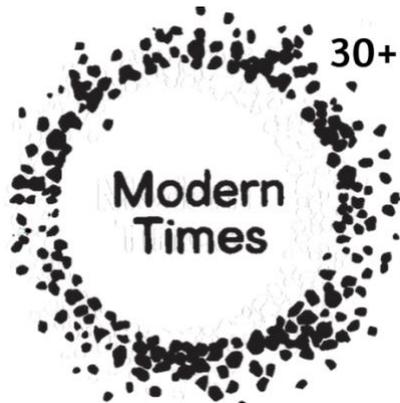


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MODERN TIMES STAGE COMPANY ANNOUNCES DEPARTURE OF CO-FOUNDER AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR SOHEIL PARSA

Toronto, ON – It is with sadness and deeply felt gratitude that Modern Times Stage Company’s Board of Directors is announcing today that company **Co-Founder and Artistic Director, Soheil Parsa**, has decided after a long period of personal reflection, to step down from his role with the company effective June 30, 2021, concluding his 31 years of artistic leadership of the company.

In response to Parsa’s departure, the Board has formed a selection committee to find a new Artistic Director to officially take over the company’s artistic direction on July 1, 2022. This individual will be selected from a broad range of candidates across Canada. He/she/they will continue to reflect the mandate of inclusion and diversity that has been essential to Modern Times and its theatre projects.

“The Board of Modern Times Theatre is deeply moved with the recent news that the company’s founder and visionary Artistic Director, Soheil Parsa, has decided to step down after so many years,” says **Board Chair Charles C. Smith**, on behalf of the Board. *“Soheil is a treasure in Canadian theatre. His deep commitment to contemporary theatre, one that reflects local and global perspectives, and his consistent and remarkable talents as a director have had a profound impact on our theatre scene. Soheil has been an innovator who has given life to theatre in modern times. We will miss him very much and wish him all the very best in his future adventures and his ongoing contributions to Canadian theatre.”*

“Leaving Modern Times was not an easy decision to make,” comments **Parsa**. *“Without the company, there would have been hardly any opportunities for me as a racialized, immigrant artist thirty years ago. It certainly was not an easy road to travel, I was confronted with a lot of obstacles and challenges. But through all these years, Modern Times has been an integral part of my artistic identity, it has been a place where I have been able to create opportunities both for myself as well as for many other Canadian theatre professionals and it has always been a welcoming and creative environment for actors of all racial and ethnic backgrounds. I am immensely proud of these achievements, of our unique contribution to Canadian theatre, the pioneering work towards a more diverse theater landscape, and the recognition that the company’s artistic work has gained nationally and internationally.”*

Parsa adds, *“Passing on this work and offering its opportunities to a young successor who will continue to lead the company in new and exciting directions, is very much in the spirit of Modern Times, and it feels like the right time to do so.”*

Parsa’s Co-Founder and Co-Artistic Director Peter Farbridge will remain for one more year in a transitional role of Artistic Producer and will himself leave the company on June 30, 2022.

*“Most of my career thus far has been dedicated to the work of Modern Times, and to reaching for the values of dialogue and co-existence that the company upholds,” says **Farbridge**. “I’m so proud of what we’ve achieved. It’s taken a village to raise Modern Times over 31 years—funders, sponsors, actors, designers, technicians, administrators, producers, and audiences have all contributed to its success. I hope audiences and the Toronto community continue to support the company as it welcomes a new artistic directorship for its next life cycle.”*

The Board is proud of Soheil’s work as the director of all the productions at Modern Times and thank both Soheil and Peter for their 31-year contribution to Canada’s theatrical landscape through the company.

The Modern Times Stage Company was established in Toronto in 1989 by Farbridge and Parsa with a focus on the creation of original plays and the re-imagining of classical work. The company has also translated the plays of Iranian dramatists. Under Iranian-Canadian Parsa’s leadership, the company’s work has been performed in Colombia, Cuba, Iran, Bosnia & Herzegovina, and Denmark. The company has been honoured with 16 Toronto DORA AWARDS and has been nominated for 60, notably including their 2015 production of *Blood Wedding* which won 6 Dora Awards and two Toronto Theatre Critics Association Awards. Their most recent production was 2019’s *The Cherry Orchard*.

Soheil Parsa is an award-winning director, actor, writer, dramaturg, choreographer and teacher, whose professional theatre career spans forty years and two continents. In his native Iran, Soheil completed studies in Theatre Performance at the University of Tehran and began a promising career as an actor and director. Arriving in Canada with his family in 1984, Soheil completed a second Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Studies at York University and then went on to establish Modern Times Stage Company. In 1995 Soheil received a New Pioneers Award by Skills for Change for Outstanding Contribution to the Arts by a recent immigrant to Canada. Soheil’s work at Modern Times has been recognized with 6 Dora Mavor Moore Awards, a Chalmers Fellowship in 2002, and a Senior Creation Grant from the Canada Council, as well as a number of international prizes and master class requests. In 2007 and 2010 he was short-listed for the Siminovitch Prize in Theatre Celebrating Directors, the highest honour in Canadian theatre. Soheil was awarded the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Award for his contribution as a theatre artist to Canadian society.

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