

**Playwright**  
**RAHUL VARMA**

**Director**  
**MURDOCH SCHON**



**Teesri Duniya**

**T H E A T R E**

*Presents*

# **COUNTER OFFENCE**

**MARCH 15-APRIL 2, 2023**

Segal Centre for Performing Arts



# LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

## **Our Land Acknowledgment Is Our Pledge To Act Upon**

Teesri Duniya Theatre acknowledges that the land it operates on was founded as and continues to be a colonial-settler state. We recognize that this sacred land is the unceded land of the Indigenous people, and we gratefully acknowledge them as this land's past, present and future stewards.

Teesri Duniya Theatre is dedicated to educating itself and engaging audiences about the colonial forces and processes shaping our present-day life. We believe in decolonization to restore justice and build a just relationship between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples. We commit to using the power of theatre to represent and support reconciliation and reparation, recognize indigenous nationhood, reform the state constitution, and build an equal relationship across all people.

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**This performance is approximately 90 minutes  
no intermission**

### **CONTENT WARNING:**

**14+, Show contains violence, coarse language, and themes of  
domestic abuse and police brutality**

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

What first drew me to *Counter Offence* is that it is not a single-issue play. One might describe it as about the justice system or racial inequity, or intimate partner violence, but to reduce it to a single issue is to shrink the enormity of what Rahul's work is grappling with. These are complicated people who are making difficult decisions motivated by money, power, fear, and fury. Inside each of them are contradictions and paradoxes. *Counter Offence* asks us to question who defines justice, and what it looks like for different people?

As we worked I became interested in how physical theatre, choreography, and gesture could lift Rahul's text into a place of metaphor. The court addresses became opportunities for exploring each character's relationship to their perceived truth. Juxtaposing each speech with poetic movement revealed to us a world rich in emotional unspoken landscapes.

Piecing together fragmented testimony the jury is asked to make sense of the events leading up to the death of Shapoor Farhadi. Are they getting the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

I'll let you be the judge of that.

**Murdoch**

## PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTE

**When a Crime against a Woman is turned into a Crime against a Race**

In a multicultural country like Canada, critical social issues are shaped by one another. Struggle for equity, inclusion, and identity exist at the intersection of race, gender and class differences, which often compete. The non-monolithic nature of multiculturalism offers a framework to negotiate differences and competing truths rather than prioritize one over another.

*Counter Offence* addresses the struggle for justice at the intersection of race, gender and culture simultaneously. In this play, I examine the thorny question of how must a multicultural society address cultural differences that often compete and might have coercive effects. *Counter Offence* examines the complexities of competing struggles, i.e. violence against women and race. The play examines what happens when a white police officer arrests a racialized wife beater, especially if the battered wife is of the same race and culture as the batterer. Should the fear of racism be accepted as an excuse for a white police officer who fails to do his duty?

I thank director Murdoch Schon for leading a multicultural team of actors and designers. I thank Eric Micha Holmes for his profound, culturally sensitive upgrading of the play and my endless thanks to the Teesri Duniya Theatre staff and the Board.

I invite audiences to grapple with the idea of ending both the violence against women and racism simultaneously.

**Rahul Varma**

# CAST

Arash Ebrahimi.....	Shapoor Farhadi
Oliver Price.....	Guy Gaillard
Andrew Joseph Richardson.....	Murad Rizvi
Howard Rosenstein.....	Gilles Prougault
Ambica Sharma.....	Shafiq Rizvi
Amanda Silveira.....	Shazia Rizvi
Sophie-Thérèse Stone-Richards.....	Clarinda Keith
Aladeen Tawfeek.....	Moolchand Misra

# PRODUCTION TEAM

Murdoch Schon.....	Director
Rahul Varma.....	Playwright
Ava Bishop.....	Stage Manager
Marie-Ève Fortier.....	Set Designer
Diana Uribe.....	Costume Designer
Aurora Torok.....	Lighting Designer
Violette Kay.....	Sound Designer
Shopdogs MTL.....	Production Manager/Technical Director
Summer Mahmud.....	Assistant Director
Emmanuel Dagenais.....	Apprentice Stage Manager
Fred Blais.....	Design Assistant
Eric Micha Holmes.....	Intercultural Dramaturg
Anita Nittoly.....	Fight Choreographer
Julia Lenardon.....	Accent Coach
Janis Kirshner.....	Publicist
Shanthony Exum.....	Graphic Designer
Jules Nerestant.....	Teesri Trailer Videographer

# CAST



## **Arash Ebrahimi - Shapoor Farhadi**



Arash Ebrahimi (He/Him) is a Montreal based actor, singer and an upcoming playwright. He is an alumnus of the theatre program at Dawson College (Dome), where he was the recipient of the Victor Knight Memorial Scholarship for Perseverance. Arash was exposed to theatre at a very young age in Iran. However, he soon faced the political obstacles of becoming a performer in his country. At the age of 17, He made the tough decision of leaving his family behind to pursue his passion. He found the Montreal theatre community very welcoming and it did not take him long to feel home. Selected performance credits include Fernan Gomez in *After Fuenteovejuna*, Menachem in *Our Class*, and Oberon in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

## **Oliver Price - Guy Gaillard**

Oliver Price (He/him) is a graduate of Concordia University's Theatre Performance Program. Acting credits include; Martin/Fenn in Talking Dog's production of *The History of Sexuality*, himself in *Incognito* by project x performance, William Carlisle in Beautiful City Theatre's production of *Punk Rock*, as well as Francis in *On Life And Living* a new documentary play based on interviews of past and present AIDS Community Care Montreal members, staff and volunteers. Oliver was nominated for a Montreal Theatre Award for his performance of Fred Herko in *The Life and Death of Fred Herko*.



## **Andrew Joseph Richardson - Murad Rizvi/Fight Captain**

Andrew Joseph Richardson (He/him) is an actor, director, dramaturg and dad originally from amiskwacî-wâskahikan (aka Edmonton). In Tkaronto, A.J. was a Co-Founder of Shakespeare in the Ruff, and also worked in numerous capacities with Dauntless City Theatre, Spur-of-the-Moment Shakespeare Collective, Shakespeare BASH'd, and Shakespeare in Action. Now in his third year in tiotia:ke, he has been working with Repercussion Theatre (*All Shall Be Well* & *Summer of Sonnets*), Playwrights Workshop Montreal (New Stories Project), and the National Theatre School of Canada (Public Classes). A.J. is a graduate of the Acting Program at NTS.



## **Howard Rosenstein - Gilles Prougault**

Howard (He/him) has played with Teesri in several productions dating back to *Reading Hebron* (2000) and is probably best known for his work as an actor with Infitheatre and tours of *Kafka's Ape*. He is excited to be a part of this company of artists and especially happy to work with Murdoch Schon in their first production together. Please enjoy the show.

## **Ambica Sharma - Shafiq Rizvi**

Ambica Sharma (She/her) is a Montreal based performer, actor, dancer, poet, curator and a broadcaster. Her poems have featured in an anthology of Canadian Hindi Poets Camp; a film. Her keen interest in performance poetry has led her to perform at multiple platforms in North America. She has played lead roles with Theatre New Brunswick and her film credits include a French production VFC. Using her poems, she developed a Dance Theatre piece with Teesri Duniya Theatre in 2021. She is the curator and director for the NexGen Poetry Festival, Montreal. She choreographs and performs Indian dance forms through her dance group in Montreal. As a passionate broadcaster, she hosts a daily live show with Radio Humsafar Montreal; weekend shows with CKUT, McGill.



## **Amanda Silveira - Shazia Rizvi**

Amanda (she/her) is thrilled to once again be working with Teesri Duniya Theatre. She was last featured in their production of *Bhopal*. Other theatre credits include *The Domestic Crusaders* (Silk Road Institute), and *You Will Remember Me* (Centaur Theatre). Film credits include *The Hummingbird Project* (Item 7), *Mother!* (Paramount), and *Touched* (KRH Films). When she is not acting, Amanda develops team-building workshops for various organizations. Requests can be made at [thirdthoughtworkshops@gmail.com](mailto:thirdthoughtworkshops@gmail.com)



## **Sophie-Thérèse Stone-Richards - Clarinda Keith**

Sophie-Thérèse Stone-Richards (She/her) is a bilingual, biracial and multicultural performer & theatre artist and a graduate of Concordia University's Theatre Performance BFA (Fine Arts Valedictorian, Summer 2018). In 2019, she was part of PWM's *Young Creators Unit* cohort. Recent appearances and collaborations include performing in and co-creating Boulouki Theatre's *the future is another country* at M.A.I. (2021), acting in and co-directing Amy Berryman's short play *Winner* (and its French translation *Gagner*) at the Festival *tout' tout court* (2020) and performing in *Hooks and Crooks' Tomorrow* at Centaur Theatre's 2020 Wildside Festival. Sophie-Thérèse is driven to making theatre she cares about and can connect to others with. She is happy and grateful to perform in her debut with Teesri Duniya Theatre this season.



## **Aladeen Tawfeek - Moolchand Misra**

Born in Geneva and raised in Cairo, Aladeen (he/him) has called Montreal his home for the past 26 years. He's a trilingual multi-disciplinary actor, writer, and director whose work has spanned theatre, film, and tv over the last decade. He played Wazzan in the English world premiere of Wajdi Mouawad's *Birds of a Kind* at the Stratford Festival. His latest short film *'Simo'* won best Canadian Short @TIFF and is currently selected in film festivals around the world including Sundance and Berlin.



# PRODUCTION TEAM



## **Murdoch Schon - Director**



Murdoch Schon (they/them) is a queer, nonbinary director, and digital innovator. Born and raised in Treaty One Territory (Winnipeg), they have been involved in the Tiohtià:ke (Montreal) English theatre scene for almost a decade. As a multidisciplinary theatre maker they use puppetry, movement and technology to build unique and immersive worlds.

Murdoch is fascinated by provocation, vulnerability, and the role of risk and failure in art making. They believe that theatre rises to its true power through the practices of ritual liminality, community and imagination. Murdoch insist on the wondrous nature of theatre as a transformative space where rulers fail, heroes rise and monsters seem more familiar than angels.

Murdoch is a graduate of the National Theatre School Directing Program, and has a BFA, Specialization in Theatre and Development, from Concordia University.

## **Rahul Varma - Playwright**

Rahul Varma (he/him) is a playwright, an activist and the Artistic Director of Teesri Duniya Theatre (Hindustani for 'Third World'), a company he co-founded in 1981. In 1998, he co-founded the publication *alt.theatre: cultural diversity and the stage*, Canada's only professional journal examining intersections between politics, cultural plurality, social activism and the stage. Born in India, Varma writes in both Hindi and English, a language he acquired as an adult. Later plays include *Counter Offence*, *State of Denial*, *Bhopal* and *Truth and Treason*. Varma's plays have been translated into French, Italian, Hindi and Punjabi.



## **Ava Bishop - Stage Manager**



Ava Bishop (she/her) is an emerging stage manager from Calgary, Alberta. She has worked with many organisations, including the Segal Centre for Performing Arts, Talisman Theatre, Caravan Farm Theatre, and more. Ava is eager to work on engaging and innovative theatre pieces throughout Canada, and is excited to be part of the rich Montreal theatre scene. This is her debut with Teesri Duniya Theatre. Selected Stage Management Credits: *Wildfire* (Talisman Theatre), *Dracula: A Comedy of Terrors* (Segal Centre) *Pool No Water* (Persephone Productions), *Legacy* (Magjusjen Entertainment), *April Fools* (Segal Centre), *Jonathan: A Seagull Parable* (Surreal SoReal Theatre)



## Marie-Ève Fortier - Set Designer

Marie-Eve Fortier (she/her) holds a masters degree in Visual and Media Arts from UQAM (2009), where she focused on the materialization of textuality in installation. Her artistic practice led her to create spaces for the performing arts, guiding her to study scenography at the National Theatre School (2017). She now works as a set and props designer, illustrator and artist.



## Diana Uribe - Costume Designer

Diana (she/her) is a Colombian theatre designer, plastic artist, interior designer and an eternal child based in Montreal. She had worked for over 30 years in design and arts. In 2000 she moved to the United States where she created, along with 3 fellow Colombian artists, Interrorism, an art movement that denounced violence and injustice in her native country. In 2005, Diana moved to Canada and found her second home; In 2011, she graduated from the Theatre Design program at The National Theater School of Canada and launched a new career. Diana is interested in the way that theatre reaches people, in the world of possibilities, dreams and change that are inherent to the theatre practice. Her passion for space and its relationship to humans, and how this affects the body and mind have inspired her work, creating spaces and costumes that evoke a metaphor of our environment. As an artist and a human, she is aware of the imprint that we leave and the importance to engage in the exploration of ecological materials and renewed theatrical practices.



## Aurora Torok - Lighting Designer

Aurora Torok (she/her) is a Montreal-based scenographer and technical director who engages in all areas of theatre design, but primarily lighting design. As a well-rounded theatre practitioner, she has designed for several different types of theatre, dance and live performance, and is always happily surprised by the challenges of each individual production. Aurora is a recent graduate of the National Theatre School of Canada in Production Design and Technical Arts, as well as from Concordia University with a BFA - Specialization in Design for the Theatre. Recent productions include: Heartbeat Reverie (YouTheatre, 2022 - META Nomination for Outstanding Contribution to Theatre) as Technical Director; Skydancers (A'nó:wara Dance Theatre, 2022-ongoing) as Lighting Director; Anima/Darkroom (Lucy M. May, 2021) as Touring Technical Director; Quatre-Quarts (Théâtre des Petites Lanternes, 2021) as Lighting Designer; TOMORROW (Hooks and Crooks, 2019-20) as Visual Production Designer.



## Violette Kay - Sound Designer

Violette (she/her) Kay is a sound designer, composer and multidisciplinary performer who studied acting at John Abbott College and violin performance at the Conservatoire de musique de Gatineau. She composed the scores for *Adoration* (Tantalus/Studio Porte Bleue), *A Joy that's Mine Alone* (Art Apart, National Theatre School of Canada), and most recently *From the Stars in the Sky to the Fish in the Sea* (Geordie Theatre) for which she received the META for Outstanding Emerging Artist - Production. Violette can usually be found behind a desk at Geordie Theatre, puppeteering various household objects, or improvising with her trusty loop pedal.



## **Shopdogs MTL - Production Manager/Technical Director**

Shopdogs Inc. provides professional solutions for film, live events, and theatre. They have proudly served designers, art directors, and technical teams in the Montréal community since 2019. For more information check out their website at [shopdogsmtl.com](http://shopdogsmtl.com)!



### **Summer Mahmud - Assistant Director**

Summer (she/they) is a Queer Pakistani immigrant director, writer, actor & musician. They are a recent graduate of McGill University, and an artistic associate at Teesri Duniya Theatre (Montreal), and Theatre Artaud (Toronto). Summer's process is centered around form, and the existential human conditions that connect us. Summer is interested in the here-ness and the now-ness of theatre. Summer is here. Summer is now. & Summer thanks you.

### **Emmanuel Dagenais - Apprentice Stage Manager**

Emmanuel Dagenais (they/them) is a recent graduate from Bishop's University as a Drama Major, as well as an apprentice member of ACTRA. During their last Academic year, they have played the role of Wadsworth in the Bishop's University production of *Clue!*, and were the president of the English Literature Club at Bishop's. They are currently working with Teesri Duniya Theatre as an Apprentice stage manager through the Katimavik FuturePerfect program. Originally from Sherbrooke, they now look forward to integrating the Montreal theatre scene as an Actor, as well as doing motion capture work within the videogame industry and others. Having physicality as a primary interest within their acting, they partake in activities such as Acro-Yoga, calisthenics and dance.



### **Fred Blais - Design Assistant**

Fred Blais (they/them) is working with Teesri Duniya Theatre as Design Assistant and Marketing Intern through the Katimavik FuturePerfect program. As a previous ALC: Languages student from CEGEP Edouard-Montpetit, they have extensive knowledge on how language and marketing work together to advocate for important social causes. This is their first experience in the domain of theatre and they are so excited to be in the team, aiding in both creative and administrative domains! They are also a recent alumni of the National Experience, Katimavik's main program.



## **Eric Micha Holmes - Intercultural Dramaturg**

Eric Micha Holmes (he/him) is a dramatist, educator, and dramaturg. Currently, he's teaching at the National Theatre School of Canada and Goddard College's MFA in Creative Writing Program. His work has been heard on Audible Inc. (*Rapture Season: From A Glacier We Watch The World Burn*), the BBC (*Care Inc.*), and seen at The National Black Theatre (*Mondo Tragic.*) The New Black Fest (*Blessèd Are The Meek*), New York Theatre Workshop ("Nimpsey Pink"), and Guild Hall (*Falls For Jodie*). Residencies and fellowships include the Djerassi Resident Artist Program, Dramatist Guild Fellowship, and Space At Ryder Farm. He is co-editor of *Decentered Playwriting: Alternative Techniques of the Stage*, a forthcoming collection of essays from Routledge press on the craft of intercultural playwriting.

## **Anita Nittoly - Fight Choreographer**

**Selected Fight Director and Sexual Choreographer credits:** *Fall on Your Knees* (Canstage); *Prodigal* (Crow's Theatre); *Trojan Girls and The Outhouse of Atreus* (Outside The March/Factory Theatre); *Our Place* (Cahoots/TPM); Full 2019 Season at The Stratford Festival; *Kitchen Radio, Stag & Doe*, Full 2018 Season at The Blyth Festival; *The Last Wife, The 39 Steps, Successions* (Centaur Theatre); *Whole World* (Carousel Players); *Don Quichotte, Die Walkure, Carmen* (Canadian Opera Company, Associate Fight Master).

**Coaching:** Stage Combat Instructor, Fight Director, and Sexual Choreographer (National Theatre School).

**Selected Stunt Performer/Stunt Actor credits:** *SEE, Star Trek: Discovery, Pretty Hard Cases, Titans, The Boys, Rabbit Hole, What We Do in the Shadows*, various Ubisoft motion capture productions. (she/her)



## **Julia Lenardon - Accent Coach**

**Selected Theatre coaching:** Canada: Segal Centre: *Under the Lintel, Indecent, The Angel and the Sparrow*. Centaur Theatre: *Kisses Deep, Good People, Intimate Apparel*. NAC: Gabriel Dumont's *Wild West*; World Tour for Yves Jacques: *The Other Side of the Moon/The Andersen Project*; Soulepper *Mother's Daughter*; PastPresent/Mirvish Prods: *Boy Falls from the Sky*; Studio 180/Mirvish Prod: *Indecent*. New York: Broadway: *Matilda, the Musical*. Shubert Theatre; Off Broadway: *Tamburlaine*, Theatre for a New Audience (TFANA); *La Belle et La Bete* 4Dart Theatre at BAM NYC; *American Dream* Gad Elmaleh debut Carnegie Hall. **Selected Film/tv coaching:** *Three Pines, The Umbrella Academy, Locke & Key, On Becoming A God in Central Florida* (for Theodore Pellerin) *Cardinal* (for Karine Vanasse); *X-Men: Apocalypse* and *Dark Phoenix, Brooklyn, Assassin's Creed Series* (Ubisoft). (she/her)



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**Counter Offence was first produced by Teesri Duniya Theatre, Montreal, Canada, in 1996.**

**Counter Offence is produced by arrangement with Kensington Literary Representation**



Teesri Duniya  
T H E A T R E

## **Change the world one play at a time**

Teesri Duniya Theatre is an intercultural theatre company dedicated to producing politically relevant plays that encourage positive change.

Our plays foster critical thinking, address injustices, generate cross-cultural dialogue, create opportunities and enhance the representation of diverse, racialized and marginalized artists. We infuse art with social responsibility with a decolonizing consciousness.

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**Rahul Varma is a member of the Playwright's  
Guild of Canada**



Teesri Duniya Theatre is a member of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres and engages professional Artists who are members of Canadian Actors' Equity Association under the terms of the jointly negotiated Canadian Theatre Agreement. The Theatre agrees to display the Canadian Actors' Equity Association logo in the production program or equivalent. The Equity logo shall be supplied by and remain the property of Equity.

# TEESRI DUNIYA THEATRE TEAM

Rahul Varma.....	Artistic Director
Brooklyn Melnyk.....	General Manager
Mahin Sekendra.....	Production Administrator
Prerna Nehta.....	Office Assistant
Sean Gordon Ryan.....	Outreach Coordinator
Ahlam Gholami.....	Artistic Associate
Vishesh Abeyratne.....	Fireworks Facilitator
Jen Cressey.....	Fireworks Dramaturg
Fred Blais.....	Intern (Katimavik FuturePerfect)
Emmanuel Dagenais.....	Intern (Katimavik FuturePerfect)

## TEESRI BOARD MEMBERS

Adrienne Piggott  
Dipti Gupta, Sushil Handa  
James Douglas  
Rusual Al-Shawkat  
Cristina Alejandra Jiménez Gómez  
Arnav Manchanda  
Alex Megelas  
Amina Bambotia  
Rahul Varma  
Ted Little (Emeritus Artistic Director)

# THANK YOU!

Teesri Duniya Theatre would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all of our community partners and private donors who make our projects possible



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Canada

**“I swear to tell  
the truth, the  
whole truth,  
and nothing  
but the truth”**



Teesri Duniya

T H E A T R E