

A SOULPEPPER AND NIGHTWOOD THEATRE CO-PRODUCTION  
IN ASSOCIATION WITH NECESSARY ANGEL AND TALK IS FREE THEATRE

# WHAT THE CONSTITUTION MEANS TO ME

BY HEIDI SCHRECK



Photo of Amy Rutherford by Dahlia Katz.



When I first read this play I was so moved by what a generous offering it was. It feels generous both in how personal it is, and how it offers us a space to grapple and reflect on what kind of society we want to live in.

It can feel like such an overwhelming and isolating time when so much of our public discourse is happening on social media. This show does what theatre does best by bringing us into the same room to imagine together. You might feel uncomfortable, then you might laugh – while the person sitting beside you is feeling the exact opposite way. And what a gift that is – especially right now – to bring us together across divides, to be entertained and to consider big questions.

With both the American election approaching, and a Canadian one on the horizon, it felt exciting and necessary to consider this story for our stage. I reached out to the wonderful playwright, Heidi Schreck, and asked if she might consider working with us on adapting it to speak to a Canadian audience. I was thrilled when she said that she would, and this Canadian premiere now marks the first production of this show outside of America. I am so grateful to Nightwood Theatre, Necessary Angel, and Talk is Free Theatre for coming on board.

We've had a wonderful and reflective time over the past few months talking about what Canada's Constitution means to us – we hope you can join in reflecting on what it means to you.

Thank you for coming, enjoy the show.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Weyni Mengesha'.

**WEYNI MENGESHA**

Director of *What the Constitution Means to Me*  
& Artistic Director, Soulpepper Theatre Company

## CAST & CREATIVE TEAM

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### Cast

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**Amy Rutherford**  
Heidi

**Damien Atkins**

**Gabriella King**

### Creative Team

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**Heidi Schreck**  
Playwright

**Laura Baxter**  
Stage Manager

**Nika Jalali**  
Script Coordinator

**Weyni Mengesha**  
Director

**Troy Taylor**  
Assistant Stage Manager

**Damien Atkins, Gabriella King,  
Amy Rutherford**  
Additional Writing Support  
(Canadian Adaptation)

**Kimberly Purtell \***  
Lighting Designer

**Emilie Trimbee**  
Associate Lighting Designer

**Rudi Lof, Hannah Liu, Joshua  
Sealy-Harrington**  
Consultants  
(Canadian Adaptation)

**Richard Feren \***  
Sound Designer & Composer

**Zoe Marín**  
Shadow Director,  
Nightwood Theatre

**Ellie Koffman**  
Costume Designer

**Joanna Falck**  
Production Dramaturg

### Production Team

---

**Andy DeVries**  
Head Carpenter

**Mathilda Pich**  
Scenic Painter

**Ellie Koffman**  
Head of Wardrobe

**Bill Stahl**  
First Carpenter

**Lisa Nighswander**  
Head of Props

**Gunes Agduk**  
Lighting Operator

**Paul Boddum**  
Head Scenic Artist

**Greg Chambers**  
1st Props Builder/Buyer

**Marcus Wong**  
Audio Operator

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“What the Constitution Means to Me” is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc. [www.concordtheatricals.com](http://www.concordtheatricals.com)

Original Broadway Production Produced by  
Diana DiMenna Aaron Glick Matt Ross  
Madeleine Foster Bersin Myla Lerner/Jon Bierman  
Jenna Segal/Catherine Markowitz Jana Shea/Maley-Stolbun-Sussman Rebecca Gold/Jose Antonio Vargas  
Level Forward Cornice Productions Lassen Wyse Balsam Nederlander Productions/Kate Lear

What the Constitution Means to Me was commissioned by True Love Productions.

What the Constitution Means to Me originated as a part of Summerworks originated as part of Summerworks in June and July 2017, produced by Clubbed Thumb in partnership with True Love Productions.

West Coast premiere produced by Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Berkeley, CA,  
Tony Taccone, Artistic Director / Susan Medak, Managing Director.

What the Constitution Means to Me had its Off-Broadway premiere in New York City at New York Theatre Workshop, Jim Nicola, Artistic Director, Jeremy Blocker, Managing Director, 2018



Soulpepper 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

Special thanks to Aaron Jan and  
Sukhpreet Sangha



\*Indicated designers on this production are represented by the Associated Designers of Canada, Local ADC659.

**Running time:  
90 MINUTES, NO INTERMISSION**



**DAMIEN ATKINS** was born in Australia and raised in Alberta. SOULPEPPER 2024: What The Constitution Means to Me, De Profundis: Oscar Wilde in Jail. FOR SOULPEPPER: Queen Goneril and King Lear (2022), The Importance of Being Earnest, The Caretaker, King Lear (2006), The Way of the World, Angels in America, The Heidi Chronicles, A Doll's House, Hosanna. OTHER THEATRE: Here Lies Henry, Beatrice & Virgil (Factory); The Sound of Music, Angels in America (Arts Club); Caroline, or Change (Obsidian/Musical Stage); Undercover (Spontaneous Theatre/Vertigo/Citadel); Sherlock Holmes & The Mystery of the Human Heart, Candida, Blithe Spirit, The Shadow of a Doubt, Prince Caspian (playwright), Sherlock Holmes and the Raven's Curse, The Devil's Disciple, The Ladykillers, Getting Married, Henry V, The Hound of the Baskervilles (Shaw); London Road, The Glass Menagerie, Sweeney Todd, Into the Woods, Frost/Nixon, Amadeus, 7 Stories (Canadian Stage); Someone Else, Unidentified Human Remains, We Are Not Alone (Crow's); I Am My Own Wife (Dallas Theater Center); Sextet, The Clockmaker (Tarragon); The Gay Heritage Project (Buddies); four seasons with the Stratford Festival, as actor and playwright. OTHER: Playwright-in-Residence at Necessary Angel, Canadian Stage, Crow's Theatre, Factory Theatre; grateful recipient of five Dora Mavor Moore Awards, two Toronto Theatre Critics Awards, Jessie and Sterling Awards. Connection: Instagram (atkins\_damien), Twitter: @skinnydamien, Website: damienatkins.com



**LAURA BAXTER** was born in Grimsby, and raised in Kingston, ON. For Soulpepper: A Streetcar Named Desire, 'da Kink in My Hair, Pipeline, 27 Club, Dirt, Jitters. Other Theatre: Sweat, Love and Information, Venus in Fur, 9 seasons at Dream in High Park (Canadian Stage); Indecent, Oslo, My Name is Asher Lev, My Night With Reg, You Will Remember Me, God of Carnage (Studio 180); Black Boys, Arigato Tokyo, Obaaberima, The Maids (Buddies in Bad Times Theatre); Actually (Obsidian/ Harold Green); The Story, Tails From the City (Common Boots Theatre); Here Lies Henry, Trout Stanley, Little Pretty and the Exceptional (Factory Theatre); 11:11, Elle (Theatre Passe Muraille); Soliciting Temptation (Tarragon Theatre) Thank you to my amazing wife Shawn, and daughter Amari for your unwavering love and support.



**JOANNA FALCK** is the Literary Associate at Soulpepper Theatre. OTHER THEATRE: Joanna was previously the Literary Manager at Tarragon Theatre and the Shaw Festival. As a freelance dramaturg, she has worked with companies including Blyth Festival Theatre, Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre, fuGen Asian Canadian Theatre, Nightwood Theatre, Tapestry New Opera Works, Studio 180, Arts Club Theatre Company, Native Earth Performing Arts and Canadian Stage Company. Other: She was awarded the 2021 Honorary Membership Award from the Playwrights Guild of Canada



**RICHARD FEREN** was born in Toronto and raised in Guelph and Toronto, ON. SOULPEPPER 2023: Sizwe Bansi Is Dead FOR SOULPEPPER: Betrayal (2019); Copenhagen (2019); Animal Farm (2018); CAGE (2017).OTHER THEATRE: Controlled Damage, Grand Ghosts (The Grand Theatre); Public Enemy (Canadian Stage); Hamlet (Stratford); The Cold War (VideoCabaret). FILM & TELEVISION: composed scores for 8 feature films, numerous shorts. OTHER: 7 Dora Awards; 1999 Pauline McGibbon Award; first sound designer shortlisted for Siminovitch Prize, 2012.



**NIKA JALALI** is an Iranian-Canadian producer and multidisciplinary artist. She is devoted to curating spaces and pushing boundaries for racialized communities to share their stories on Canadian and international stages. Nika has collaborated on interdisciplinary projects in Canada, Italy, Scotland, the Czech Republic, and Germany. THEATRE: Mad Madge (Nighthood Theatre); The Chemical Valley Project (Broadleaf Creative/Teesri Duniya Theatre); The Sound of Music (Nighthood Theatre); TomorrowLove (Why Not Theatre/Toronto Metropolitan University); Enormity, Girl & the Earthquake in Her Lungs (Toronto Metropolitan University). FILM: DinoLand (Rock Bottom Movement/Toronto Metropolitan University).



**GABRIELLA KING** is a multi-talented actress and author who has captivated audiences since childhood. Raised in Houston, Texas, she began her acting career at age 5 and published her first book at 15. Gabriella's passion for storytelling and dedication to her craft drive her continued growth in both acting and writing. With her sights set on making a lasting impact in the entertainment and literary worlds, Gabriella's future is undeniably bright, and her journey is only just beginning. FOR SOULPEPPER: What the Constitution Means to Me.



**ELLIE KOFFMAN** is a Toronto-based Costume Designer and Wardrobe Manager. Ellie currently serves as the Head of Wardrobe at Soulpepper Theatre Company. SOULPEPPER 2024: What The Constitution Means to Me. OTHER THEATRE: A Little Night Music (The Royal Conservatory of Music), Rock of Ages (More Entertainment), 4 Minutes 12 Seconds (Studio 180), The 39 Steps (The Grove Theatre), Ghost The Musical (Starvox Entertainment).



**ZOE MARÍN** was born in Mendoza (Argentina) and raised in New Jersey. She is based in Toronto, ON. SOULPEPPER 2024: What the Constitution Means to Me. OTHER THEATRE: GRINGAS (Aluna Theatre/RUTAS Festival, Toronto Fringe, Hamilton Fringe), Internet Sensation (Paprika Festival); Small Friend Tall Friend: Take A Proper Gander (The Theatre Centre), Small Friend Tall Friend: Do You Think You're Better Than Me? (Toronto Fringe, Hamilton Fringe, Toronto Sketch Comedy Festival), 1184 (Phoenix Arts, Aga Khan Museum).



**WEYNI MENGESHA** is the Artistic Director of Soulpepper Theatre Company and an award-winning director, known for her groundbreaking work and community engagement. Weyni has directed shows across Canada that have gone on to tour nationally and internationally, and have been developed into television shows playing on CBC, Global, and Netflix. She has also directed in London, New York, Los Angeles, garnering a NAACP nomination for Best Direction as well as Dora, Drama League, and Drama Critics Circle award nominations and awards for Outstanding Direction. She has been an instructor at Soulpepper Academy, the National Theatre School of Canada and the Canadian Film Centre and was Co-Artistic Director and teacher with A.M.Y Project for 7 years. In 2017, Weyni was named one of the Women In View's "Five in Focus" identifying five rising film directors across Canada. She was recently named one of the 50 most influential people in Toronto by Toronto Life Magazine.



**KIMBERLY PURTELL** was born and raised in Thornhill, ON SOULPEPPER 2024: What the Constitution Means to Me, A Streetcar Named Desire. FOR SOULPEPPER: (selected) Wildwoman; Queen Goneril; King Lear; Pipeline; A Streetcar Named Desire; Sisters; The Goat or Who Is Sylvia; The Last Wife; The Virgin Trial; Mother's Daughter; Crash; Twelve Angry Men; Happy Place. OTHER THEATRE: Mirvish Productions, Stratford Festival, Shaw Festival, Canadian Stage Company, Soulpepper Theatre, Arena Stage, DC, National Arts Centre and the National Arts Centre Orchestra, Pacific Opera Victoria, Opera Philadelphia, Edmonton Opera, Theatre Calgary, Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre, Citadel Theatre, Place des Arts, among others. OTHER: Recipient of three Dora Mavor Moore Awards, the Pauline McGibbon Award, a Montreal English Theatre Award, a Toronto Theatre Critics Award, an Ottawa Critics Circle Award and an Elizabeth Sterling Award. Kimberly is the Vice President of the Associated Designers of Canada and ADC659.



**AMY RUTHERFORD** is a graduate of The National Theatre School of Canada and Stratford Birmingham Conservatory. FOR SOULPEPPER: A Streetcar Named Desire (2019); The Odd Couple (2008) As You Like It (2008). OTHER THEATRE: Fifteen Dogs (Segal Centre), An Undeveloped Sound (Electric Company Theatre), Public Enemy (Canadian Stage) Infinity (Tarragon Theatre) Divisadero (Necessary Angel) FILM & TELEVISION: Murdoch Mysteries, Kim's Convenience (CBC), Remedy (Global). OTHER: Amy has also written several plays: The Public Servant, Out of the Woods and Mortified which won The PGC's Carol Bolt Award in 2018

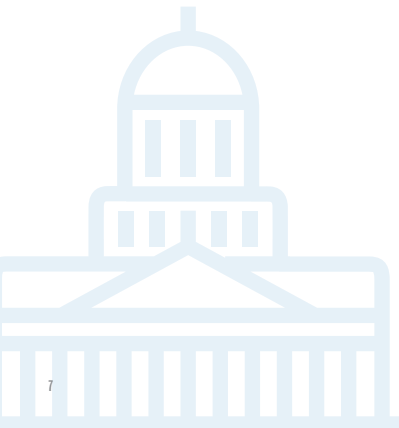



**HEIDI SCHRECK** is a writer and performer living in Brooklyn. Her critically-acclaimed play What the Constitution Means to Me played an extended, sold-out run on Broadway in 2019, and was nominated for two Tony Awards. It had subsequent runs at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C., the Mark Taper Forum, the Guthrie, Seattle Repertory Theatre and the McCarter Theatre, as well as theatres in Houston, Miami, Omaha, Nashville, Charlotte and Chicago. A filmed version of the play premiered on Amazon Prime Video, and was nominated for a Critics Choice Award, a PGA Award and DGA Award. What the Constitution Means to Me was named Best of the Year by The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times, The Chicago Tribune, Time Magazine, The Hollywood Reporter, The New Yorker and more. Schreck's other plays Grand Concourse, Creature, and There Are No More Big Secrets have also been produced in NYC and all over the country. Screenwriting credits include I Love Dick, Billions, Nurse Jackie, Dispatches from Elsewhere and shows in development with Amazon Studios, Plan B and A24. She is the recipient of three Obie Awards, a Drama Desk Award and a Theatre World Award, as well as the Horton Foote Playwriting Award and the Hull-Warriner Award from the Dramatists Guild. Schreck was awarded Smithsonian Magazine's 2019 American Ingenuity Award, for her work in the Performing Arts.



**TROY TAYLOR** was born and raised in Keswick, ON. SOULPEPPER 2024: What the Constitution Means to Me. FOR SOULPEPPER: It's a Wonderful Life (2016). OTHER THEATRE: Productions with the National Ballet of Canada including Don Quixote, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, UtopiVerse, Jewels, The Nutcracker, Emma Bovary, Passion, MADADDAM, and Swan Lake. The Queen in Me (National Arts Centre), Fall for Dance North Festival (FFDN), The Darkest Dark (YPT), A Midsummer Night's Dream, As You Like It (Canadian Stage). Productions with the Shaw Festival, Tarragon Theatre, Nightwood Theatre, Factory Theatre, Ross Petty Productions, and Mirvish.

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Photo by Chris Kane



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Photo of Diego Matamoros by Dahlia Katz.

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House and Stage Technicians employed by the Young Centre for the Performing Arts are represented by Local 58 of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees.



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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 has created and produced award-winning plays, which have won 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 combined leadership has received public acclaim for artistic excellence, and the successful training of emerging artists.

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#### Andrea Donaldson

Artistic Director

#### Naz Afsahi

Managing Director

#### Charlene Wolf

Head of Partnerships & Giving

#### Jade Silman

Artistic Associate & Head of Communications

#### Ashley Elliott

Administrator – Operations & Partnerships

#### Nika Jalali

Metcalf Intern Artistic Producer\*

#### Isa Chiu

Digital Communications Associate

#### Keshia Palm

Interim Program Director: Write From The Hip

#### Intisar Awishe

Incoming Program Director: Write From The Hip

#### Cynthia GrantKim Renders

#### Kim Renders

#### Mary Vingoe

#### Maureen White

Founding Members

#### Chris Mustard

Financial Advisor, Young & Associates

\*Made possible through the Metcalf Foundation

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#### Paul Butler (Secretary)

#### Shreya Lathia (Treasurer)

#### Edina Cavalli

#### Anthea Chan

#### Devin Jarcaig

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Necessary Angel Theatre Company is one of English Canada's most vital original creation and touring organisations. The company has a history of innovation and risk taking and engages theatre artists from a variety of disciplines in the creation of new work. An influential and original presence on the national and international theatre scene for over 40 years, the company has produced more than 60 productions, including 30 world premieres and 11 North American premieres. Work created by Necessary Angel has been nominated for and has won Governor General's Awards for Drama, Chalmers Awards for Outstanding New Play, and many Dora Mavor Moore Awards.

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#### Alan Dilworth

Artistic Director

#### Kanika Ambrose

Associate Artistic Director

#### Kristina McNamee

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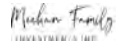
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### Talk is Free Team

---

#### **Arkady Spivak**

Artistic Producer

#### **Michael Torontow**

Communications Associate

#### **Cara Mcrae**

Administrator

#### **Dustyn Wales**

Associate Producer

#### **Richard Lam**

Artist BIG (Basic Income Guarantee) Program Liaison

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Production Advisor

### Bigger than BIG Artistic Directors

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#### **Noah Beemer**

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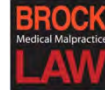
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The artists and staff of Soulpepper and the Young Centre for the Performing Arts acknowledge the original caretakers and storytellers of this land —the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Haudenosaunee, the Anishinaabe, and the Wendat First Nations. We commit to honouring and celebrating their past, present and future.