



## Participatory Players Company Bio

Participatory Players is a new theatre company that brings together emerging and experienced artists to create accessible, original Canadian works. Founded by **Jacob Pittini** and **Jaiden French**, the company aims to develop theatre that incorporates participatory elements and invites audiences to engage in meaningful ways.

**Jacob Pittini** is a PhD candidate at the Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies at the University of Toronto. Prior to pursuing graduate studies he studied Drama at Queen's University. His research focuses on forms of theatre that encourage audience participation and engagement. For *Pedro the Penguin*, Jacobs serves as Assistant Director and Producer.

**Jaiden French** is a recent graduate of the George Brown Theatre School. She previously earned a BScH in Environmental Biology from Queen's University where she met Jacob while working on productions at the Dan Studio Series and Colliding Scopes Theatre. Jaiden is both a producer and a member of the cast.

*Pedro the Penguin* was originally written as an assignment for Mark Brownwell's Playwriting class at George Brown Theatre School in 2025. Initially the show was 10 minutes long and was selected for presentation during that year's Distillery Winter Market Plays for young audiences. This run was produced by George Brown Theatre School Students, with assistance from Aaron Willis and Julie Tepperman, as part of the 'Self-as-Producer' class. After receiving positive audience reception, and packed audiences in the TD Studio, the show was further developed into a full-length format for presentation as part of the **2026 Toronto Fringe Festival KidsFest from June 30th to July 11th** at the **Young People's Theatre - Studio**.

The production is led by director **Sue Miner**. Sue is an actor, director, producer and theatre educator who graduated from the National Theatre School's Acting Section in 1983. She has won and been nominated for several Dora Awards and has performed and directed across Canada in Fringe Festivals and Mainstage productions. For YPT, she recently co-adapted *Love You Forever and More Munsch* and directed *Bad Hats Alice in Wonderland* (Soulpepper, Ontario Tour, MTYP).

**Philip Diamond** makes his Toronto Playwriting debut. Also a recent graduate of George Brown Theatre School, he focuses on writing, directing, and comedy. *Pedro the Penguin* is inspired by classic sports films and he hopes to introduce the new generation to these classic stories with a fresh twist.

**Tim Walker**, a veteran of the Toronto Fringe scene rounds out the cast of *Pedro the Penguin*. He recently appeared as Mr. Zero in *The Adding Machine* with Leroy Street Theatre at the Toronto Fringe in 2025 and has performed internationally for over two decades.

This production was created with love by artists and graduates from George Brown Theatre School, Queen's University, and the University of Toronto Centre for Drama, Theatre & Performance Studies.