

# Belles Sœurs

THE MUSICAL

COPA DE ORO PRODUCTIONS AND THE SEGAL CENTRE  
FOR PERFORMING ARTS PRESENT

## BELLES SŒURS: THE MUSICAL

WORLD PREMIERE ENGLISH ADAPTATION  
OF THE INTERNATIONALLY-ACCLAIMED MUSICAL SENSATION



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**Montreal, February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2014** – Copa de Oro Productions and the Segal Centre for Performing Arts have secured the rights to the English-language adaptation of *Belles-Sœurs*, the Quebec musical sensation based on the play by Michel Tremblay. **BELLES SŒURS: THE MUSICAL** will premiere to Montreal audiences as part of the Segal Centre's 2014-2015 Season from **October 19 – November 9, 2014**.

With book, lyrics and direction by **René Richard Cyr** and music by Juno Award-winning recording artist **Daniel Bélanger**, *Belles-Sœurs* took Quebec by storm after its premiere at the Théâtre d'Aujourd'hui in 2010, garnering unanimous critical acclaim and touring throughout the province and to Paris in 2012. Cyr and Bélanger have joined forces with award-winning Canadian writers **Neil Bartram** and **Brian Hill** to adapt this enormous Quebec hit for English audiences.

*"Our task in adapting the French musical to English has been to combine the essence of our original production with the structure of the Broadway-style musical while ensuring that the story and the characters remain quintessentially Quebecois,"* stated René Richard Cyr, who makes his English theatre directorial debut at the Segal Centre with this exciting new production.

*"We've always admired Michel Tremblay's play Les Belles-sœurs and we were stunned by how powerful René Richard's and Daniel's musical adaptation was when we saw it. Our task has been to retain the essence of these iconic women and tap into their universality for an English-speaking audience. It's been a fascinating and joyful challenge getting inside their heads and finding a counterpart for their unique voices,"* said composer and lyricist Neil Bartram and book-writer Brian Hill. The New-York based duo have created multiple musical theatre hits including Broadway's *The Story of My Life* (nominated for four Drama Desk Awards).

*Belles Sœurs: The Musical* is the brainchild of **Allan Sandler**, CEO of Montreal's Copa de Oro Productions, the well-known Quebec producer of highly successful theatrical productions in both the English and French languages, including *Chicago: The Musical*, *Grease*, and the Mirvish production of *War Horse*.

*"After five years of hard work we have succeeded in adapting and structuring this musical for the English market, while still holding on to the wonderful spirit of the Michel Tremblay play. Neil and Brian have worked closely with Cyr and Bélanger to update the music and lyrics and make them accessible to all musical theatre lovers. We look forward to seeing our creation take flight at the Segal Centre with Michel Tremblay's blessing,"* said Sandler.

### BELLES SŒURS: THE MUSICAL

BASED ON THE PLAY  
*LES BELLES-SŒURS* BY  
**MICHEL TREMBLAY**

BOOK, LYRICS AND DIRECTED BY  
**RENÉ RICHARD CYR**

MUSIC BY  
**DANIEL BÉLANGER**

ENGLISH BOOK ADAPTED BY  
**BRIAN HILL**

ENGLISH LYRICS ADAPTED BY  
**NEIL BARTRAM**

MUSIC ADAPTATION AND  
ADDITIONAL MUSIC BY  
**NEIL BARTRAM**

ORCHESTRATIONS AND  
MUSICAL DIRECTION BY  
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# Belles Sœurs

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## THE MUSICAL

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“Forty six years ago, *Les Belles-sœurs* began speaking in jòal in Montreal. A few years later they spoke English in Toronto and, after that, over twenty-five languages around the world. And yes even in Yiddish... Four years ago they began singing in jòal in Montreal and soon they will sing in English for you. These fifteen women will never cease to amaze me!” stated **Michel Tremblay**, celebrated playwright of *Les Belles-sœurs* and over 26 published plays.

### Story

Tremblay’s 1968 tragicomedy about a working-class Montreal housewife whose life is turned upside down after winning one million trading stamps takes on a whole new dimension in this outrageously fun musical celebration.

“We have the really exciting opportunity to take this beloved local tale and make it resonate through the medium of the Broadway-style musical. Audiences will delight in this new adaptation featuring the same characters, stories and even the set they fell in love with in the original production,” said **Lisa Rubin**, Artistic and Executive Director of the Segal Centre.

*Belles Sœurs: The Musical* is born out of the Segal Centre’s longstanding association with Copa de Oro Productions (*Ain’t Misbehavin’*, *The Mahalia Jackson Musical*) and the Segal’s continuing efforts to adapt Francophone productions for its audiences. The Segal partnered with Théâtre du Rideau Vert in 2010 to produce *Old Wicked Songs/Une musique inquiétante* by Jon Marans, whose English version won the *Association québécoise des critiques de théâtre* award, and again in 2012 with Morris Panych’s *Vigil*.

*Belles Sœurs: The Musical* is currently in its final stages of completion. Casting has been completed and will be announced at the unveiling of the Segal Centre’s full 2014–2015 Season on March 27<sup>th</sup>.

*Belles Sœurs: The Musical* is presented by arrangement with B-14 Productions and Agence Goodwin.

### About the Segal Centre for Performing Arts

The Segal Centre is a meeting place for all of the performing arts, showcasing the best professional artists from here and abroad and playing a leading role in the artistic development of Montreal’s youth and the creation of its cultural legacy. Through theatre, music, dance, cinema and the Academy, the Segal Centre is setting a broad vision by recognizing the importance of building bridges through the arts and supporting multicultural projects in Montreal. The Centre’s commitment is to ensure that creativity resonates within our community and that it remains accessible and inspiring each and every day. [segalcentre.org](http://segalcentre.org)

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# Belles Sœurs

THE MUSICAL



## CREATIVE TEAM

### MICHEL TREMBLAY

PLAYRIGHT (*LES BELLES-SŒURS*)

Major figure in Quebec theatre, Michel Tremblay has built an impressive body of work as a playwright, novelist, translator and screenwriter. We owe him 26 plays, three musicals, twelve novels, one book of tales, four collections of short stories, seven film scripts, 23 translations and adaptations of foreign works, one opera libretto, as well as the lyrics for dozens of songs. His plays have been published and translated in a number of languages and have garnered critical acclaim in Canada, the United States and all over Europe. His name can be found in the Larousse and Robert Dictionaries, the Who's Who Encyclopedia and the Dictionary of International Biography. A six-time recipient of Canada Council for the Arts grants, Michel Tremblay has been awarded over fifty prizes over the course of his illustrious fifty-year career.

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### RENÉ RICHARD CYR

BOOK, LYRICS, DIRECTOR

Actor, director, writer and television host René Richard Cyr was Artistic Director and Co-General Manager of the Théâtre d'Aujourd'hui from 1998 to 2004 and Co-Artistic Director of Théâtre PàP (Petit à Petit) from 1981 to 1998. As an actor, he was awarded two prizes for his portrayal of Michel Tremblay's Hosanna and was featured in many television shows, including *Cover Girl*, for which he was nominated for two *Prix Gémeaux*. We also saw him on the big screen in Luc Picard's *Ésimésac* and *Babine*. Artistic Director of several variety shows, René Richard has directed plays by Molière, Shakespeare, Camus, Brecht, Williams, Genet, Ionesco, and new creations by Michel Tremblay, Michel Marc Bouchard, Daniel Danis, René Daniel Dubois and Serge Boucher. On top of his work as a television host and director, his adaptations of the popular television series *Motel Hélène* and *24 poses (portraits)* by Serge Boucher earned him several *Gémeaux* nominations. A multitasking artist in his own right, René Richard co-wrote and co-directed *Zumanity*, Cirque du Soleil's erotic cabaret presented in Las Vegas since 2003, and has also dabbled in Opera, directing Britten's *The turn of the screw*, Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and *Macbeth*, presented in Montreal, Melbourne and Sydney. In 2010, he adapted and directed the musical *Belles-Sœurs*, for which he was awarded the Félix prize for Director of the Year. A second musical collaboration with Michel Tremblay and musician Daniel Bélanger is born with *Le Chant de Sainte Carmen de la Main*, which premiered at the Théâtre du Nouveau Monde in 2013 and is currently touring the province.

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### DANIEL BÉLANGER

MUSIC

Singer-songwriter Daniel Bélanger earned instant success in Quebec with his debut solo album *Les insomniaques s'amuse* (1992). With his follow-up albums *Quatre saisons dans le désordre* (1996), *Tricycle* (1999), *Rêver mieux* (2001), *Deflaboxe* (2003), *L'échec du matériel* (2007) et *Joli chaos* (2008), he has made a name for himself as one of the best Quebec musicians to emerge in the past 15 years. Recipient of 22 Félix prizes, Daniel Bélanger is also an accomplished film composer; his music for *L'audition* earned him a Jutra prize for Best Film Score in 2006. In 2000, he published *Erreur d'impression* (Éditions Coronet Liv), a collection of short texts dedicated to the theme of chaos. In 2010, he collaborated with René Richard Cyr on the musical adaptation of Michel Tremblay's *Belles-Sœurs*, for which he composed the music. A second musical collaboration with Tremblay and Cyr is born in with *Le Chant de Sainte Carmen de la Main*, presented at the Théâtre du Nouveau Monde in 2013. During this time, he composed the soundtrack for *Paradis perdu*, a new show based on an original idea by Jean Lemire and written and directed by Dominic Champagne, and found time to release his eighth album, the luminous and funky *Nous* (2009), co-produced by Bélanger and JF Lemieux. Proof of his ability to constantly reinvent himself, *Nous* gave way to his ninth album, *Chic de ville*, released in March of 2013.



# Belles Soeurs

THE MUSICAL



## CREATIVE TEAM

### NEIL BARTRAM

COMPOSER & LYRICIST – ENGLISH ADAPTATION

Neil is the composer and lyricist of Broadway's *The Story of My Life* with book writer Brian Hill (four Drama Desk Award nominations including two for Neil – Outstanding Music and Outstanding Lyrics). Prior to Broadway, *The Story of My Life* played at Canadian Stage Company in Toronto and Goodspeed's Norma Terris Theatre. Neil has also written music and lyrics for *Clara's Piano* (Stratford Festival), *Somewhere in the World* (five seasons at the Charlottetown Festival) and *The Nightingale and the Rose*, and scored productions of *Romeo and Juliet*, *Timon of Athens* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. His adaptation of Carlo Collodi's *The Adventures of Pinocchio* was commissioned by Chicago Shakespeare Theater for their 2011 season. Neil and Brian's musical *Not Wanted On The Voyage* received a developmental production at Northwestern University's Barber Theatre as part of the American Music Theatre Project and was part of Goodspeed Musicals' 2012 New Works Festival. His musical *The Theory of Relativity*, commissioned by Toronto's Sheridan College and written specifically for and about college age students, was part of Goodspeed's 2014 New Works Festival.

Current projects include *Spin* directed by Eric Schaeffer (premiered at the Signature Theatre, Arlington, VA), a musical based on Ray Bradbury's classic novel *Something Wicked This Way Comes*, and the stage adaptation of Disney's beloved film *Bedknobs & Broomsticks*, all with book writer Brian Hill. Neil's awards include a Jonathan Larson Foundation Award, a Dramatists Guild Fellowship, and a Dora Award. Cast albums include *Somewhere in the World* and *The Story of My Life* (PS Classics). Neil is a member of the Dramatists Guild, ASCAP, and is an alumnus of the BMI Lehman Engel Music Theatre Workshop.

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### BRIAN HILL

BOOK WRITER – ENGLISH ADAPTATION

Brian's work as an actor, director and writer has taken him across Canada and the United States. As an actor, he spent three seasons with the Shaw Festival, appeared as Raoul in the Toronto production of *Phantom of the Opera*, performed the role of Joe Gillis in *Sunset Boulevard* and won a Dora Award for outstanding performance as Frankie in the original Canadian cast of *Forever Plaid*. For the Stratford Festival he directed Gilbert and Sullivan's *Patience* and was associate director of Susan H. Schulman's acclaimed productions of *Man of La Mancha* and *Fiddler On The Roof*. For four seasons he was artistic director of the Confederation Centre Young Company and served as the Charlottetown Festival's associate director of new play development. He was resident director of the Toronto, Vancouver and national companies of *Forever Plaid* and served as associate director to Susan H. Schulman for the U.S. national tour of *Sunset Boulevard* and the first national tour of *The Sound of Music*. For Disney Theatrical Productions he directed the reading of *High School Musical 2*, was resident director of the Toronto and Broadway companies of *The Lion King*, and associate director of Broadway's *The Little Mermaid*. With composer and lyricist Neil Bartram he has written the book for *Not Wanted on the Voyage* (Goodspeed's New Works Festival 2012), *The Nightingale and the Rose*, *Clara's Piano*, *Somewhere in the World*, *The Theory of Relativity* and *The Adventures of Pinocchio*, which was commissioned for the 2011 Chicago Shakespeare Theater season. Current Bartram and Hill projects include *Spin* with director Eric Schaeffer, which premiered at the Signature Theatre in 2013, a musical adaptation of Ray Bradbury's *Something Wicked This Way Comes*, and the stage adaptation of Disney's *Bedknobs and Broomsticks*. Brian is best known as the book writer for *The Story of My Life*, which was developed at Goodspeed's Norma Terris Theatre, premiered on Broadway in 2009 and earned four Drama Desk Award nominations –outstanding musical, music, lyrics, and book.



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### ALLAN SANDLER

PRODUCER, COPA DE ORO PRODUCTIONS



Allan is a well-known Quebec producer of highly successful theatrical productions in both the English and French languages. Among some of Allan's most successful productions are: *Chicago The Musical* in Montreal and Paris where it was nominated for Best Musical; *Grease*, four productions in Montreal, two in Toronto, nominated for seven «Les Masques» awards (including Best Musical) and awarded the coveted prix Billet d'Or. Allan most recently worked with The Mirvish Company in Toronto on *War Horse*. Allan is thrilled to announce that he has entered into an association with the Segal Centre to acquire the worldwide rights to the smash-hit *Sherlock Holmes*.