



## Many Happy Returns – Programme

### THE CAST

BARTENDER.....Karley Säägi / Tamika Poetzsch / Anjali Rai  
BOOTLEGGER.....Kat Welsh / Anjali Rai  
HOST.....Jing Cui  
SOCIALITE.....Karen Scora  
TIME CAPTAIN.....Julie Cohn / Kat Welsh

Director.....Julie Cohn

**Director's Note:** This show is a Toronto adaptation of an *IntrigueX* fan favourite, adapted to the 1920s. When we say "the 20s", we immediately call to mind speakeasies, jazz, flappers, black and white photos, ridiculous hats; HISTORY. Then we realize we're in the 20s again. What has changed? What hasn't? What will and won't change in the next 100 years? We think about war, financial crises, women fighting for equity, racism, pandemics – hard times, and they are still here. But we are still finding ways to be bold and brave: rebelling, celebrating our successes, finding reasons to get dolled up and sneak some gin. It's great to be proud of how far we've come, and important to recognize where we still have work to do. In the meantime, let's cut a rug, and maybe even do some scheming!

-Julie Cohn

"Don't think about making art, just get it done. Let everyone else decide if it's good or bad, whether they love it or hate it. While they are deciding, make even more art."

-Andy Warhol

# CAST

## Your mischievous BARTENDERS



**Karley Säägi (she/her)** – A self-proclaimed natural-born performer, Karley Säägi's passion to entertain began at the tender age of six. When her family finally had enough of her constant dinner table performances, they enrolled her in musical theatre and she was instantly enchanted by the world of the arts.

Karley is a classically trained actor who recently graduated from the Second City's Conservatory Program and currently performs improv and sketch comedy across the city. She's a Toronto Film School graduate who started her career in radio and television hosting, and has transitioned to theatre, film, television and voice acting.

Beyond the stage, she's a photographer who has been dubbed the 'pink queen' - capturing candy-inspired pastel hues and over-sweetened aesthetics.



**Tamika Poetzsch (she/her)** – Tamika Poetzsch is a Brampton based actor, who has performed with numerous groups around the GTA. A self-proclaimed jack-of-all-trades, she is always willing to try something new, and loves the skills and friends she gains along the way. Tamika received her BFA in Theatre Performance from Laurentian University, with special training in clown and Shakespeare, and has been having fun taking improv classes with Toronto's Second City.

## Your adventuresome BOOTLEGGERS



**Anjali Rai (she/her), Alternate BARTENDER** – Anjali was last seen in the Secret City Adventure's production of *The Wedding Party* at The Doctor's House and Sawitri Theatre Group's production of *Pandemic Pandemonium*. Before that she was seen in various theatre productions around the GTA. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Theatre from the University of British Columbia (UBC). In addition to being a theatre actor, she also does film, television and voice work. She wishes to thank Julie Cohn for bringing her onto this roaring journey back to the 1920's.



**Kat Welsh (she/her), Alternate TIME CAPTAIN** – Kat Welsh is a theatre creative living in Toronto with a special interest in all things immersive, interactive, accessible, and adventure-based. "Sleep No More" inspired Kat's passion for works that transcend traditional audience-performer relationships to create a more meaningful and fun connection to time, place, and theme. Since seeing the show in 2015, Kat has chased every immersive theatre opportunity, leading her to: produce a hybrid digital/live production of "Albertine in Five Times" (Alumnae Theatre 2022), act in Secret City's "Zombie Apocalypse" (2022-23), produce and star in an original digital escape experience "E-Scape" (2019), and now to her current role as host and event facilitator for WonderLit Productions. Kat's non-theatre passions include mental illness and chronic pain advocacy, pet boarding, volunteering marketing support for small businesses, and her incomparable partner Ryan!

Thanks to this stupidly talented and supportive cast, and to Julie for making it all happen.

## Your sparkling HOST



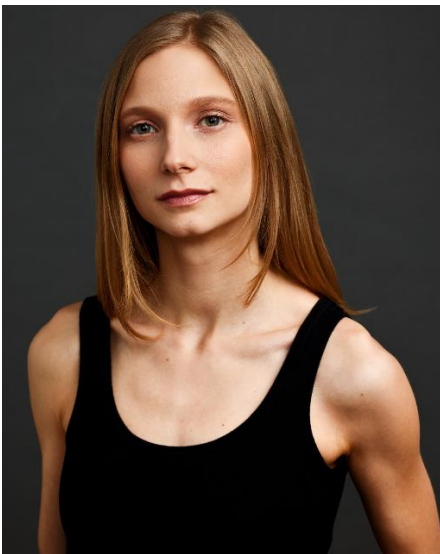
**Jing Cui (she/her)** – An actress with a passion for diverse roles, Jing Cui brings both stage and screen experience to life. From the powerful Witch in “Candy” (Spadina Theatre) to the graceful Li Niang in “Peony Pavilion” at the Shanghai Opera House, she captivates audiences.

Recently, she has played lead roles in short films like “A Prize Worth Dying For” (QMP Production), “Filmmaker” (GBC), “The Help” (GBC), “Divided Dining” (Best Student Film at the 2024 ALT Film Festival), and “Our Favorite Song” (Best Short Film for Cinematography at the 2024 Montreal Film Festival).

A graduate of George Brown College's Acting Program, her skills extend beyond acting. Fluent in English, Mandarin, and French, she's also a skilled Chinese Kunqu opera singer and Tango dancer, a brown belt in karate, and adept at horse riding and skiing.

For more information, visit her website at <https://jingcui.ca>.

## Your dazzling SOCIALITE



**Karen Scora (she/her)** – Karen is a Dora-nominated actor who has studied improv at Second City, stage combat at Rapier Wit and is a graduate of Sheridan College and UofT's joint Theatre and Drama Studies program. **Selected Theatre Credits:** An Evening at Sea (Whew Power Generation with Toronto Fringe Festival), The Caligula Exiles (Fireworks Festival with Alumnae Theatre) Back to the Bar (Sidestreet Theatre with Toronto Fringe Festival), Bone Cage (One Four One Collective with The Assembly Theatre) Back Mirror (New Ideas Festival with Alumnae Theatre) **Selected Film/TV Credits:** Succubus (Burgundy Dragon), Believer (FAST motion studios), An Unexpected Killer (Oxygen), Hotel Paranormal (T+E). Karen is also an educator who teaches children with a particular emphasis on sharing her passion for theatre through drama and storytelling based programs. When not creating or teaching, you can find Karen outdoors, playing board games, and cooking/eating, although generally not all at once!

## Your trusty TIME CAPTAIN



**Julie Cohn (she/them), Director** – Julie is an actor, director, and devised theatre creator with over 35 years' experience in theatre, film, television, voice over, radio, and dance. She is passionate about creating immersive experiences, and is actively seeking Creative Direction roles! Julie has served as Artistic Director to two multidisciplinary production companies, BEARS! In The City! and Palette Collective, and is the boots-on-the-ground Creative Director for IntrigueX in Toronto.

Julie's recent awards include: CanadaShorts Award of Excellence and Best Acting Ensemble for *The Last Supper* (Billet Media/48 Hour Film Project), Top 5 Vancouver Fringe Shows for *Is That How Clowns Have Sex?* (Devising, Direction/Maximaliste Productions). Julie recently co-created and directed the workshop version of her upcoming new show, "(Un)remembering" (workshop version, "Stepping into the (Un)known") for Nuit Blanche '23, in collaboration with IntrigueX in NY. Julie's other recent direction work includes "Zombie Apocalypse" for Secret City, and an upcoming devised fairy tale show. Catch Julie on TV in *What We Do in the Shadows* (FX), and stay tuned for her upcoming detective comedy TV series, "Whomst've?!" (BITC).

Julie would like to thank The Danu, IntrigueX, the entire cast, and especially the incredible Jono Naito for their commitment and sharing in creating this piece; for a phenomenal sold out initial summer run of *Many Happy Returns*; and for an incredible benefit show for Glad Day Books, the oldest surviving Queer bookstore in the world!

Julie enjoys sharing compelling stories with integrity and is passionate about anti-oppression. Her artistic mandate is to entertain, enlighten, and inspire.

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Julie also runs the largest monthly escape room meetup in the world, in conjunction with Morty! Feel free to join us, here: <https://www.meetup.com/toronto-escape-rooms/>



## Thank Yous

We wish to extend a heartfelt and giant thank you to the following people and organizations:

- ❖ Joshua, Scott, and the staff of The Danu, for their generous use of their gorgeous spaces and general help producing this show
- ❖ Jono Naito, for passionate, tireless, and incredible energy; support, resources, faith, trust, genuineness, and guidance
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- ❖ Our incredibly creative, hilarious, and fantastic performers: Anjali, Jing, Karen, Karley, Kat, and Tamika, thank you, thank you, thank you, and break all the legs!
- ❖ Our prior performers for fantastic shows: Bonnie and Saint Stella
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- ❖ Andy Bauch, Shawn Clisso, Neda Delavarpour, and Morty, for giving the world a platform to explore escape rooms and immersive happenings, and for creating the best jobs ever
- ❖ The Toronto Escape Room Meetup gang for sharing an unabashed love of immersion, adventure, and play, and for continuing to come back for more
- ❖ Meow Wolf for showing the world what immersion can do; for fostering a culture of open sharing; and giving artists a shared space, a platform, and a community
- ❖ One Yellow Rabbit for the inspiration and incredible partnerships
- ❖ Tom Scholte for sharing the joy of deeply connected devised theatre
- ❖ YRDSB Arts Camp for being a home for performers in need
- ❖ Every artist who is out there making it happen. Keep making art.

