

# TAKE FIVE

A Revealing Q and A  
with...

Nicole Underhay



Nicole was born and raised in St. John's, Newfoundland. She has worked in theatres all across the country, including eight seasons at The Shaw Festival in Major Barbara, The Millionairess, His Girl Friday and Mrs. Warren's Profession. Other theatre highlights include: Fire (Canadian Stage) for which she won a Dora Award; The Small Room at the Top of the Stairs (Tarragon Theatre) for which she received a Dora nomination; and The Constant Wife (Arts Club Theatre) for which she received a Jessie nomination. Her most recent television work includes playing Margaret Haile on Murdoch Mysteries (CBC) and a stint on CTV's Saving Hope.

## 1. When did you first think of yourself as an artist?

I vacillate between feeling like an artist and feeling like an utter fraud on a daily, to many-times-daily basis. So the first moment was probably somewhere way back in childhood and it's been a roller coaster of self-confidence and self-doubt ever since.

## 2. Who helped you develop your voice as an artist?

There have been many people at many stages. The first was Michael Chiasson. He grew up in St. John's Newfoundland and he is my best friend's step-father. He gave me the courage to pursue acting in the first place. Jackie Maxwell took a big chance on me and gave me amazing challenges and opportunities at The Shaw Festival. Through Shaw I had the great fortune of meeting and falling in love with Morris Panych.

## 3. What's something that's inspired you this week?

On lunch break on our first day most of our team bore witness to the horrific van attack in North York.. When I think about what has inspired me this week and what has been inspiring me in all these weeks since, I think about the people I have had the great fortune to work with. We had only known each other for three hours before we came to have this event in common in our lives It is something none of us will ever forget. I just feel very lucky to be surrounded by this particular group of people who inspire me on a daily basis and make me believe that when I look back on this time, their support and generosity and we will outshine what happened on that day.

## 4. What's your favourite restaurant in the city to visit?

Well. I am a biased because my husband owns a few great spots in this City. [The Three Speed](#) at Bloor and Dufferin has an awesome vibe, and killer patio. The latest venture is [The Skyline](#) in Parkdale. It's a classic diner by day and at night has amazing specials and cozy vibes. I make all the desserts for the restaurant and my husband and sister-in-law run it together, so it's a great family point.

## 5. What do you want to see more of on Toronto stages?

Risk. In any way you can think that to mean. Risk in terms of plays that safe chosen to be on our stages. Risk in terms of actors challenging themselves and pushing themselves outside their comfort zones. Risk in how things are cast. Risk in how they are staged. You get where I am going with this... No risk, no reward. Or what I grew up hearing: go big, or go home.

**Alia Rasul is currently appearing in [Brighton Beach Memoirs](#)  
With the [Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company](#).**