and displayed. Through performance, he was truly able to exercise power over his life.

The performers tackling this tale have female bodies, but more importantly, they have storyteller's bodies. Bodies attuned to transformation and play. Through intuition, empathy and inexplicable alchemical magic, actors are able to conjure disparate aspects of humanity from inside of themselves. Every body, in fact, contains immeasurably more than what can be seen -- the heart, the brain, and the spirit -- the rich inner life of a person who may not match our expectations informed by the skin that they wear.

We have had many engaging and stimulating discussions through the process about the meanings that bodies make. Whatever you take from our telling, we're sure you'll agree that the story of Andre has never been told like this before, and that excites us.

-Lindsey Zess, Assistant Director

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