

A Number Large-Print, Screen Reader-Friendly Program

Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre presents

A Number

By Caryl Churchill

November 12-29, 2025

Run Time

60 minutes, no intermission.

Warnings

Mature content, including reference to violence and suicide; occasional strong language; flashing lights.

Low-Vision Friendly

This production is mostly understandable by dialogue alone. For an audio introduction to the visual elements, visit royalmtc.ca/LVF



Things to know about our theatre

Ushers: Royal MTC's loyal volunteer ushers are available at every performance to assist patrons. They wear black or black and white, and lanyards with name tags.

Latecomers: Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of the House Manager.

Courtesy to others: Talking, candy wrappers and coughing are distracting to fellow patrons and actors. We ask you to please keep noise to a minimum during a performance. Thank you for your cooperation.

Scents and Allergies: A number of Royal MTC patrons have medical reactions caused by scented products, so much so that

they can't enjoy the show.

Please consider others before using items such as colognes, perfumes and hairspray.

Your thoughtfulness is appreciated.

Hearing enhancement: FM Listening Devices are available free of charge in the lobby at the John Hirsch Mainstage and Tom Hendry Warehouse. Please see the House Manager for details.

Prohibited: The use of cameras and recording devices is strictly prohibited. Mobile devices must be turned off. To be contacted in an emergency, leave your name and seat number with the House Manager.

Director's Notes by Alex Poch Goldin

Dolly the sheep would have been 30 years old this year – the first cloned mammal died in 2003, but her spirit lives on. I don't mean that she may be cloned again, but the spirit of progress, technology, ethical compromise and financial greed that shaped her continues to thrive. In many ways, Artificial Intelligence is the Dolly of today as we face the profound societal impacts of AI. I read *A Number* over 20 years ago and was deeply affected by the play, the language, the ideas, the structure and dilemmas explored between a father and his son(s). Reading the play again in 2024, I was still awe struck but for different reasons. Now as a dad, I viewed the play from the father's perspective. E.g. If you

were a lousy parent who damaged your kid, and you could start all over, would you do it? Try to get it right this time? Wash away the guilt, the disappointment and start again with a fresh human to imprint on? That is the question that *Salter*, the father in the play, contends with. But to remake the past is to live with the consequences. Caryl Churchill is brilliant and continues to confront us. She manages to skewer society, family and free will all in the same instant. She pits father against son(s) and stretches the filial bonds to absurd degrees. *Salter* seeks escape, or possibly redemption, for his life choices. For the son(s) – Bernard's questioning of identity, history, family

allegiance and the unsettling implications of being one of a number of copies is chilling. The father denies and dissembles while his son(s) must poke through a shield of subterfuge,

Synopsis

Having discovered that there are “a number” of him, Bernard comes to his father Salter, looking for answers. How and why would he ever agree to a child’s replication, and what triggered his son’s cloning in the first place? What evolves are conversations questioning

Enrich your Experience

Do you want to delve deeper into the play? Every show has an enrichment guide with help from experts and educators with background context, resources

probing the disturbing nature of their beginnings to discover who they are. In an age of rapid technological advances, what could be more human? Thank you for being here.

originality, identity and the value of human life. As Salter faces the legacy he has created, and the ethical impacts of his decisions, he is forced to confront his sons and face the truth about the personal cost of scientific progress and the need for self-perpetuation.

to explore and questions to keep the conversation going.

RoyalMTC.ca/

EnrichmentGuides.



Dolly the Sheep

By Tala Gammon

A Number was written in the years following the first successful cloning of an adult mammal. Dolly the sheep, born July 5, 1996, was introduced to the world in early 1997, setting off a wave of speculation about the cloning of humans and its greater ramifications. While the method of cloning used to create Dolly was highly inefficient and technical, news reports suggested we were on the verge of developing human clones, and governments rushed to respond to the threat. The New York Times Retro Report titled, "The story of Dolly the Cloned Sheep" contains archived footage of many popular concerns, including the idea of a "future Hitler" producing an army of themselves, and the suggestion that humans were playing God. The work and its public discussion also opened up debate about the ethics around stem cell research, pioneered by American scientists

of the time. This related research used stem cells harvested from aborted embryos. While the Bush Administration did succeed in shutting down this research in America at the time, Professor Shinya Yamanaka was able to develop a method for creating stem cells from adult cells, receiving a Nobel Prize in 2012 for his work. This has relieved some of the controversy surrounding stem cell research, and has allowed scientists to develop ways to grow healthy tissue for use in medical treatments. When asked to consider human cloning, scientists will point to the high risk of unsuccessful tests, and the multiple ways the processes could go wrong both before and after birth. Dolly was one successful clone in hundreds of tests. Even if an exact clone of a human was desired, the clone's experiences as they grew up would produce differences. In reality, Dolly was a by-product of experiments meant to duplicate parts of cells to produce material for medical research. The

unreliability of the method used for her cloning has meant it in itself has not stuck around, though methods inspired by her are used to clone pets and livestock who exhibit exceptional traits. The legacy of Dolly's experiment is one of great advancements in medical research and our understanding of genetics. Thanks, Dolly!

FUN FACTS

- Dolly lived for six and a half years.
- Dolly had six biological offspring, and was the source for nine more clones.
- Dolly was named after Dolly Parton, because her genetic material was taken from her genetic source's breast tissue.
- You can still visit Dolly at the National Museum of Scotland, as her taxidermied body is on display, and is one of the most popular exhibits.

Credits

The Creative Team

Director: Alex Poch Goldin

Set Designer: Kara Pankiw * (Past Jean Murray - Moray Sinclair apprenticeship recipient)

Costume Designer: Daina Leitold

Lighting Designer: Ksenia Broda-Milian * (Past Jean Murray - Moray Sinclair scholarship and apprenticeship recipient)

Composer & Sound Designer: Ashley Au

Assistant Director: Sarah Constible

Assistant Sound Designer: Natanielle Felicitas

Stage Manager: Katie Hoppa

Apprentice Stage Manager: Larissa Shabaga

The Cast

Bernard 1 / Bernard 2 / Michael Black: Rodrigo Beilfuss

Salter: Victor Ertmanis



Visit our website to see headshots and zoom in on biographies!

<https://royalmtc.ca/Current-Plays/A-Number.aspx#cast-crew>

Biographies

Creative Team

Caryl Churchill

Caryl Churchill was born on September 3, 1938 in London and grew up in the Lake District and in Montreal. She was educated at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford. Downstairs, her first play written while she was still at university, was first staged in 1958 and won an award at the Sunday Times National Union of Students Drama Festival. Caryl Churchill's plays include: *Owners, Traps, Light Shining in Buckinghamshire, Cloud 9, Top Girls, Fen, Serious Money, Ice Cream, Mad Forest, The Skriker, Blue Heart, This is a Chair, Far Away, A Number, Drunk Enough To Say I Love You?, Seven Jewish Children, Love & Information, Here We Go* and

Escaped Alone. Music theatre includes *Lives of the Great Poisoners* and *Hotel*, both with Orlando Gough. Caryl has also written for radio and television.

Alex Poch Goldin

Royal MTC Directing debut.

Acting: *Indecent, The Lehman Trilogy, Network, Trouble in Mind, Bang Bang* (Evie Award), *King Lear, Scorched, My Name is Asher Lev* (Meta Award).

Upcoming: appearing in *Murder on the Orient Express* (with Citadel).

Other Theatre Directing: *This Hotel* (TiFT); *Bully* (Artistic Fraud Newfoundland); *Jim and Shorty* (Factory); *Going* (Buddies); *The Dining Room, Love and Information* (Toronto Film

School); *Anybody and Nobody* (Theatre Centre); *Bananafish: The Album* (SummerWorks).

Alex has worked extensively in film and television and performed across Canada including Soulpepper, Canadian Stage, Citadel, Theatre Calgary, Tarragon and Segal Centre. He has published/produced several plays and is completing a residency for WJT (Edenbridge) and a commission for Royal MTC (Intrepid). Upcoming: His play *The Right Road to Pontypool* will receive three staged readings at WJT in November.

Et cetera alexpochgoldin.com

Kara Pankiw

Royal MTC *Sexual Misconduct of the Middle Classes*

Other Theatre *Pauline Boutal, entre les toiles et les planches*

(TCM); *Hand to God, Smarty Pants* (Magnus); *Summer of Semitism, Bar Mitzvah Boy, After Jerusalem* (WJT); *Guys and Dolls* (Randolph College for the Performing Arts); *The Cave* (Theatre Passe Muraille); *The Velveteen Rabbit* (Carousel Players); *This is How We Got Here* (Native Earth Performing Arts); Set and Costume Assistant (Shaw); *La Liste* (TCM); *Awaken* (Zone41/ SIR).

Film/TV *The Great Salish Heist, Burden of Truth Season 3.*

Training Graduate of the University of Winnipeg's Theatre and Film program, as well as the Environmental Design program at the University of Manitoba having studied Architecture. She is also a member of the Associated Designers of Canada.

Daina Leitold

Royal MTC Costume Design:

Waitress, The Recipe (with

TPM), *among men* (with

TPM). Set Design: *Mix Tapes*

From My Mom. Upcoming:

Hockey Mom Hockey Dad (Set

and Costumes), *Holland*

(Costumes – with TPM).

Other Theatre (selected)

Costume Design: *Rock of Ages*,

Rent (Rainbow); *End of the Line*

(TPM); *Twelfth Night* (SIR);

Narrow Bridge, Bar Mitzvah Boy

(WJT). Set Design: *Raised by*

Women, Year of Magical

Thinking (PTE); *The Dark Lady*

(SIR); *PLÉ* (Plé

Collective/MTYP). Set, Prop and

Costume Design: *Glad to Be*

Here, Meet Me at Dawn, Edward

II, Cock, Bull (TBTR); *Hamlet*,

Timon of Athens (SIR); *Red*

Earth (One Trunk/TPM).

Et Cetera SATA Nomination for

Production Excellence (*The Dark*

Lady); Evie Award for

Outstanding Design (*Red*

Earth).

Ksenia Broda-Milian

Royal MTC Costume Designer:

King James, Yaga. Assistant

Designer: *As You Like It, Matilda*

the Musical. Design Apprentice:

The Seagull, Cabaret, Sherlock

Holmes. 2020/21 National

Mentorship Program. Design

team for MTC/MBA Lawyers

Plays: *Mamma Mia!, Urinetown*.

Upcoming: *Holland* (with TPM).

Other Theatre Selected recent

set, costume and/or lighting

designs: *Gather, The Velveteen*

Rabbit (MTYP); *Rock of Ages*,

Breaking Up, Cash (Rainbow);

The Band's Visit, Address

Unknown (WJT); *Yaga* (Belfry);

None of this is Happening

(TPM); *Much Ado* (SIR);
Katharsis (PTE); *It's a Wonderful
Life* (Magnus).

Training/Teaching U of W
(BAH, BSc), U of Alberta (MFA),
Pratt Institute, Banff Centre.
Teaching: Creative Manitoba, U
of W, Musical Stage, MTYP,
Theatre Alberta.

Et Cetera Ksenia is Royal
MTC's Education and
Enrichment Manager, a Rick
Hansen Foundation Accessibility
Certification Professional, and
ADC659 member. Grateful for
support of my family, this
production team and mentors,
including Per Brask in whose
class I first read *A Number*, and
who once remarked "sh*t
happens – and it's a good thing
too, otherwise we wouldn't have
plays."

Ashley Au

Royal MTC *Casey and Diana*
(with TA), *Little Women*, *The
Recipe* (with TPM), *The Lehman
Trilogy*, *among men* (with TPM),
Burning Mom, *Sexual
Misconduct of the Middle
Classes*, *Trouble in Mind*,
Orlando. 2022/23 National
Mentorship Program.

Other Theatre *Burning Mom*
(Arts Club); *The Year of Magical
Thinking* (PTE); 2024 This Gen
Fellow (Why Not Theatre).

Training B.Mus (Jazz
Performance) Brandon
University, School of Music.

Et Cetera Ashley Au (she/they)
is a Winnipeg-based bassist,
composer, sound designer,
arranger and queer creative. A
multifaceted musician, Ashley
specializes in the upright and
electric basses – performing,
touring and recording

extensively for the last 15 years. As a composer and sound artist, Ashley's work can be found behind various theatre and dance productions as well as galleries and stages internationally. Ashley is the artistic director of Cluster New Music + Integrated Arts Festival.

Sarah Constible

Royal MTC (selected) Actor: *As You Like It, Di and Viv and Rose, Shakespeare in Love* (with Citadel), *Sarah Ballenden, The Fighting Days, The Penelopiad, The 39 Steps, Bleeding Hearts, After Miss Julie.*

Other Theatre (selected) Actor: *Much Ado About Nothing, Timon of Athens, Richard III, Henry V* (SIR); *Dragonfly, Reservations, Beautiful Man* (TPM); *A Doll's House, Part 2* (Segal); *Strawberries in January, The*

Swearing Jar, Godspell (PTE); *Am I Not King?* (zone41).

Director: *The Winter's Tale, Julius Caesar, Stripped Down Hamlet* (SIR); *Mary's Wedding* (TPM); *Hamlet* (Snakeskin Jacket); *Edward II* (TBTR).

Film/TV Actor: *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever!*, *The Zealot, The Stone Angel, High Life, Todd and the Book of Pure Evil, Less Than Kind, Flag Day.*
Et Cetera Sarah is in two bands, both of which have albums coming out soon: *Claire Thérèse* and *The Lockdown* this fall, and *The Fu Fu Chi Chi Choir* in the spring.

Katie Hoppa

Royal MTC Assistant Stage Manager: *Waitress, The Mountaintop.*

Other Theatre: Select recent credits: *Liars at a Funeral,*

Raised by Women, Year of Magical Thinking (PTE); *Bad Parent* (PTE/vAct); *Frozen, Mary Poppins, The Little Mermaid, The Wizard of Oz, Cinderella* (Rainbow); *A Charlie Brown Double Bill* (MTYP); seven seasons of rain and sunshine with SIR.

Et Cetera Thanks to Kristjan, Rupert and Juniper for all their support this season and to Mike, Ali, Zahra and Dustyn, who I wouldn't have gotten here without.

Larissa Shabaga

Royal MTC *Murder for Two, Mix Tapes From My Mom* (tour).

Other Theatre Assistant SM: *Macbeth, Waiting for Godot* (SIR). Apprentice SM: *Mary Poppins* (Rainbow). Production Assistant: *The Little Mermaid, RENT, The Wizard of Oz, The Hockey Sweater: A Musical* (Rainbow).

Training Graduate of the University of Winnipeg with a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre and Film.

Et Cetera Thank you to my family, friends and colleagues for their never-ending support and guidance.

Cast

Rodrigo Beilfuss

Royal MTC Actor: *Little Women*, *The Three Musketeers*. Assistant Director: *Private Lives*.

Upcoming: *Murder on the Orient Express* (with Citadel).

Other Theatre (selected) Actor:

Four seasons at Stratford Festival (2016–2019); *The Player King* (SIR); *A Dance to the End of the World* (PTE).

Director: *The Year of Magical Thinking*, *Pandora* (PTE); *Waiting for Godot*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Iago Speaks*, *The Dark Lady*, *Hamlet* (SIR).

Film/TV Nobody 2; Intersection; The Snow Must Go On, The Santa Summit, Snowkissed (Hallmark).

Training Birmingham

Conservatory (Stratford); MA in Classical Acting from LAMDA

(UK); BA (Honours) from the University of Winnipeg; Michael Langham Workshop (Stratford). **Et Cetera** Rodrigo is the Artistic Director of Shakespeare in the Ruins (SIR).

Victor Ertmanis

Royal MTC Warehouse:

Automatic Pilot 1985. Mainstage: Marco in *A View from the Bridge* 1989.

Other Theatre Five seasons at the NAC English Company from 1978 to start my career; worked in every major and many minor theatre across Canada; nine seasons at Stratford; *Inexpressible Island* 2020; this is my second Caryl Churchill production – *Cloud 9* in the early '80s.

Film/TV I keep telling people that if you don't look for me, I will show up in the oddest films or TV. Upcoming: appearing in Hallmark's Holiday in Happy Hollow movie this Christmas.

Training I was trained on the job. Amateur work at 12 years

old, semi-pro at age 17, pro at age 23. I'm now 73 years old and still learning.

Et Cetera I think this will be my theatrical swan song. My memory is still good, but the body is revolting. I'll stick to small film work from now on.

Message from the Artistic Director, Kelly Thornton

I'm thrilled to welcome you to the theatre. While *Elf – The Musical*, our Mainstage offering, is sure to delight audiences throughout the holiday season, our production of Caryl Churchill's *A Number* at the Warehouse will feed the theatregoer who is looking for more edgy fare. Interestingly both plays deal with fathers and sons, identity and belonging, yet the exercise in comparison stops there. *A Number* is a brilliant psychological drama from one of the most exciting playwrights of the 20th century. Caryl Churchill wrote *A Number* in 2002, and its themes of technology, ethics and

humanity have triggered a revival across English-language theatre. Known for her daring and innovative approach to social issues, Churchill skewers the possibility of human cloning – sensationalized in 1997 by the cloning of the first mammal, Dolly the Sheep. With the rise of AI, and the disastrous potential of technology on humanity, this play raises the alarm bells. At the centre, it is also about love, parenting and the mistakes we make along the way as we struggle to do our best amidst life's challenges. Thanks for joining us, and enjoy the show!

About the Production

A Number is presented by arrangement with Concord

Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc.

www.concordtheatricals.com

A Number was first presented by the English Stage Company at the Royal Court Theatre, London, September 2002 U.S. Premiere by New York Theatre Workshop, December 2004.

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About MTC

Royal MTC is a member of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres and engages, under the terms of the Canadian Theatre Agreement, professional artists who are members of the Canadian Actors' Equity Association.

Scenery, Carpentry and Show Running Crew at the John Hirsch Mainstage and the Tom Hendry Warehouse are members of IATSE Local 63.

Land Acknowledgement

Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre
is proud to call Manitoba home.

Royal MTC is located in
Winnipeg on Treaty 1, the
traditional territory of the
Anishinaabeg, Inninewak,
Anishinewak, Dakota Oyate and
Denesuline, and the National

Homeland of the Red River
Métis. We are thankful for the
benefits sharing this land has
afforded us, acknowledge the
responsibilities of the Treaties,
and embrace the opportunity to
partner with Indigenous
communities in spirit of
reconciliation and collaboration.

List of Theatre Abbreviations

A.C.T. American Conservatory Theater • San Francisco, CA

Arts Club Arts Club Theatre Company • Vancouver, BC

ATF Atlantic Theatre Festival • Wolfville, NS

ATP Alberta Theatre Projects • Calgary, AB

BAM Brooklyn Academy of Music • NYC

Bard on the Beach Bard on the Beach Shakespeare Festival •
Vancouver, BC

Belfry The Belfry Theatre • Victoria, BC

Blyth Blyth Theatre Festival • Blyth, ON

Broadway Theatre district • New York, NY

CBC Canadian Broadcasting Corporation

Centaur Centaur Theatre Company • Montreal, QC

Citadel The Citadel Theatre • Edmonton, AB

COC Canadian Opera Company • Toronto, ON

CS Canadian Stage • Toronto, ON

Dora Dora Mavor Moore Award • Toronto, ON

Drayton Drayton Entertainment • Ontario

Dry Cold Dry Cold Productions • Winnipeg, MB

Factory Factory Theatre • Toronto, ON

GCTC The Great Canadian Theatre Company • Ottawa, ON

Grand The Grand Theatre • London, ON

HGJT Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company • Toronto, ON

Mirvish Mirvish Productions • Toronto, ON

Moving Target Moving Target Theatre Company • Winnipeg, MB

MTYP Manitoba Theatre for Young People • Winnipeg, MB

NAC National Arts Centre • Ottawa, ON

Necessary Angel Necessary Angel Theatre Company • Toronto, ON

Neptune Neptune Theatre • Halifax, NS

NFB National Film Board of Canada

NTS National Theatre School of Canada • Montreal, QC

Persephone Persephone Theatre • Saskatoon, SK

PTAM Popular Theatre Alliance of Manitoba • Winnipeg, MB

PTE Prairie Theatre Exchange • Winnipeg, MB

Rainbow Rainbow Stage • Winnipeg, MB

RNT Royal National Theatre • London, England

Royal Alex The Royal Alexandra Theatre • Toronto, ON

RSC Royal Shakespeare Company • Stratford-upon-Avon, England

RWB Royal Winnipeg Ballet • Winnipeg, MB

Sarasvati Sarasvati Productions • Winnipeg, MB

Segal The Segal Centre for Performing Arts • Montreal, QC

Shaw Shaw Festival • Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON

SIR Shakespeare in the Ruins • Winnipeg, MB

Soulpepper Soulpepper Theatre Company • Toronto, ON

Stratford Stratford Festival • Stratford, ON

SummerWorks SummerWorks Theatre Festival • Toronto, ON

TA Theatre Aquarius • Hamilton, ON

Tarragon Tarragon Theatre • Toronto, ON

TBTR Theatre by the River • Winnipeg, MB

TC Theatre Calgary • Calgary, AB

TiFT Talk is Free Theatre • Barrie, ON

TNB Theatre New Brunswick • Fredericton, NB

Toronto Free Toronto Free Theatre • Toronto, ON

TPM Theatre Projects Manitoba • Winnipeg, MB

TSO Toronto Symphony Orchestra

U of M University of Manitoba

U of T University of Toronto

U of W University of Winnipeg

ViC The Village Conservatory for Music Theatre • Winnipeg, MB

VP Vancouver Playhouse Theatre Company • Vancouver, BC

West End Theatre district • London, England

WCT Western Canada Theatre • Kamloops, BC

WJT Winnipeg Jewish Theatre

WSO Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra

WST Winnipeg Studio Theatre

YPT Young People's Theatre • Toronto, ON

zone41 zone41 theatre • Winnipeg, MB