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## CALL FOR DEBATER FOR UPCOMING THEATRE PRODUCTION IN TORONTO

Soulpepper and Nightwood Theatre are casting a BIPOC young woman or gender-expansive debater to perform in the Canadian premiere of the play *What The Constitution Means To Me* by Heidi Schreck in Fall 2024.

### ROLE DESCRIPTION

16-21 years old; Black, Indigenous, or person of colour; young woman or gender-expansive debater with a performative style; experience with debate at the high school and/or university level required; no acting experience required. Performer will use their own name in the show.

### CASTING INFORMATION

**Production Name:** What the Constitution Means To Me by Heidi Schreck

**Director:** Weyni Mengesha (Artistic Director, Soulpepper Theatre)

**Producers:** Soulpepper and Nightwood Theatre in association with Necessary Angel and Talk Is Free Theatre

**Production Dates:** October 15-November 10, 2024

**Audition Date:** June 17, 2024

**Callback Date:** June 20, 2024

**Submission Deadline:** June 12, 2024 at 5:00pm

**Submission Email:** casting@soulpepper.ca

[Must be available for the entire production period, October 15-November 10, 2024 \(schedule provided in detail below\).](#)

Only those selected for an audition will be contacted. Scripts will be provided and auditioners will be asked to prepare select portions of the script.

### HOW TO SUBMIT

Email [casting@soulpepper.ca](mailto:casting@soulpepper.ca), subject line: **CONSTITUTION – Debater Submission.**

Please include a recent photo and short introductory paragraph sharing your debate experience and any other relevant experience you'd like to tell us about.

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## ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

*What the Constitution Means To Me* premiered on Broadway in 2019 and was a Tony nominee for Best Play and a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. In the years since, it has become the most-performed play across the United States.

The American playwright Heidi Schreck earned her college tuition by winning constitutional debate competitions across the United States. In *What the Constitution Means To Me*, which originally starred the playwright as herself, Heidi traces the relationship between four generations of women in her family and the founding document that profoundly shaped their lives. The play allows audiences to explore the dynamic relationship between individuals and the foundational principles of their country, sparking conversations around citizenship, rights, and democracy.

## ABOUT THE ROLE: THE YOUNG DEBATER

In “part one” of the play, Heidi re-creates the constitutional debate contests of her youth. In “part two,” Heidi invites a young debater to join her onstage to help understand how they are thinking about their country and democracy today. This debater introduces themselves with their real-life background, and then they and Heidi stage a debate in real-time with the topic: “Should We Abolish the United States Constitution?” A coin flip decides which side each will take at each performance. Following the debate, Heidi and the Young Debater answer a set of questions that have been submitted by the audience, and finish by reflecting on the future the Young Debater imagines for themselves. The debate and the questions and answers are scripted, with room for ad-libbing.

For the Canadian premiere, Heidi is working with Toronto-based teacher, scholar, and advocate Joshua Sealy-Harrington to re-imagine the play specifically for Canadian audiences.

## PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

The Young Debater will be required for all rehearsals and performances of the production, including technical rehearsals and dress rehearsal. They will also be required to have all lines memorized by the time rehearsals begin on October 15, 2024.

The production schedule is anticipated to be as follows (meal breaks not indicated), and is subject to change:

- Tuesday, October 15-Sunday, October 20 – 10am-6pm

- Wednesday, October 22-Friday, October 25 – 10am-6pm
- Saturday, October 26-Sunday, October 27 – 12pm-11pm
- Tuesday, October 29-Friday, November 1 – 12pm-11pm

Performance times are listed below. The Young Debater will be called 30 minutes prior to each performance start time. The performance will last 90 minutes, with no intermission.

- Saturday, November 2 – 2pm and 8pm
- Sunday, November 3 – 2pm
- Tuesday, November 5 – 2pm and 8pm
- Wednesday, November 6 – 8pm
- Thursday, November 7 – 8pm
- Friday, November 8 – 8pm
- Saturday, November 9 – 2pm and 8pm
- Sunday, November 10 – 2pm

All rehearsals and performances will take place at Soulpepper Theatre at the Young Centre for Performing Arts, 50 Tank House Lane, in Toronto's Distillery District.

## COMPENSATION

The Young Debater will receive a weekly fee of \$1,050 for each of the four engagement weeks (October 15-November 10), plus a one-time payment of \$525 for memorizing lines prior to the first rehearsal. The Young Debater will receive two complimentary tickets to Opening Night on Friday, November 1.

## ABOUT SOULPEPPER THEATRE

Soulpepper is Canada's leading artist-driven theatre company. At Soulpepper, we believe that the arts have the power to bring people together and create a more inclusive and resilient society. Our mission is urgent: to harness the transformative power of the arts to inspire and unite diverse communities. We do this because we believe that live art can change lives. We are committed to supporting artists in the creation of extraordinary work, training the next generation of artists, and reimagining our theatre as a community asset.

Our work is seen by over 50,000 audience members each year and has received over 30 awards. Soulpepper has produced some of Toronto's most successful theatrical productions, including

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Angels in America, A Streetcar Named Desire, Alligator Pie, 'da Kink in My Hair, and Kim's Convenience which was adapted into a successful television show by CBC. Soulpepper is led by Artistic Director Weyni Mengesha and Executive Director Gideon Arthurs.

## ABOUT NIGHTWOOD THEATRE

As Canada's preeminent feminist theatre, Nightwood cultivates, creates, and produces extraordinary theatre by women and gender-expansive artists, liberating futures, one room at a time. Founded in 1979, Nightwood Theatre upholds a long-standing tradition of giving voice to many of the leading theatre artists in the country and of contributing to the national canon of plays by women, creating and producing award-winning plays which have received Dora Mavor Moore, Chalmers, Trillium, and Governor General's Awards.

The company is helmed by Artistic Director Andrea Donaldson and Managing Director Naz Afsahi, whose leadership has received public acclaim for artistic excellence, the successful training and development of emerging talent, and their on-going advocacy around gender equity. Our values are boldness, opportunity, inclusivity, integrity and care.

## CASTING STATEMENT

Soulpepper and Nightwood welcome people of all backgrounds. We prioritize voices, perspectives, and experiences that have been excluded from our stages, creating theatre where everyone's experience is valued and reflected. As equal opportunity employers, we welcome and encourage submissions from individuals of all genders, body types, cultures, ethnicities, sexual orientations, and abilities.

For *What the Constitution Means to Me*, we are specifically looking for debaters who identify as women or gender-expansive to submit in order to uphold the artistic integrity of the work. If you choose, you may provide us with the pronouns you would like us to use in your submission, or any other self-identification. We will respect these pronouns throughout the process. If you have access needs that require assistance during the submission and/or casting process, please let us know and we will work with you to meet your needs.

We are committed to reflecting the diversity of our community and our country. As theatre makers, we commit to centering a plurality of voices and stories in our work and we believe in the transformative power of stories to unite communities.