

NOWADAYS THEATRE Company

NOWADAYS THEATRE is a Toronto-based not-for-profit company founded by Aida Keykhaii and Mohammad Yaghoubi in 2016. It is a highly acclaimed theatre company with over a decade of background in Iran with its Farsi name: 'In-Rooz-Ha', which means: 'Nowadays'.

Mohammad Yaghoubi is a multi-award-winning playwright, director, screenwriter, and theatre instructor who established himself in Tehran (Iran). Aida Keykhaii is an established artist in Iran with near two decades of work as an actor, director, producer, and theatre instructor.

NOWADAYS THEATRE prioritizes plays that address socially relevant topics and has been presenting works that provoke public discourse and promote community engagement. In the interest of inspiring cross-cultural dialogue and supporting cultural diversity in Canada, NOWADAYS THEATRE translates Canadian plays into Farsi and Iranian plays into English. Our works have been performed in Australia, Belgium, France, Germany, Kurdistan, Russia, Sweden, The Czech Republic, Turkey, and the USA.

NOWADAYS THEATRE aims to be recognized as a company that celebrates cultural diversity. We are committed to our path: to engage, inspire, entertain and challenge the audience with innovative and entertaining productions in both traditional and non-traditional playing spaces, using contemporary Canadian plays, provocative plays written by playwrights from other cultures and countries, and new interpretations of classic texts.

NOWADAYS THEATRE was the 2018-19 RBC Emerging Company in Residence at Canadian stage, where, with the generous support of the Canada Council for the Arts and Toronto Arts Council, we presented 'The Only Possible Way' written and directed by Mohammad Yaghoubi at Upstairs Theatre on March 29-31, 2019. The cast was comprised of Iranian newcomers to Canada and refugees.

In November 2019, NOWADAYS THEATRE remounted 'Swim Team', directed by Aida Keykhaii that was performed at Theatre Centre, Toronto, with the generous support of Toronto Arts Council, Ontario Arts Council, and Canada Council for the Arts. 'Swim Team', was premiered at the 2018 SummerWorks Lab, and it was in NOW's annual list of 'the best of the Fest' for Outstanding Production, Outstanding ensembles, Outstanding Direction, and Outstanding design. 'Swim Team' was also mentioned in the list of Canadian Stage Award for Direction as 'Honourable Mentions'.

The last in-person theatre project before the pandemic, presented by NOWADAYS THEATRE with the generous support of Canada Council for the Arts, was the celebrated Iranian play 'Winter of 88' written and directed by Mohammad Yaghoubi at the 2020 Next Stage Theatre Festival, Toronto. The production received amazing reviews, including 5Ns review from Now Magazine.

In May 2021, with the support of the Canada Council for the Arts, NOWADAYS THEATRE presented the online English premier of the Iranian recognized play 'From The Basement To The Roof' directed by Aida Keykhaii.

Our recent project was an immersive 360-degree video-theatre project of the celebrated Iranian play 'Dance of Torn Papers' streamed at the Toronto Fringe Festival 2021. The project was performed with two different teams in two languages: English and Farsi, to offer the audience two different choices to watch.

Mohammad Yaghoubi - Playwright and Director (he/him)

Born and raised in Iran, Mohammad Yaghoubi is a playwright, director, screenwriter, theatre instructor, Co-founder, and co-artistic director of Toronto-based NOWADAYS THEATRE company.

His plays have been translated and produced in Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Kurdistan, Russia, Sweden, The Czech Republic, Turkey, and the USA. His highly acclaimed play 'A Moment of Silence' has been anthologized as one of the new Iranian plays published by Aurora Metro (United Kingdom) in 2021.

With over a decade of experience in theatre, Mohammad moved to Canada in 2015. After founding NOWADAYS THEATRE company in 2016, Mohammad Yaghoubi staged the English premiere of his play 'A Moment of Silence' at the 2016 SummerWorks Performance Festival. 'A Moment of Silence' has been anthologized as one of the new Iranian plays published by Aurora Metro (United Kingdom).

In 2018, with the support of the Canada Council for the Arts, he wrote his first play in English 'Persimmon'. Toronto Arts Council has also awarded him a grant in 2020 to write his second play in English titled 'Earworm'.

Recent Credits: 'Dance of Torn Papers' (Toronto Fringe Theatre Festival, 2021), 'Winter of 88' (Next Stage Theatre Festival, 2020, Factory Theatre MainSpace), The Only Possible Way (Canadian Stage, 2019).

Selected Awards: The Promising Pen Prize from Cahoots Theatre for his play 'Persimmon', 2021; The National Theatre Critics Society Award for Outstanding Play - Drought & Lies; First place winner of the Iranian Playwrights Society and third place winner of the New Play Contest in Toronto's Fringe Festival - 2016 for Outstanding Writing - A Moment of Silence; The National Theatre Critics Society Award for Outstanding Writing – Geraniums; The National Theatre Critics Society Award for Outstanding Direction- Dance of Torn Papers and The Fadjr Theatre Festival Award for Outstanding Direction and Writing - Winter of 88.

Aida Keykhaii - Actor (she/her)

Aida Keykhaii is an Canadian-Iranian Actor and Director, producer, theatre instructor, with over a decade's experience in the Industry.

She holds an M.A in Play Directing and a B.A in Acting from the University of Tehran. She is the co-founder of Nowadays Theatre, which was the 2018-19 Company in Residency at Canadian Stage, where she made her Canadian acting debut in 'The Only Possible Way'. She performed in English premier of 'Winter of 88' at the Next Stage Theatre Festival, 2020. She recently directed the English premier of From The Basement To The Roof on Zoom and had a main role in the project. Her most recent Project is at The Toronto Fringe Festival 2021.

Select Credits: Drought and Lies, Proof, Dinner with Friends, Sleeping in an Empty Cup, The Pillowman, Iceland, Swim Team, The Only Possible Way, Winter of 88 and From The Basement To The Roof.

Select Awards and Honours: The Iran Festival of University Theatre for Outstanding acting, Olive; The International Iran Festival of University Theatre award for Outstanding directing, Goodbye; Honourable Mention from Canadian Stage in Direction and NOW's annual list of the "Best of the Fest" for Outstanding Production, Ensemble, and Direction, Swim Team.

Neta J. Rose - Actor (they/them)

Neta J. Rose (they/them) is a proud Ashkenazi Jewish queer non-binary redheaded tomboy-femme geek. They are an actor, visual artist, poet, and theatre creator based in Toronto/Tkaronto, and are a founding member of Create! Youth Theatre, in Scotland, now entering its 13th year. Upon returning to Canada, they toured Ontario researching, creating, and performing site-specific community-engaged multimedia works and producing documentaries as part of their tenure with FiXT POiNT Arts & Media.

Prior to COVID, Neta was last seen onstage in Darrah Teitel's The Omnibus Bill (TACTICS), and in Odyssey Theatre's The Bonds of Interest. Other theatre credits include The Penelopiad (Hart House), We The Men - New York cast (Soulo), Midsummer Night's Dream and Twelfth Night (Foxtail - UK).

Neta is a frequent audiobook narrator and voice actor appearing in radio plays. Most recently they narrated the novel What's The Matter With Mary Jane, a new mystery by Candace Jane Dorsey from ECW Press, and featured in the "podplay" production of Henry G20: an ambitious new work by Christine Brubaker, set in Toronto during the G20 protests and mass arrests of 2010. Henry G20 had its world premiere as part of the Luminato Toronto International Festival of the Arts.

You might also have spotted them lately on-screen, eating endless mozza sticks for Boston Pizza during Raptors' games. The life of an actor is never boring.

Siavash Shabanpour - Actor (he/him)

He was born in Tehran. He studied Theatre Studies at York University in Toronto and began a thriving career as a director and actor for the stage. His directing credits include 'Chekhov in Compliance' (2021), 'The Name(2019),The Question 1&2 (2019),The Case of Metranpazhem (2019), The Body of a Woman as a Battlefield in the Bosnian War (2018, Director),Chekhovnameh (2018, Director), The Cripple of Inishmaan (2017), The Monster (2017), Thirty Roubles for delicacy (2016),The Good Doctor (2015),Two Ducks In The Mist (2014), Horses at the Window (2012), When It All Falls Down (2011), and Apartment 812 (2008).He was an actor of workshop presentation of Arush (2006),Home (2007), and Conference of the Birds (2011) all Directed by Soheil Parsa, Doctor Faustus (2011, Dir : Aleksandar Lukac), Pillowman (2016, Dir: Mohammad Yaghoubi and Aida Keykhaii).

Aylin Oyan Salahshoor - actor (she/her)

She is currently studying theatre at University of Toronto. She has performed in a number of theatre productions in Toronto. Her most recent performances are Swim Team (Theatre Centre – November 8 to November 17, 2019) and The Sisyphus and Death (Alumnae theatre – May 2019). She has been actively pursuing her love for theatre in Canada- Toronto since 2017, and has attended several acting workshops in the recent years including Mohammad Yaghoubi and Aida Keykhaii's acting classes.

Over the last few years, she has appeared in the following performances: The Dance of Torn Papers (Dance Maker – November 2018) and The Only Possible Way (Ignatieff Theatre – June 2018).

Heart Of A Dog Names & Pronouns

Director/Playwright: **Mohammad Yaghoubi (he/him)**

Actors: **Melanie Grace (she/her), Siavash Shabanpour (he/him), Neta J. Rose (they/them), Aida Keykhaii (she/her), Aylin Oyan Salahshour (she/her), Yury Ruzhyev (he/him), Ali Ghorbanian (he/him)**

Stage Manager: **Laura Lakatosh (she/her)**

Assistant Director: **Mahsa Ershadifar (she/her)**

Lighting Design: **David DeGrow (he/him)**

Make-up Artist: **Roksana Razavi (she/her)**

Composer: **Farshad Fozooni (he/him)**

Poster: **Saman Farzaneh (he/him)**

Photographer: **Bahare Ahmadi (she/her)**

