

## Creative Team

Created and Performed by  
**Viktorija Kovac**  
Co-created and Performed by  
**Nada Abusaleh**  
Co-created and Directed by  
**Andy Houston**  
Stage Management and  
Multimedia Operations by  
**Nadia Ursacki**

Video and Video Dramaturgy by  
**William Innes**  
Photography by  
**Vladimir Kovac**  
Graphic Design by  
**Karianne Tremain**  
Lighting Design by  
**Allan Hoch**

## Thank You

**We would not be here without the following people:**

A special thank you to **Brooke Barnes** for her involvement and commitment to the development of *The B Party* in 2017.

**JM Drama Alumni** and **The Registry Theatre** board members for the opportunity to be the 2017/2018 Artist-in-Residence.

Sam Varteniuk, Lawrence McNaught, and Lynne Sosnowski from The Registry Theatre

Janelle Rainville, Gill Lesperance, Bill Chesney, Sharon Secord, Paul Cegys Jennifer Roberts-Smith, Shana MacDonald, Jordana Cox from University of Waterloo

Wendy Philpot ✿ Sahar Elkhatib ✿  
Majdi Abusaleh ✿ Madiha Ahmad ✿  
Meseret Abebe ✿

Ciarán Myers from Informal Upright  
Carin Lowerison and Matt White from Green Light Arts  
Terri Plummer from Arts Fund  
Kathleen Sheehy from Lost&Found Theatre  
Janice Jo Lee  
Isabel Cisterna from Neruda Arts  
Martin de Groot from The Record and Common Studio  
Isabella Stefanescu from Inter Arts Matrix  
Glodeane Brown from Culture Fancier and Cafka  
SteelRails 2017 Art Party and The Community Edition



June  
**28**  
2018

**COSMICFISHING**  
**THEATRECOMPANY**  
Presents

# The B Party

Created by **Viktorija Kovac**  
2017/2018 Artist-in-Residence  
for JM Drama Alumni and The Registry Theatre  
Co-created with **Andy Houston** and **Nada Abusaleh**



@cosmicfishing  
 @cosmicfishing  
 @cosmicfishing

Cosmic Fishing Theatre is an experimental theatre company, exploring a range of aesthetics in performance through multi-development productions. Founded by Viktorija Kovac in 2015, and based in the Waterloo region, Comic Fishing works with emerging and established theatre artists to create professional theatrical performances for everyone to enjoy.

Cosmic Fishing Theatre presents *The B Party*, its second project in development, in the pursuit of evocative, relevant, and exciting performance. The company's inaugural workshop production of *King Lear*, seen in August 2016 at The Registry Theatre, focused on puppetry and its relationship to performance. This year, as a one night only event on June 28, again at The Registry Theatre, *The B Party* takes a plunge into the semiotics of Barbie, in an auto-ethnographic performance that takes the audience on a journey inside the consumerist culture sold to girls and women. This project is an original 2017 creation by Viktorija Kovac, showcased as part of Viktorija's 2017/2018 Artist-in-Residence term for JM Drama Alumni and The Registry Theatre.



### Land Acknowledgment

Cosmic Fishing Theatre acknowledges that we are living, working, and creating on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (also known as Neutral), Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee peoples. The Registry Theatre is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Six Nations that includes ten kilometers on each side of the Grand River.



### Flush Ink Productions

flushink.net  
 @FlushInkProductions  
 @Flush\_Ink

The theatre that thinks outside the theater. Bringing innovative theatre to the community.



### Pat the Dog

patthedog.org  
 @PatTheDog.Playwright  
 @patthedogpdc  
 @PatTheDogPDC

A theatre incubator devoted to the creation and presentation of new works for Canadian Theatre with a special interest in emerging voices and regional landscapes.



### Lost&Found Theatre

lostandfoundtheatre.ca  
 @LostAndFoundTheatre  
 @lostandfoundkw  
 @lostandfoundtheatre

Lost&Found Theatre produces actor-driven, thought-provoking theatre, using primarily regional professional talent, that stimulates artists and audiences to explore together the challenging and redemptive aspects of human relationships.



### Page 1 Entertainment

pg1entertainment.com  
 @Page1 Entertainment  
 @PG1\_Entertainment  
 @PG1E1

PG1E produces and presents live theatrical & movement-based performance pieces that explore the concept of identity through themes of sexuality, gender, race, culture and ethnicity. We ask what role our society and our community have in shaping our identity.



### Neruda Arts

nerudaarts.ca  
 @NerudaArts  
 @NerudaArts  
 @nerudaarts.ca

Neruda Arts is a community based non-for-profit organization that connects the diverse cultures of our region through the arts.

# Performing Arts and Theatre in the Waterloo Region



## MT Space

mtspace.ca  
@TheMTSpace  
@theMTspace  
@themtspace

A theatre company devoted to developing inter-cultural forms and practices in performance, producing and presenting theatre that reflects our diversity.



## Informal Upright

informalupright.com  
@InformalUpright  
@InformalUpright  
@informalupright

Based in both Kitchener and Toronto, Informal Upright is a new theatre collective that produces contemporary and original theatre, engages audiences through issues of social justice, and celebrates an exploration of the theatrical form.



## Lightning Banjo Productions

@lightningbanjo  
@lightningbanjo

Lightning Banjo Productions creates high quality theatre for families in Kitchener. We believe theatre that entertains children should entertain everyone.

*The B Party*



## Green Light Arts

greenlight-arts.com  
@Green.Light.Arts  
@GreenLight\_Arts  
@green\_light\_arts

Entertaining, challenging, unique theatre that inspires people to make the world a better place.



## Sonderlust

sonderlust.ca  
@sonderlustcollective  
@sonderlusttweets  
@sonderlustcollective

Sonderlust is a local theatre collective of professional artists dedicated to the creation of original work and the staging of women's stories.



## Inter-Arts Matrix

interartsmatrix.ca  
@InterArtsMatrix  
@InterArtsMatrix  
@interartsmatrix

Increasing public appreciation of Interdisciplinary art.

# Notes by Artistic Director *Vik and Barbie's After-Party*

Tonight, you are offered an exclusive membership to *The B Party*. You will gain a sense of Barbie's world, and from this vantage point, get a glimpse into my childhood, adolescence, and adulthood – as these stages of life are performed through Barbie's unique reality, both expansive and alienating. My 2017/2018 Artist-in-Residence term for JM Drama Alumni and The Registry Theatre offers a generous opportunity for The Registry Theatre to serve as an echo chamber for the two opposing political systems to which I belong: socialism and capitalism. It gives *The B Party* the thinking space to disseminate its large ideas and themes.

The inspiration for *The B Party* comes from over 15 years of experience, being situated at a disadvantage in all aspects of my life: social, professional, and personal. I feel fortunate to have certain privileges as a single Caucasian heterosexual woman, and a Serbian immigrant in Canada. However, as a woman wanting to direct and create theatre professionally, I often wonder if I am pursuing an impossible dream – a dream best suited to doll houses and the scaled-down accessories that furnish such a life.

What you will experience tonight is how *The B Party* celebrates my many detours in art and life. Looking back 30 years, it all started with the first moment I met Barbie. Around this time, I also started going to the theatre. Unknowingly, Barbie and I would end up exploring the world together, navigating many hardships of displacement. Meanwhile, theatre and performance will teach me how to create the worlds and systems in which I wish to exist in.

My sincere intent and focus with *The B Party* is to advocate for a systematic change that would offer women of all race, ability, and origin the opportunity and choice to not just play the role of dolls, but to be the creators, engineers, and builders of a world of opportunities.

**Viktorija Kovac - Artistic Director**

*In Loving Memory of Olga Kovac*

*The B Party*

## Notes by Artistic Conspirator

### *Vik's Inner Barbie...*

*The B Party* began as a solo performance that Vik created for a performance creation class that I taught in the winter term of 2017. A theme explored in this course was alienation in a world of post-truth; the focus of the solo performance assignment was to explore the idea of an 'echo chamber'. For the purposes of this assignment, the echo chamber was defined metaphorically as a space in which information, ideas, or beliefs are amplified or reinforced by communication and repetition inside a defined system of thinking and being. From this idea, Vik felt compelled to explore the significant influence that Barbie has had on her life. The Mattel Corporation provided the information, ideas, and beliefs and this 'echo chamber' was irresistible to a very young Vik Kovac, living in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, where Barbie's pink, frilly, and fully accessorized lifestyle no doubt offered a way of thinking and being a woman that was exotic and deeply alluring.

I was thrilled with Vik's interpretation of the assignment, and I have endeavored to support the development of this work through a performance at the Steel Rails Art Party in June 2017, followed by a performance in September 2017, in Studio 180, at the University of Waterloo, and finally to the performance you will experience tonight. Since its first incarnation, 'the look' of *The B Party* has changed somewhat: the work gained a second performer, and, most recently, Vik became pregnant.

Brooke Barnes created the second role in 2017, and for this performance, Nada Abusaleh has developed it further. Vik's pregnancy at first posed a couple of challenges – given a rigorous rehearsal schedule and the new semiotics of a pregnant protagonist. But Vik was determined that the party must go on, and we soon discovered that her obvious pregnancy enriches and deepens many of the questions we want this performance to pose about women in relation to the ideology of Barbie.

The text has been developed to reflect more of what I would call an auto-ethnographic style. Briefly, auto-ethnography in performance is a way of discovering one's voice in relation to a particular cultural and political context. It is a way of exploring the reflections and refractions of the self in contexts that transform the authorial 'I' to an existential 'we'. And, thus, auto-ethnography is a way of examining how our multiple layers of experience connect us all. Auto-ethnography recognizes that knowledge is subjective and deeply connected to the knower, but it also possesses a sort of bifurcated gaze; that is a way of looking inward at the self, while maintaining an outward gaze and awareness of the larger context of cultural experience where self-defining experiences occur.

Vik has warmly welcomed me into her Barbie world; it's a party, and I've enjoyed doing what I can to help her welcome all of you to this party tonight.

**Andy Houston - Artistic Conspirator**

## Notes by Artistic Accomplice

### *Barbie's Influence*

My convocation was just a few weeks ago. I graduated with a Major in Psychology and a Minor in Theatre and Performance. As an actor, you don't always get the opportunity to develop, discuss, and critique a project as a co-creator. This project has been rewarding for me both intellectually and creatively: I am happy that I am already putting my degree to use (I see you, skeptics).

As a femme immigrant Palestinian-Canadian person, I relate to Vik's narrative presented in *The B Party*. I also grew up playing with Barbie dolls. My relationship with Barbie is contentious: as a young child, I embraced and idolized her. She is simultaneously oppressive and liberating. She is both a good role model and a bad one. As an adult now, revisiting Barbie, I have developed sympathy for her as if she were a person. It is a reminder that femininity (whatever that means to you) is not the problem, but rather it is the ways in which various aspects of it are framed and constructed. People of all genders and identity should feel empowered by their own brand of femininity, rather than the one that is prescribed.

The Assistant serves to provide the audience with information, spouting dates and reciting Mattel propaganda. As I developed the character and injected my own voice into *The B Party*, it became necessary for the Assistant to challenge Vik and the audience about the content being presented. Together, we remain actively critical of the messages we are transmitting to our audience. We are always asking ourselves and each other about our intentions. What are we trying to say? What's our point? Are we saying it right?

The discourse around Barbie is complicated. On the one hand, she is an evil embodiment of capitalist patriarchal ideals. On the other, she is a free woman living her best life. There are so many more experiences and truths that we could present to give a fuller picture of the issues discussed. I hope that our performance opens a dialogue and provokes some critical reflection on the complexities of social and personal identity issues that women face. Regardless of your take, you cannot deny that Barbie has influence – she was literally created to do that, and her success is a result of it.

**Nada Abusaleh - Artistic Accomplice**