

THE WORLD PREMIERE OF

HYPOTHETICAL BABY

A NEW PLAY WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY RACHEL CAIRNS
DIRECTED BY COURTNEY CH'NG LANCASTER



Presented by The Howland Company at Tarragon Theatre

HYPOTHETICAL BABY

Created and performed by **Rachel Cairns***

Directed by **Courtney Ch'ng Lancaster***

Production, Lighting, & Projection Designer **Julia Howman**

Production Stage Manager **Taylor Young**

Sound Designer **Cosette Pin**

Associate Technical Artist **Emily Jung**

Publicist **Katie Saunoris**

Performance time is approximately 75 minutes with no intermission.

* The participation of these Artists are arranged by permission of Canadian Actors' Equity Association under the provisions of the Dance•Opera•Theatre Policy.

Land Acknowledgement

We gather at the Tarragon Theatre to connect and collaborate on the territory of the Wendat, the Chippewa, the Six Nations of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and the Anishnabeg, including the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation who completed the negotiations on what is collectively referred to as the Toronto Purchase, now known as Treaty 13.

The Dish with One Spoon is a concept that predates European treaty-making and describes caring for the land and its resources so that everyone has what they need to survive. It's the Wampum Belt agreement between the Anishinaabek and Haudenosaunee Confederacy to peacefully share and protect the land to ensure a sustainable way of life. The stewardship inherent in this philosophy is a responsibility that extends to all other Indigenous Nations and settlers who call this area home and whose actions affect the environment.

Hypothetical Baby is a story about the decision to become a parent, or not, and the need for a fairer, more equitable society. Like theatre, stewardship is a social project that depends on communal cooperation and investment. As we embark upon our time together, we invite you to reflect on our relationship with the land and to each other, and the work required to co-create a world in which everyone's basic needs are met.

If you want to support Indigenous-led advocacy for reproductive justice in Tkarón:to, we suggest donating to **The Native Women's Resource Centre**, the **Native Youth Sexual Health Network**, and the **Call Auntie Clinic**.

Playright's Note

“It’s news whenever a [person] has an abortion because [their] abortion has never been had before and won’t ever be had again. I’m saying this as someone who’s had an abortion but hasn’t had anyone else’s.”

— Leslie Jamison, *The Empathy Exams*

“Why do you need to tell everyone about your abortion, Rachel?” is the most frequent question lobbed at me by my inner critic. Maybe you’re wondering why too. My critic is challenging me to justify the act of sharing this story, because my critic is also the part of me that feels a responsibility to represent the entire social spectrum of abortion in relation to the human condition... which is... an impossible task.

It’s impossible because abortion exists at the nexus of some of the most foundational and divisive elements of culture: politics, religion, money and sex. This is fertile territory. At the same time, I had a pretty basic, run-of-the-mill abortion. The tension between these extremities — the ordinary and the extraordinary — prompted me to write about my experience.

Today, we’re talking about abortion more than ever, but it’s usually in relation to the backsliding of reproductive rights in the States and the falsely constructed moral binary weaponized to erode gender equality and bodily autonomy. And while we need to be acutely aware of the rise of anti-human rights agendas, far less airtime is given to the potent cocktail of choices that determine people’s reproductive decisions and often implicate every aspect of our identities and position in society.

I strove not to have feelings about my abortion. Generations of people fought hard for my right to access this healthcare in a way that is profoundly different from what you'll learn about my mom's experiences of "choice". I also didn't decide to get pregnant, so in that sense, this was fairly straightforward: just-a-ball-of-cells kind of abortion. A simple 'yes' or 'no' question: to be or not to be a parent.

But eventually, I had to concede I had many feelings about my abortion, because it was a choice in conversation with other choices about my finances, career, location, relationships, goals and dreams, and intrinsically informed by the constellation of my gender, race, class and ability. Considering how complex and common abortion is — 1 in 3 Canadians who can become pregnant will access it in their lifetime — you'd think we'd have more stories about it. This show is mine.



Rachel Cairns* - Writer/Performer

Rachel Cairns has acted in (and occasionally directed) other people's plays for officially a decade, but this is the first time she is performing one that she has written. Alongside her work as a performer on some of Toronto's mainstages (Tarragon, CanStage, Crow's Theatre), Rachel has written and directed a library of digital content, like her web series Mom & Me which has been viewed over 7 million times on YouTube. Rachel is also the creator and host of Aborsh, a podcast that examines why abortion is still such a "big deal", what "choice" really means and looks like, and why that answer is different for different people. Season one was released last summer and was honoured by Planned Parenthood Toronto with a Choice Award for excellence in sexual and reproductive health and rights advocacy. In addition to her various creative endeavours, Rachel is a professor at the George Brown School of Media and Performing Arts and she also directs audiobooks for Penguin Random House Canada. Rachel lives in Toronto but also lives with the perpetual existential dilemma of whether she should move back to the West Coast, where she grew up.



Courtney Ch'ng Lancaster* - Director

Courtney Ch'ng Lancaster is an artistic leader of the Toronto-based theatre collective The Howland Company and a sessional assistant professor at York University's School of Art, Music, Design and Performance. She was recently the Assistant Artistic Director at Tarragon Theatre, and is a former resident artist with Soulpepper Theatre. Courtney has performed with the Shaw Festival, Soulpepper,

Public Recordings, Canadian Stage, Citadel Theatre, Blue Bridge Repertory, Cahoots, Native Earth Performing Arts, Tarragon and beyond, winning several best ensemble Dora Awards, and twice being named to Now Magazine's Top Ten Theatre Artists list. Her live theatre direction includes *The Wolves* (Howland/Crows - Outstanding Ensemble Win, Toronto Theatre Critics Awards, Outstanding Production - MyEntWorld Critic's Pick Awards), *Cannibal* (Next Stage Festival), *52 Pick-Up* (Howland - Best of Fringe), *Gray* (Inamorata), *Three Women of Swatow* (Tarragon - Dora Award Nomination for Outstanding Direction), *The Home Project*, (Howland Company/Native Earth/Soulpepper - received 5 Dora Award nominations), *Casimir and Caroline* (Sheridan College) and *Everybody* (York University), and the radio plays *Three Women of Swatow* for CBC PlayMe, *7 Stories*, *Shape of a Girl and Democracy* (Expect Theatre/Tarragon), and *Ins Choi's Casting* at Factory Theatre. Courtney is a co-creator of *Stillwater School for Mosquitos*, a musical adventure podcast for children. She can be seen on screen in *Love et Lajoie*, *Hudson and Rex*, *SurrealEstate*, *Transplant*, *Murdoch Mysteries* and many other shows and movies, including the upcoming feature *Silent Planet*.



Julia Howman - Production, Lighting, & Projection Designer

Julia Howman is a multidisciplinary designer and production manager. Julia is a settler on Turtle Island, was raised in Doha, Qatar, and currently resides in Tkaronto. Recent Credits Include: Projection Designer, *Access Me* (Boys in Chairs Collective, 2023); Production Design and Production Management, *The Chemical Valley Project* (Broadleaf Creations with The Great

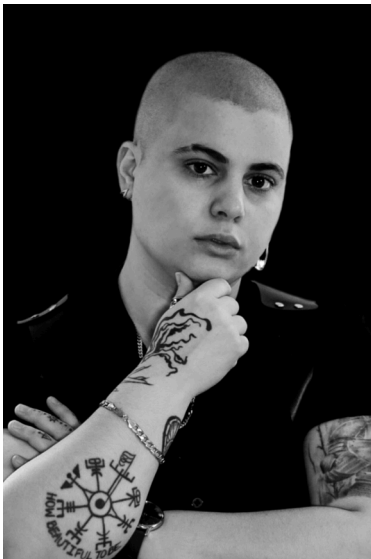
Canadian Theatre Company, 2022); Assistant Projection Design, *The Golden Record v*(Soulpepper Theatre Company, 2022); Projection Design, *Distant Early Warning* (Pearle Harbour/Buddies in Bad Times Theatre,

2022); Production Management, An IMM-Permanent Resident (Nautanki Bazaar/Why Not Theatre, 2022), Production Design and Production Management, The Chemical Valley Project (Broadleaf Creations with Theatre Passe Muraille, 2019)



Taylor Young - Production Stage Manager

Taylor Young is a Toronto-based Stage Manager and Production Manager, originally from Calgary, AB. They hold a BFA from TMU in Performance Production. They have worked with companies such as Dance Made in Canada, Pencil Kit Productions, Kaeja d'Dance, Nova Dance, ProArteDanza, Citadel + Compagnie, DopoLavoro Teatrale, Toronto Dance Theatre, Rock Bottom Movement, and Fall for Dance North.



Cosette Pin - Sound Designer

COSETTE PIN (he/she/they) is an international, multi-disciplinary designer based out of New York City. They design lighting, sound, projections, and sets for theatre and live performance across Canada, the United States, and the UK. A graduate of the National Theatre School of Canada in Production Design and Technical Arts, they are excited to be back in their home country working with such an incredible team of artists. Recent design credits include Box 4901 (Timeshare Productions, Lighting Design), Orestes (Oxford University Classics, Video Design), Into the Woods (Secret Theatre, Set Design), The Winter's Tale (New York Shakespeare Exchange, Sound Design/Composition), Children of Fire (Nightwood Theatre, Sound

Design), The Gambler (Exponential Theatre Festival, Set and Projection Design), House of Velour (Resident Production Designer), Stranger Sings (Off Broadway, Sound Design), Third Law (WWTNS? Sound and Projection Design), Sleeper (The Tank, Scenic Design), Traces (WWTNS? Projection Design), Their work is available at: www.cosettepin.com



Emily Jung - Associate Technical Artist

Emily Jung is an interdisciplinary arts worker. She was a participant in Light, Form + Stage Projection Mapping Workshop & Showing at SummerWorks Festival, and was a Projection Designer for Between a Wok and a Hot Pot at Cahoots Theatre. In 2023 Summer she was invited to rice & beans theatre's Polyphonic Translation Residency to develop a Korean-English Play. She works at The Theatre Centre as Director of Communications. She is the co-founder of the conceptual artsworker collective 'Labour in the Arts'. Her essay, Korean Seniors Don't Care for Bingo, is available online at Choa Magazine.



Katie Saunoris - Publicist, KSPR

Katie is the founder of KSPR, and a Toronto-based publicist and communication strategist with over 15 years of experience in arts, culture and social justice PR. She has worked for major festivals including the Stratford Festival, the Toronto International Film Festival, Luminato Festival, and the Toronto International Festival of Authors. Central clients of KSPR include the Indigenous Voices Awards, the

Jon Kaplan Legacy Fund, Necessary Angel Theatre Company, the Capitol Theatre Port Hope, and ARC theatre company. She is a Board Member of the Paprika Theatre Festival.

Hypothetical Baby has been produced with the support of the City of Toronto through the Toronto Arts Council, the Ontario Arts Council, the Government of Ontario, and the Canada Council for the Arts. We'd also like to thank the Cayle Chernin Awards for nurturing the development of this play.

If you enjoy the show, tune into the **Aborsh podcast** to learn more about abortion in Canada.

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