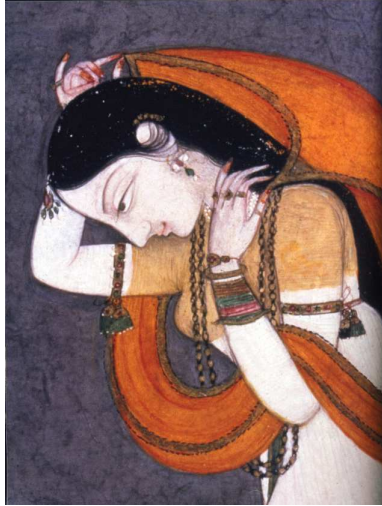


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**Pleiades Theatre
(Toronto)
In Association With Harbourfront Centre**

Shakuntala

**Fleck Dance Theatre
207 Queens Quay West
February 5 - 6, 8:00 p.m.
February 7, 2:00 p.m. & 8:00 p.m.
February 8, 2:00 p.m.
February 10 – 13, 8:00 p.m.
February 14, 2:00 p.m. & 8:00 p.m.
February 15, 2:00 p.m.
\$15-30**

**Box office: 416-973-4000
www.harbourfrontcentre.com/worldstage**

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Pleiades Theatre – *Shakuntala*

Production Notes and Overview

Toronto Premiere!

Known all over the world and ranked among the world's theatrical masterpieces, *Shakuntala* (sha-KOON-tala) – an epic love story by the 5th century Indian playwright, Kalidasa – is appearing on a Toronto stage for the very first time. It also marks the first professional production of *Shakuntala* in Canada.

Shakuntala tells a story of affection, tragedy and eternal love between King Dushyanta and a devout young woman, Shakuntala. They meet in innocence, fall in love, are cruelly separated and are eventually reunited in eternity. Poetic and deeply human, this story takes you on a magnificent, emotion-filled journey that is profound and far-reaching.

Featuring a culturally diverse cast of eight actors/musicians (including rising theatrical star Anita Majumdar), beautiful costumes and music, intricate choreography and exquisite lighting, *Shakuntala* arrives just in time for Valentine's Day.

Shakuntala is adapted and directed by Charles Roy and stars Anita Majumdar, Sanjay Talwar, Pragna Desai and 5 other actors. Other key artistic contributors include Teresa Prybylski (set design), Milan Shahani (costumes), Itai Erdal (lighting design), Hari Krishnan (choreography) and Reza Jacobs (original music) - *{full cast and crew below}*.

Synopsis of *Shakuntala*:

While hunting deer, King Dushyanta finds himself in a sacred forest, where he meets Shakuntala, the beautiful daughter of a holy sage. It is love at first sight. They marry and soon she is expecting his child. The King is called back to court but promises to return to this blissful love and new family. He gives Shakuntala a ring as a pledge of his eternal devotion. Tragedy strikes when Shakuntala, pre-occupied, fails to pay homage to a cantankerous old holy man. He curses her, saying "The one who loves you best shall forget you!" Shakuntala's handmaids prevail upon him to mitigate the curse and he allows that upon sight of his token of love, the King's memory will be restored. Months pass and the King fails to reappear. Shakuntala bravely goes in search of him, but on her journey, while crossing a stream, the ring slips from her finger. When she arrives at the palace and is taken before the King, he refuses to acknowledge her, or the son she bears. He cruelly rejects her as an abuser of his royal generosity. In humiliation and despair, Shakuntala leaves. The gods, taking pity on her plight, whisk her and her son off to a new home in the clouds.

Much later, a fisherman is accused of stealing a ring with the King's insignia. He explains that it was found in a fish that he caught. When the King sees it, he instantly recalls his wife, Shakuntala.

Eventually, the King is called to heaven to fight celestial demons. The battle won, he again wanders into a divine forest. There, he encounters his beloved Shakuntala and their son, the Prince Bharata. Together, they form a trinity to bless the world: faith,

treasure and piety. It is foretold that Bharata will rule the earth in noble wisdom while Dushyanta and Shakuntala are re-united in eternity.

Cast and Crew:

***Shakuntala* by Kalidasa**

Adapted by **Charles Roy**

In association with World Stage at Toronto's [Harbourfront Centre](#)

Fleck Dance Theatre, February 4 - 15, 2009 – {all times on cover sheet}

Directed by **Charles Roy**

Set Design by **Teresa Prybylski**

Costumes by **Milan Shahani**

Lighting Design by **Itai Erdal**

Choreography by **Hari Krishnan**

Original music by **Reza Jacobs**

Starring **Anita Majumdar** and **Sanjay Talwar**

with **Pragna Desai** and 5 other actors.

Company History

Toronto is home to people from around the world. Pleiades Theatre gives home to their theatre. They produce plays from Canadian and international repertoires and present them in modern, Canadian translations and innovative productions. New or classical, they are selected for their entertainment value and because they introduce writers and styles not widely known to Toronto audiences.

Also, through training, workshops and outreach, which they offer in both English and French, they make a concerted effort to ensure that the creative process of theatre is accessible to young people of all cultural backgrounds. This is done through their unique educational program, *Speak the Speech!*

Pleiades Theatre is all about cultural encounters. They believe that Canadian lives are enriched by the shared stories of world cultures expressed through theatre.

Biographies

John Van Burek – Artistic Director and Founder of Pleiades Theatre

Mr. Van Burek has been a professional theatre artist for thirty-five years. He has directed over 100 plays, workshops, operas and special events and translated over 40. He was the founding Artistic Director of Théâtre français de Toronto, which he ran for close to twenty years. Through his translations, often in partnership with the late Bill Glassco, he introduced the work of Michel Tremblay, one of Canada's preëminent playwrights, to the English-speaking world. In addition, he has translated works by Gratien Gélinas, Goldoni, Suzanne Lebeau, Marivaux and Molière. He is currently working on a translation of Albert Camus' *Les Justes*. Mr. Van Burek has taught at the National Theatre School of Canada, York University, Ryerson Theatre School, the Nottingham School of the Performing Arts (U.K.), University of Victoria and at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh. For four years, he was a member of the Canadian Artists and Producers Professional Relations Tribunal and he is a member of l'Ordre de la Pléiade

(Paris). He has received many awards and distinctions, including the Toronto Drama Bench Award for Distinguished Contribution to Canadian Theatre, the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal and most recently, he was given the prestigious Silver Ticket Award by the Toronto Association of Performing Arts.

Charles Roy – Director of *Shakuntala*

Charles Roy has directed extensively in Toronto and Montreal and is the co-founder and artistic director of two theatre companies, Talking Camel Productions and The Classical Theatre Project. Recent productions include *Hamlet* (Hart House Theatre), *Scenes from a Jazz Bar* (Poor Alex Theatre Cabaret), *Ordering Ives* (Talking Camel Productions) and *Romeo and Juliet* (Classical Theatre Project). He is a graduate of McGill University and a Fellow of Visva-Bharati University, Santiniketan, India.

Anita Majumdar – Actress in *Shakuntala*

Canadian actress, dancer and writer, she is the award-winning star of the CBC film "Murder Unveiled." She is a 2004 acting graduate of the National Theatre School of Canada and holds a degree in English, Theatre and South Asian Languages from the University of British Columbia. Her Indian dance training originates in Kathak, but she has also studied Bharat Natyam and Odissi. Anita is also a member of the 2005 Tarragon Playwrights Unit. She has had recent critical success with her company Pull'it Out Theatre as writer/director/producer of *Fish Eyes* (2005) and *The Misfit* (2007), both of which staged as part of Harbourfront Centre's **HATCH: emerging performance projects**.

Pleiades Theatre Performance History

Past Productions:

1997 – *Marcel Pursued by the Hounds*, Michel Tremblay, translated by John Van Burek and Bill Glassco, in co-production with Tarragon Theatre; world premiere in English

1998 – *The Government Guy* (adapted from *Gogo*), Michel Tremblay, translated by John Van Burek, in a French-English co-production with Théâtre français de Toronto; a world premiere in English

2000 – *The Game of Love and Chance*, Marivaux, translated by John Van Burek

2001 – *The Triumph of Love*, Marivaux, translated by John Van Burek; Canadian premiere in English

2002 – *Counterfeit Secrets*, Marivaux, translated by John Van Burek, Canadian premiere in English

2003 – *Heart of a Dog*, Mikhaïl Bulgakov, translated and adapted by Anne Nenarokoff, in an English-French co-production with Théâtre français de Toronto, a world premiere in English

2004 – *Beaux Gestes & Beautiful Deeds*, Marie-Lynn Hammond, a bilingual play with music

2005 – *The Amorous Servant*, Carlo Goldoni, translated by John Van Burek, English language world premiere

2006 – *Hosanna*, Michel Tremblay, translated by John Van Burek

2007 – *Dying to Be Sick*, Moliere, translated by Adrienne Clarkson and John Van Burek

Current Productions:

Citizen Schippel, Directed by John Van Burek, designed by Philip Silver

Shakuntala, Adapted and directed by Charles Roy

Press Notes and Reviews

Dying To Be Sick

- “It’s that sense of timeless, flawed humanity that seems to be captured so beautifully in this charming new translation, which while it rolls trippingly from the tongue and falls comfortably on the ear, still manages to maintain not only its sense of period but a certain je ne sais quoi that anchors it firmly in the nation of Moliere’s birth as well...In keeping with the Pleiades’ tradition, the work plays out on a simple but effective set created here by Teresa Przbylski and lit by Glenn Davidson, while the costumes, designed by Dana Osborne, hint broadly at period, before taking off on flights of fancy that most often seem to blend the music hall with haute couture.”

— *John Coulbourn, Sun Media*