

**COMMUNIQUÉ**

**Press Release- for immediate diffusion**

***Amazone - a (Very Violent) Love Story: Breaking new ground at the Montreal Fringe Festival with the first-ever Money-Back Guarantee!***

May 18 2009 - This summer, from June 11-21, the 19th edition of the Montreal Fringe Festival will add something never before seen in its already beyond-eclectic programming -- a company willing to put their money where their mouth is.

But the creators of Vangarde Theatre's **Amazone**, an action-packed new show that promises everything from kick-ass Amazon Warrior-Goddesses, spectacular kung fu fighting, biting social commentary on the nature of oppression, and a meditation on the morality of violence, are willing to go one step further: Satisfaction guaranteed or your money back.

In a sense, the Fringe, with its anything-goes policy of uncensored theatrical madness, has already been encouraging this kind of democracy-in-action for its entire 19-year existence. Vangarde is taking the anarchic essence of the Fringe one step further with this bold (some would say risky) promotional strategy.

The playwright & producer **Paul de Turreil**, explains, "So few people go to see live theatre, especially compared to movies, or even other live events like musical acts, circus, or professional sports. We wanted to encourage potential audience members by removing as many impediments to trying new things as possible."

With a diversified cast and crew, headed up by rising local stars **Heidi Hawkins** (most recently in Mainline Theatre's hit *The Real Inspector Hound*), actor-acrobat **Oliver Koomsatira**, (fresh off Geordie Productions' acclaimed version of *The Jungle Book*), and the on-stage action itself overseen by home-grown thespian and Stage Combat Instructor **Shawn Baichoo**, the team behind *Amazone* is hoping that this year's public will be anything but fickle.

Vangarde also steps outside the confines of traditional theatre by inviting creative collaboration from high-level artists in other fields: **Ulka Simone Mohanty** plays Zura, the most dangerous Amazone, and brings international performance experience in Indian Classical Dance (*Bharata Natyam*); and movie stuntman, multi-art black belt and actor **Yannick Giguere** steps into the role of her nemesis, General Ko.

So how does a money-back guarantee work at the Fringe? "Well, I won't be standing at the exit with a big bag of money and a sign saying, 'Help Yourselves', that's for sure," exclaims Paul de Turreil. "Both my accountant and my archivist are insisting on some sort of paper trail, but anyone who honestly felt ripped off will get their nine bucks back, that's guaranteed."

## **CAST BIOS**

### **Oliver Koomsatira**

Oliver Koomsatira graduated from The Dome's Professional Theatre Program and has since performed in over 70 film and theatre productions in both English and French. A few theatre credits include Mowgli in Geordie Productions' The Jungle Book, directed by Dean Fleming; Moritz Steifel in Persephone Theatre's Spring Awakening directed by Gabrielle Soskin, and many other roles with local Montreal companies like TacCom, Gravy Bath, Three Blind Mice, Gleams Theatre, Unwashed Grape and more. He's also toured Montreal, Quebec, Toronto and The United-States with 3 productions. The first one entitled Law, was funded by Le Ministère de la Justice with the mandate to raise awareness about bullying. The second entitled L'aventure Saine Cité, funded by Le Ministère de la Santé et des Services Sociaux aimed to raise awareness about the risks of excessive gambling, drug and alcohol use. The third entitled Me Me Me by Dynamo Theatre, was an acrobatic movement theatre show for young audiences exploring the many aspects of friendship. Part time, he enjoys seeking out evil ninjas to give them wedgies and Charlie horses.

### **Yannick Giguère**

Yannick Giguère baigne dans les arts martiaux depuis 1981. Depuis ses débuts en Karaté et Aiki Jiu-jitsu, qu'il pratique et enseigne toujours, il à su perfectionner son art en visitant plusieurs familles d'arts martiaux. Des styles chinois de Kung Fu tel le White Crane et le Hung Gar à l'escrime européenne, il s'intéresse à toutes les formes d'arts martiaux. Avec sa formation d'acteur et de cascadeur, il fut mené à diriger des équipes de cascadeurs pour diverses réalisations. Il récidive maintenant dans ces numéros, en jumelant sa passion pour les arts martiaux et le jeu d'acteur. Il incarne ici le général... Bon... Mauvais... il est celui avec le sourire...

### **Heidi Hawkins**

(Photo: Terry Hughes)

Upon graduating from John Abbott's Professional theatre program, Heidi has had the opportunity to work with various local theatre companies. Most recently she appeared as Felicity Cunningham in Mainline's The Real Inspector Hound directed by Jeremy Hetchman. Other favorites include playing Celia in Pumpkin Theatre's As You Like it, Erica in Persephone Productions' Suburbia, and touring with Geordie Theatre Productions' No Sweat and Gremlin. She just finished up Cherry Docs, by David Gow in which she made her Assistant Directorial debut, under Persephone Productions Gabrielle Soskin. She thinks Amazone is going to kick some serious ASS!

## **Ulka Simone Mohanty**

(Photo: Amar Khoday: [atkphotoworks.com](http://atkphotoworks.com))

A native Montrealer and Fringe enthusiast, **Ulka Simone Mohanty** learned to walk and dance at approximately the same time. She is classically trained in the Indian dance form of Bharata Natyam (*Montreal*) as well as in contemporary dance (*UK, Montreal*). She possesses parallel training in various martial arts, theatre and yoga which greatly influence her work and she has had the opportunity to perform throughout Canada, United States, India, the UK and Costa Rica. She is a co-founder of the dance-music collective *Ekatva*, and has collaborated with dancers such as *Reena Almoneda-Chang*, *Manijeh Ali* and *Roger Sinha*. When not choreographing or performing, she teaches dance and yoga, and does voice acting on the side. Ulka looks forward to fighting the baddies as *Zura* in *Amazon* with sassy choreography and seriously bone-breaking stage combat.

## **Paul de Turreil**

Paul de Turreil began writing fiction at a very young age, when his third-grade teacher encouraged him to serialize a story for his weekly composition homework. Eight months and 136 pages later, the budding writer was hooked. Numerous detours followed, including a B.Sc in Biology from Concordia University, instructor training and certification in White Crane Kung Fu, which he has been teaching professionally since 1997, and co-founding Vangarde Theatre Company in 1998. His twin interests in martial arts and theatre intersect in the discipline of Stage Combat, which he has been practicing and studying since 1996. 2009 marks his return to the Fringe after an improbably long and regrettable absence.

## **Vangarde Theatre Company**

Vangarde Theatre Company was founded in 1998, with the mandate of producing local works by emerging creators, with a special emphasis on accessible entertainment for a wide-ranging public, especially the people who rarely attend the theatre. Bolstered by innovative promotions, including Montreal's first-ever Money-Back Guarantee, Vangarde seeks to expand the current size of the theatre-going public.

The first production was True Faith - a one-man-show (with Ninjas), and its French translation Vérité & Conséquences- un spectacle solo (ninjas inclus) in 1999 which premiered at the Monument-National and enjoyed a three week run at Théâtre de la Veillée (now Théâtre Prospero).

Also in 1999, Vangarde premiered professionally-mounted productions of two plays by local authors, Lenny & Reno by Josh Bloch (a surprise hit!) and X by Matt McLennan. In the 4 years that followed, Vangarde focused mainly on event-specific productions such as variety shows, martial arts demonstrations, and multi-disciplinary works

After a period of relative inactivity, the company re-launched its activities in 2008, for the 2009 St-Ambroise Fringe festival. Amazone is premiering here, while a remixed version of Vérité & Conséquences, the french translation of the infamous "Ninja Attack" show (Fringe 1996, Professional production 1999) hopes to impress a new generation of theatre-goers

### **Schedule:**

Friday, June 12 at 23h45

Sunday, June 14 at 18h

Monday, June 15 at 21h45

Friday, June 19 at 24h

Saturday, June 20 at 17h15

Sunday, June 21 at 19h

### **Price:**

9\$ and money-back guarantee

Info: **Julie Blais**

Tel: 514-254-8399 ou 514-466-0351

Email: [julie.blais.3@umontreal.ca](mailto:julie.blais.3@umontreal.ca)

Website: <http://www.kinalaya.com/vangarde/>