

Awe! Theatre
82 Wardell Street
Toronto ON, M4M 2L6

TORONTO
FRINGE

FESTIVAL

War Dog: A boy, his dog and his father; A healing journey of loyalty and love.

War Dog is an intimate personal story that plunges audiences into the world of a Canadian Vietnam veteran, peacekeeper and spy told from the evolving perspective of his son, solo performer Mike D. Smith. It explores male identity, the strong bond between boy and his dog, the tragedy of loss, the ravages of generational trauma and ultimately forgiveness and healing.

This is an original work premiering at the Soulpepper Theatre's RBC Finance Theatre on June 30th. The writer performer, Mike D. Smith has wanted to tell this story for long time but immediate inspiration for the play came from his recent performance playing Scrooge for King City Theatre's of A Christmas Carol. The ghosts of the past, and the spirit of love inspired by his beloved childhood pet lead him from trauma to triumph and redemption.

The writing process consisted of creating a story outline then recording an improvised performance using voice to text, then editing the text followed. This process was repeated until the text was ready for rehearsals and the creative input from the director Janice Israeloff and projections designer Winnie Liao. The show is performed on a bare stage with projected images and music.

About Awe Theatre

Founded by Mike D. Smith and Janice Israeloff in 2003. After 15yrs of acting in other people's plays they decided to write and produce original content. Shows include Sugar and Spice and Everything Nasty (Toronto Fringe) Barkley's Park (Toronto Fringe), One Flew Over the Cubicle (Hamilton Fringe, Montreal Fringe, Edmonton Fringe, Regina Fringe), Martin Seligman is a Douchebag (Toronto Shed Show Fringe *sold out*), Staying Alive (Ottawa Fringe), Cringe Mom (Hamilton Fringe)

About Mike D. Smith

Mike returned to acting in 2019 after working in the financial industry for 25 years. He has been working steadily in theatre, film and TV. In 2025 played Scrooge in King City Theatre and the character of Roger in Elderberry Theatre's production of Long Live The Rainbow. He was appeared in Crave comedy show The Office Movers and the Dessert Presents: St. Bulgies Day. He was a lead actor in an award winning arthouse film Tempest Me directed by Wes Rickert and was also seen in Middle Life a feature film directed by Pavan Moondi. As a director and writer he collaborated with Janice Israeloff on all of her one person shows and all of AWE! Theatre's past productions.

About Janice Israeloff

Janice is an actor, director and award winning stand up comic. She toured her hit solo show One Flew Over the Cubicle, across Canada and sold out Martin Seligman is a Douchebag in Toronto. She has acted in over 7 one woman shows which she wrote and too many plays to mention here including dinner theatre, touring children's theatre, and independent plays. She taught acting and ran a drama school from 2000 to 2003 where she directed Midsummer Nights Dream, Barkley's Park, and coaches' actors of all ages. She has acted in television and film in numerous independent films and most recently was seen in Twisted Metal on Prime, Hot Frosty on Netflix, and continues to work as an actor in commercials, and television and film.

About Winnie Liao

Winnie is a Taiwanese actor, comedian, educator, and podcast producer based in Toronto. She moved to Canada to pursue a career in film, television, and comedy after spending over a

decade performing in touring children's theatre productions across Taiwan. Along the way, she has taught drama, public speaking, and voice acting, and has worked with students and performers across Taiwan. She is also the creator and host of the podcast *English, Listen Up!* and the producer of the stand-up comedy show *Life Sucks*. A graduate of Seneca College's Acting for Camera & Voice program, Winnie can often be found performing, studying, or enthusiastically nerding out about stand-up, clown, sketch, improv, and live theatre somewhere in Toronto.

War Dog is will take you on an emotional journey that touches upon childhood trauma as well as the trauma of war and it's impact on military families. It is a story of redemption and the healing power of love.

Awe! Theatre

presented as part of the 2026 Toronto Fringe Festival

written by Mike D. Smith

directed by Janice Israeloff

starring Mike D. Smith

sound designer: Winnie Liao

projections designer: Winnie Liao

stage manager: Winnie Liao

Performances at Soulpepper RBC Finance:

June 30, 2:00 pm

July 3, 8:15 pm

July 5, 12:30 pm

July 6, 3:00 pm

July 7, 6:30 pm

July 9, 6:30 pm

July 11, 10:15 pm

July 12, 5:30 pm

More information and tickets available as of June 3, 2026

<https://www.fringetoronto.com/fringe/show/war-dog>

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