

Svjetlana Jaklenec (DIRECTOR)

Svjetlana Jaklenec (Red Drapes Productions) is a Toronto based award winning Director, alumna of prestigious Cineplex Director's Lab at Canadian Film Centre. Her short films *Dangerous Heroes*, *The Quarry* and *Rishi's World* have screened internationally at Festivals and Television, garnering many accolades and awards. She left her native Croatia after the war, in 1996 to pursue Film and TV Production Studies at York University.

As an accomplished Writer, Svjetlana is a recipient of both, Telefilm Screenwriting Grant and Corus Entertainment Writing Grant for her feature film screenplays *The Freedomland* and *Under These Leaves* respectively. The recognizable thread to all of her work is a directing style of rigorous visual impact, raw and strikingly intimate and poetic storytelling, combined with a non-judgmental approach to her characters. They are strong characters, usually balancing on the verge of great personal disasters, making fatal mistakes and courageous decisions while fighting social stereotypes and stigma.

Svjetlana started collaborating with the playwright Tena Štivičić first on the script for her upcoming feature film *Window Watching* which is yet another original dissertation on emotional richness and complexity of human eternal conflict of morals vs. deep urges. That screenplay just received a development support from the Harold Greenberg Fund. They love collaborating together on the projects and are excited for their new adventure coming up.

With *The Two Of Us*, Svjetlana is coming back to her theatre roots that she left behind in Croatia where she founded a Children's Theatre *Nikola*. Where she was the writer and director, and children's acting coach. It was running for many years, only recently closing.

The Two Of Us is a play about the women of her generation, who were just sprouting from their teenage years into adolescence during the time the war was going on, and are still trying to in different ways deal with the PTSD and its effects in more or less productive ways. The play has never been performed in English before and Svjetlana cannot wait to present it to North America and start the conversation about the pathways to turn yourself into a functioning, productive well adjusted part of your society, rather than giving into the self pity and victimhood.

Tena Štivičić (WRITER):

Tena Štivičić is a Croatian actress, playwright, screenwriter and columnist. Her award winning plays include *The Two of Us*, *Can't Escape Sundays*, *Fragile!*, *Three Winters*, *Fireflies* and *Invisible*.

Tena graduated from the Academy of Dramatic Art in Croatia and obtained a Masters degree at the University of London. After graduating, Tena won a six month writing residency in Switzerland.

The Two of Us was first produced in 2003 at the legendary Atelje 212 Theatre in Belgrade. The hit production won the Audience Award at Croatia's Marulićevi dani Festival. There have been several successful productions of *The Two of Us*, including one staged at the National Theatre in Zagreb. This production will mark its North American debut and be the first outside of Europe!

Tena's first play was the award winning *Can't Escape Sundays*, produced at Zagreb's internationally renowned ZKM Theatre. Inspired by her first year living in London, Tena wrote the acclaimed play *Fragile!* which was voted best production of the year, receiving critical acclaim around Europe. Tena was nominated as one of the fifty most promising young writers in Great Britain. *Fragile!* enjoyed further productions at London's Arcola Theatre, European Play and Innovations Award at Heidelberg Stückemarkt in Germany in 2008.

Three Winters, tracing the journey of a Zagreb family across four generations and through the turbulent twentieth century Croatia opened to great critical acclaim at the National Theatre in London in 2014. It was directed by Howard Davies and won the prestigious Susan Smith Blackburn Prize for 2015.

Tena lives with her daughter and husband, actor Douglas Henshall.

Beatriz Yuste (CAST - ANJA):

Beatriz Yuste is an actress and writer living in Toronto.

Originally from Moncton, N.B., she graduated from Dalhousie University with a B.A. in Political Science and Languages. She then went on to work a summer job at CBC Radio in Moncton, before deciding to pursue comedy and acting in Toronto.

Beatriz graduated from the Second City Conservatory in Toronto, and studied Meisner technique extensively with the late Jacqueline McClintock. She also studied at the Mallorca Film Academy in Spain and with John Strasberg in New York.

Her theatre credits include her one-woman show *The Naked Opera* at the Fringe in 2002, *The Bride of Sasquatch* by James Gilpin in Fringe 2007, and *France*, and the *Niqab* by Sean Dixon in Summerworks 2012, which won Best Ensemble.

Her film credits include starring in Anita Doron's dreamy, guerrilla feature film *Mystico Fantástico*, which was filmed on the Beach of the Dead in Mexico. It premiered at the 2014 Cinequest film festival in San José, California, to rave reviews.

She has also appeared in John Madden's *Killshot*, Bruce McDonald's *Pontypool*, Disney's *How to Build a Better Boy*.

Among her many TV credits, her most recent ones include HULU's *Handmaid's Tale*, Netflix's *Damnation* and CTV's *Designated Survivor*.

Trivia: Beatriz is trilingual and worked as a tour guide in Peru in 1995, resulting in having hiked the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu 20 times.

Shannon Currie (CAST - LENA):

Shannon Currie is a Toronto-based actor and founder of the HotKnives Collective.

Notable Credits: *Troilus and Cressida* (Secret Shakespeare), *The Seagull* (Segal Centre), *Iceland* (Why Not Theatre) Blithe Spirit, *Waiting for the Parade* (Thousand Islands Playhouse/Western Canada Theatre), *Dear Johnny Deere* (Thousand Islands Playhouse), *It's A Wonderful Life*, *Boeing Boeing*, *The Mousetrap* (Theatre Aquarius), *Romeo & Juliet*, *The Comedy of Errors* (St.Lawrence Shakespeare Festival).

Film and television credits include: *Royal Blood* (Resolve Films) *Murdoch Mysteries* (CBC/UKTV), *Saving Hope* (CTV), *Warehouse 13* (SyFy).

Shannon is a graduate of the National Theatre School and holds a B.F.A. from the University of Windsor. She has also been recognized with a Capital Critics Award Nomination for Best Actress (Blithe Spirit).

Deborah Grover (CAST - SONJA):

Deborah Grover was raised in Ottawa and studied theatre at Ryerson in Toronto and at the Banff School of Fine Arts.

She has performed in theatres across the country, including Theatre New Brunswick, Canadian Stage, Théâtre Français de Toronto, Theatre Aquarius, The Grand Theatre, Sudbury Theatre Centre, Manitoba Theatre Centre and Prairie Theatre Exchange.

She has extensive film and TV credits. Most recently, she was in TIFF favourite *Don't Talk to Irene*, and plays Josephine Barry in the award-winning TV series *Anne*.

She's a Dora Mavor Moore nominee and an ACTRA Outstanding Performance nominee.

Trivia: She played the role of Prosecutor Elaine Jeffers in 77 episodes of Night Heat between 1985 and 1989.