PRODUCTION SUPPORT IS GENEROUSLY PROVIDED BY
KARON C. BALES & CHARLES E. BEALL AND BY M. FAINER
LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Welcome to the Stratford Festival. It is a great privilege to gather and share stories on this beautiful territory, which has been the site of human activity — and therefore storytelling — for many thousands of years. We wish to honour the ancestral guardians of this land and its waterways: the Anishinaabe, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the Wendat, and the Attiwonderonk. Today many Indigenous peoples continue to call this land home and act as its stewards, and this responsibility extends to all peoples, to share and care for this land for generations to come.
Two young people are in love. They’re next-door neighbours, but their families don’t get on. So they’re not allowed to meet: all they can do is whisper sweet nothings to each other through a small gap in the garden wall between them. Eventually, they plan to run off together – but on the night of their elopement, a terrible accident of fate impels them both to take their own lives.

Sound familiar? It’s the story of Pyramus and Thisbe, as told by the ancient Roman poet Ovid, one of Shakespeare’s favourite authors. Most of us know it from the comical play-within-the-play in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* – but it’s also essentially the same story Shakespeare told in *Romeo and Juliet*.

It certainly resonates with us today. We know what it’s like to be isolated in our homes, separated from our loved ones, reduced to interacting through online equivalents of a hole in the wall. And we know about other barriers, too: walls of prejudice, mistrust and hatred that can be as fatal as any pandemic.

But there’s more to Ovid’s story. The blood of the lovers, seeping into the ground, is absorbed by the roots of a mulberry bush – and turns its berries from white to a deep and vibrant red. And with that metamorphosis comes the families’ realization of the tragedy their enmity has wrought.

That idea of metamorphosis, of awakening and new growth arising from loss, informs our 2021 season. Our artists, like the rest of us, have been living through a time of seismic shock to their psyches – but it has also been a time of transformative regeneration. It’s as if we’ve been in a cocoon, and now it’s time to emerge in a blaze of new colour, with lively, searching work that deals with profound questions and prompts us to think and see in new ways.

While I do intend to program in future seasons all the plays we’d planned to present in 2020, I also know we can’t just pick up where we left off. The world has changed; we have changed. Something huge has happened to us and within us. How do we express that together?

In one significant sense, 2021 sees us return to our roots. Two open-sided canopies, one erected at the Festival Theatre and the other on the grounds of the new Tom Patterson Theatre, shelter appropriately distanced seats. Sharing the same visually gorgeous design, these structures enable audiences to gather in safety and comfort in the open air.

But more than that, they bring an inherently festive quality to the season. Just like our original tent in 1953, these new canopies signal that a very special event is taking place here in Stratford: a new artistic beginning.

Meanwhile, we have also been able to make provision for limited-capacity indoor performances at the Studio Theatre. As always, your safety, and the safety of our artists and staff, is our very first priority, and all three of our 2021 venues will operate in strict accordance with public-health guidelines.

But far from placing limitations on our creativity, the need to work within the parameters required of us – with shorter performances, smaller casts (no more
than eight actors per show) and physical distancing on stage – has stimulated our artists to new feats of imagination as they devise novel modes of performance. Our 2021 playbill encompasses Shakespeare, music, modern classics and new work, presented in ways you’ve never seen at Stratford before.

And it’s not only the pandemic that has opened us up to new ideas and experiences. The Black Lives Matter protests of last summer brought home to us how far our society still remains from overcoming those other dividing barriers of systemic inequity and oppression. So our playbill celebrates difference as well as universality, widening our definitions both of a classic and of who we are. To learn more about our work on anti-racism please visit our website.

The pandemic has taken a dreadful toll, both in lives and in lingering psychological effects. We at the Festival may be powerless against the former, but we have a crucial role to play in addressing the latter. If theatre has anything to teach us, it is about the resilience of the human spirit.

Our new season was born of our determination to emerge from this crisis more inventive, more inclusive and more creative than ever. I hope it will excite you and engage you, bring renewed joy into your life and inspire you as we dream together of a world without walls.

Antoni Cimolino
Artistic Director
The Stratford Shakespearean Festival of Canada and the Stratford Shakespearean Festival of America are registered charities in Canada and the U.S. respectively.

The Stratford Festival gratefully acknowledges the generous support of these contributors to our success:
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WE COULDN’T DO IT WITHOUT YOU...

Our generous donors and Members have recognized that this is a critical time for the Stratford Festival and have stepped up to do their part to help us get back on stage and to ensure that we will continue to produce the excellent theatre they have come to count on from the Festival.

Our deepest gratitude to all our donors who make gifts and pledges to support the Festival in so many ways.

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MY YOUNGER SISTER DIED OF BRAIN AND SPINAL CANCER ON FEBRUARY 19, 2019. SHE WAS/IS MY BEST FRIEND. ONE OF THE SIX CLOSEST PEOPLE IN THE WORLD TO ME. THE ONE PERSON I TalkED TO EVERY DAY OTHER THAN MY DAUGHTER. THE PERSON WHO HELD ALL MY SECRETS ... MY BELOVED, MY HERO, MY LIFE.

ANTONI CIMOLINO CALLED ME IN MID-APRIL 2019 TO OFFER ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO DIRECT THE REZ SISTERS IN HIS 2020 SEASON. BEING IN THE MASSIVE GRIEF FOG I WAS IN, I MAINLY LISTENED, SAID THANK YOU AND WAS HONOURED TO BE ASKED. I GOT OFF THE PHONE – AND THEN WEEPED, REALIZING, "OH, THAT'S THE PLAY WHERE A WOMAN DIES OF CANCER...."

MY LIFE, THAT OF MY IMMEDIATE FAMILY, HAS BEEN IRREVOCABLY ALTERED.

WHEN COVID-19 BEGAN TO TRULY HIT IN FEBRUARY 2020, AND THE ENSUING MASS TRAGEDY MOUNTED GLOBALLY, OF COURSE, GRIEF IN MY LIFE REVERBERATED. WE HAD NOT – STILL HAVE NOT – SPREAD MY SISTER’S ASHES. I STILL DID NOT KNOW HOW TO DRESS PROPERLY. I SUFFERED FROM MASSIVE VERTIGO. I UNDERSTOOD DEEPLY, AND FELT PROFOUNDLY FOR, THOSE WHO COULD NOT GATHER WITH THEIR LOVED ONES TO MOURN, OR EVEN SAY GOODBYE TO, THEIR BELOVED, WHETHER THEY PASSED FROM COVID-19 OR ANY OTHER ILLNESS, ACCIDENT, TRAGIC EVENT DURING A TIME WHEN WE WERE ASKED NOT TO GATHER.

THIS PRODUCTION IS FOR ALL OF US WHO KNOW THAT DEATH COMES AND SHAKES US.

GRIEF IS BIG AND SURPRISING. IT IS LIFE-LONG. THERE ARE NO "CORRECT STAGES" OR WAYS TO DO GRIEF "RIGHT." IT IS NOT AN ILLNESS. THERE IS NO END TIMELINE FOR IT. MY OWN GRIEF COUNSELLOR HAS SHARED WITH ME SO MANY VALUABLE INSIGHTS, INCLUDING: THIS JUST HAPPENED. FIVE MONTHS AGO, ONE YEAR, TWO YEARS ... FIVE, TEN, FIFTY. IT CAN FEEL LIKE THREE MINUTES HAVE PASSED.... AND IT HAS BEEN VALUABLE AND COMPLICATED TO GRAPPLE WITH THE NOTION THAT WE LIVE IN A GRIEF-ILLITERATE SOCIETY.

IT IS VERY HARD FOR MANY PEOPLE TO TALK ABOUT DEATH....

BUT PERHAPS GRIEF IS SIMPLY THE REFLECTION OF OUR DEEP CAPACITY TO LOVE?
The women in this play love. They don’t all get grief “right.” Their lives are messy. This play is untidy. Like life. It is deeply affected by change, as Tomson Highway himself has stated. Thematically, I love that Tomson’s play speaks to a state of transition, and therefore transformation, which we as human beings frequently encounter in our lives. In an interview, Tomson mused that “every society is constantly in a state of change…. I think it is very important that it continue to be so to prevent the stagnation of our imaginations, our spirits, our soul.” I am very moved by his insight. I ponder what this might mean in regard to the current narratives we live in, especially those that affect Indigenous people: how can we continue to embrace change and grow despite difficulties presented through encounters with death, spiritual corruption, capitalism, poverty, patriarchy, misogyny, climate change?

Part of what I envision for you, oh audience, to experience as a takeaway, is reflecting on, perhaps, how fragile life is – its transitory nature – and considering what acts may be taken to live life to the fullest each day. I want you to empathize with these women, to potentially see yourselves in them, to understand them and have their journeys resonate with you in some small or large way. At the centre of this play is a story about a woman, Marie-Adele Starblanket, who has been diagnosed with cancer. She is facing her own mortality. Her sisters around her are facing her imminent departure. This play is about how they each in turn face her death. How Nanabush, as a spiritual guide, provokes them to share their most vulnerable fears and experiences, and therefore asks them to come a bit closer to understanding their existence and the fact that life is full of incalculable events we must face and own. How do we do that with hope and with a continued effort to love and care for each other? What might that look like? How do we companion and truly see each other in this one, wild, ridiculous, joyful, painful, beautiful, chaotic, poetic life?

A poem by Prageeta Sharma:

“A Human with Feelings”

I am having trouble today. How gauche it is to be in this body unseen by you now. And I am wearing to bed the floral shirt I bought you, because it’s the only thing that keeps me intact. You are not you anymore and I’m trying to understand how a human with feelings disappeared. You were mine. You were floral. You were more than a presence felt. But I fight to find you among the loudest, drunkiest voices laughing at me when I go to their bars. Where are you? You held me in so many of them.
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When a play by an obscure Nehiyaw composer, pianist, and author premièred at the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto in November 1986, it was a non-event. Few people came out to see the show in its first week – so few, in fact, that company members stood on the street, waylaying passersby and pressing free tickets upon them. In the second week of its run, a swelling stream of theatregoers followed in the wake of glowing reviews. And by its third and final week, would-be audience members were being turned away in droves. Winner of the Dora Mavor Moore Award for Best New Play of Toronto’s 1986–87 theatre season and of the Floyd S. Chalmers Award for Outstanding New Play (1986), Tomson Highway’s “window” into the lives of seven Anishinaabekwewak ravished the Canadian imaginary, launching the career of its creator, fixing Native Earth Performing Arts (of which Highway was artistic director) in cultural consciousness, and lodging The Rez Sisters in national memory as the advent of Indigenous theatre in Canada.

The Rez Sisters is certainly not the first instance of Indigenous performativity in these territories or even the first instance, in this nation-state, of a professional Indigenous production. Nevertheless, its foregrounding of an Anishinaabe, feminine, collective protagonist; its unapologetic use of Anishinaabemowin to communicate key moments in the play; and its gleeful refusal of those established tropes – the drunk, the doomed, or the vanishing – with which non-Indigenous audiences had become too comfortable disrupted post-modern theatrical sensibilities, shattering colonial complacency and empowering Indigenous audiences like nothing before it.

Wasaychigan, the name ascribed to Highway’s fictional reserve of this play, means “window.” And with this play, Highway has opened a window onto the complex human histories and spiritual geography of those Anishinaabeg with whom he has lived and worked, to whom he is related, whose stories he has heard, and with whom he has always been able to communicate in the timeless, living language that is his mother tongue. Highway’s Wasaychigan invites Canadian audiences to glimpse life in a “cool” Northern Oji-Cree community, to better apprehend “what funky folk Canada’s Indian people really are.” But the window constitutes a multidimensional lens, offering more than one way to see: those who peer into the glass are also subject to the scrutiny of those they observe. Too, windows refract

“Woman has had a traditional role as the Centre, maintaining the fire – the fire which is at the centre of our beliefs. She is the Keeper of the Culture.”

– Skonaganleh:rá Sylvia Maracle
light and, depending upon the position of the sun, obscure the view of what lies behind the veil, casting back to the viewer an image of himself wavering within a shadowy world of materiality rendered immaterial by light and shadow.

Emerging in 1986 as a cultural disruptor exploding from a seeming non-event, *The Rez Sisters* is emblematic of its time. In this year (although many Canadians remained blissfully unaware), the United Church of Canada acknowledged and apologized for its role in the colonial project. The Indian Act had been amended one year earlier (with Bill C-31), allowing thousands of Indigenous women and their children who had been stripped of their status and band memberships to regain their treaty rights. Now one year later, Toronto’s Native Child and Family Services was being established by Indigenous elders and community activists to begin the work of appropriately supporting Indigenous mothers, as they struggled to raise their children within an urban crucible of racism, sexism, and state violence. And one month before the première of *The Rez Sisters*, two of the four men who had abducted, tortured, and murdered a nineteen-year-old Nehiyaw girl in 1971 had finally been arrested and called to account for their part in her death.

Helen Betty Osborne from Norway House Reserve had been boarding far from home in the Pas, Manitoba, as she completed secondary school. When her body was discovered, by chance, in November 1971, investigators ascertained that she had been brutally beaten and stabbed more than fifty times with a screwdriver. The irrepressible Zhaboonigan (“needle”) Peterson who is the youngest of Highway’s seven “sisters” is the “Helen Betty” who survives. While deeply affected by the racial violence perpetrated upon a young woman with whom he shares Nehiyaw kinship ties and with whom he attended school, Highway refuses to collapse under the weight of state violence and public apathy. Likewise, he refuses to allow his stage “sisters” to be cowed, crushed, or silenced by their woundings.

In 1986, despite relocations and re-education; despite the historic suppression of Indigenous languages and spiritual practices; despite relentless assaults on the integrity of the Indigenous family through the removal of our children (residential schools, adoption, fostering); despite the despoilment of the lands and waters that have sustained us for millennia; despite crushing poverty; despite starvation; despite Canada’s continuing determination to literally or legislatively disappear Indigenous peoples, Wasaychigan’s women move forward, repairing what is broken, mothering the motherless, speaking their language, making song, making babies, exercising political agency, exercising entrepreneurship, feeding family, and playing bingo. Facing perilous uncertainty without flinching, they refute victimry and refuse despair. In the midst of the great disorder wrought by colonization, they continue to hold the centre. And our nations endure.
More than three decades after they seized hope with both hands and carried it with them all the way to the “Biggest Bingo in the World,” Highway’s sisters reprise that road trip, inviting us to gather our own hope and to pour our energy (without any assurances and despite all uncertainty) into the facilitation of minobimaatisiiwin – a way of life that is good for all. This invitation is fraught with particular poignancy, issued as it is in the wake of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, with its ninety-four Calls to Action (2015), and the more recent Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2019). Through the window of The Rez Sisters, Canadian audiences are once again invited to celebrate the unapologetic life and unquenchable spirit of Indigenous peoples and the mothers who birthed us; to receive and reflect upon hard truths concerning the nation to which you belong and which you continue to shape; and to respond to these truths by seizing hope with both hands and plunging into an uncertain future with the courage to lose all, with the respect to play the game with integrity, with humility in the face of mystery, with gratitude regardless of outcome, and with love.

Above all, with love....

Jill Carter is an Anishinaabe-Ashkenazi woman based in Tkaron:to/Gichi Kiiwengwa. She is a theatre practitioner and assistant professor with the Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies; the Transitional Year Programme; and Indigenous Studies at the University of Toronto.
Tomson Highway was born in a snowbank on the Manitoba/Nunavut border to a family of nomadic caribou hunters. He was raised off-reserve, in the spectacularly beautiful natural landscape that is Canada’s sub-Arctic. He had the great privilege of growing up in two languages, neither of which was French or English but Cree, his mother tongue, and Dene, the language of the neighbouring “nation,” a people with whom they roamed and hunted.

Following an education where he earned both a Bachelor of Music and the equivalent of a Bachelor of Arts with an English major, he spent seven years immersed in the field of Native social work. He then combined his education and training and poured himself into writing.

Today Tomson enjoys an international career as playwright, novelist, pianist, composer and songwriter. Tomson is best known for universal hits such as *The Rez Sisters*, *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing*, *Rose*, *Ernestine Shuswap Gets Her Trout*, *The (Post) Mistress* and the best-selling novel *Kiss of the Fur Queen*. He has also published a number of children’s books, namely *Caribou Song*, *Dragon Fly Kites* and *Fox on the Ice*. His work has been translated into 11 languages.

For many years Tomson was Artistic Director of Canada’s premier aboriginal theatre company, Toronto-based Native Earth Performing Arts, from which has emerged an entire generation of playwrights and theatre artists.

Tomson is the recipient of 11 honorary doctorates and is a member of the Order of Canada. His awards include two Governor General’s Literary Award nominations, Dora Mavor Moore Awards, Floyd S. Chalmers Canadian Play Award, Toronto Arts Award and National Aboriginal Achievement Award.

Fluent in Cree, French and English, he continues to write, teach, lecture, and perform across Canada and around the world.

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**$5 FROM EACH TICKET SOLD FOR THE REZ SISTERS WILL BE DONATED TO NATIVE WOMEN’S ASSOCIATION OF CANADA IN SUPPORT OF JUSTICE FOR MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS.**
The Rez Sisters

BY TOMSON HIGHWAY

Tomson Highway and the Festival dedicate this production of *The Rez Sisters* to the current generation of LIVING – not dead but living – young Native people who are, as we write this, going out into the world to change it so that their people can have better lives, lives much less filled with the kind of pain that they have just undergone in Kamloops, BC, and other places across our fair country. No more, they are saying; from now on, our lives will be filled with the joy and the strength that you will see in this play.

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### THE CAST

**IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Character</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zhaboonigan Peterson</td>
<td>Brefny Caribou</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marie-Adele Starblanket</td>
<td>Lisa Cromarty</td>
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<td>Veronique St. Pierre</td>
<td>Christine Frederick</td>
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<td>Annie Cook</td>
<td>Nicole Joy-Fraser</td>
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<td>Pelajia Patchnose</td>
<td>Jani Lauzon</td>
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<td>Emily Dictionary</td>
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<td>Philomena Moosetail</td>
<td>Tracey Nepinak</td>
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<td>Nanabush</td>
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<tr>
<td>Standby</td>
<td>Jonathan Fisher</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Irene Poole</td>
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</tbody>
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### ARTISTIC CREDITS

- **Director**: Jessica Carmichael
- **Assistant Director**: Sara Jarvie-Clark
- **Set and Lighting Designer**: Sophie Tang
- **Costume Designer**: Asa Benally
- **Composer and Sound Designer**: Wayne Kelso
- **Fight Director**: Anita Nittoly
- **Stage Manager**: Bona Duncan
- **Assistant Stage Manager**: Holly Korhonen
- **Apprentice Stage Manager**: Alyss Szatkowski
- **Production Assistant**: May Nemat Allah
- **Production Stage Managers**: Meghan Callan, Elizabeth McDermott
- **Technical Director**: Greg Dougherty
- **MUSIC**: Original Music Recorded by Wayne Kelso
- **Director of Music**: Franklin Brasz
- **Music Administrator**: Janice Owens
- **Special Thanks**: Vicky Boldo, Jill Carter
- **Cultural Consultant**: Elizabeth Stevens
- **Language Consultant**: Rosary Spence
- **Reflection Room Facilitator**: Kelly Fran Davis
- **Technical Director**: Greg Dougherty

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A space for reflection, conversation or questions with facilitator Kelly Fran Davis, Haudenosaunee of the Cayuga Nation Wolf Clan from the Grand River Territory, will be available inside the Tom Patterson Theatre following the performance. All are welcome (subject to room capacity). COVID-19 protocols are in place. Please see an usher for directions.
**Backstage**

**Head Carpenter**
Joe Tracey

**Head Electrician**
Bruno Hacquebard

**Head Property**
John Lowe

**Head Sound**
Roger Psutka

**Crew**
Stewart Cappie

**Wardrobe Head**
Mary-Lou Mason

**Wigs and Makeup Show Head**
Angela Moncur

**Production Credits**

**Director of Production**
Simon Marsden

**Associate Director of Production**
C.J. Astronomo

**Scene Shop Manager**
Evan Bonnah-Hawkes

**Associate Technical Director**
David Campbell

**Production Administrator**
Carla Fowler

**Technical Director**
– Scenic Construction
Andrew Mestern

**Technical Direction Assistants**
Laura Coleman
Zach Fedora
Frank Incer

**Transportation**
Dirk Newbery
James Thistle

**Head Carpenter**
Joe Tracey

**Head Electrician**
Bruno Hacquebard

**Head Property**
John Lowe

**Head Sound**
Roger Psutka

**Crew**
Stewart Cappie

**Wardrobe Head**
Mary-Lou Mason

**Wigs and Makeup Show Head**
Angela Moncur

**Properties**

**Head of Properties**
Dona Hrabluk

**Assisted by**
Matthew Burgess
Ken Dubblestyne
Michelle Jamieson
Heather Ruthig
Lisa Summers

**Properties Buyer**
Kathleen Orlando

**Scenic Carpenter**

**Head Carpenter**
Ryan Flanagan

**Assistant Head Carpenter**
Paul Cooper

**Assisted by**
Simon Aldridge
Paul Hyde
Scott King
Corey Mielke
John Roth
Jody Satchell
Scott Schmidt
Mark Smith
Cliff Tipping

**Coster**
Terri Dans

**Sewers**
Patricia Hawkins-Russell
Joan Scheerer

**Bijoux/Decoration**
Rebecca Dillow

**Boots and Shoes**
Michael Karn

**Dyeing**
Linda Pinhay

**Millinery**
Monica Viani

**Costume Buyer**
Erin Michelle Steele

**Head of Wigs and Makeup**
Gerald Altenburg

**Construction Crew**
Angela Moncur
Julie Scott

**Scenic Art**

**Head Scenic Artist**
Duncan Johnstone

**Assistant Scenic Artist**
Michael Wharran

**Costume**

**Costume Director**
Michelle Barnier

**Acknowledgements**

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BREFNY CARIBOU
2021: Zhaboonigan Peterson in The Rez Sisters. Second season. Brefny is a Cree/Irish-settler performer and creator from Toronto. She holds an MFA in Acting from York University. With curiosity, patience and lots of humour, Brefny focuses her attention on works surrounding identity and decolonization, striving to evolve her artistic practice on the regular. She has had the privilege of working across the country with many notable companies and collectives including Theatre Kingston, Urban Ink and Caravan Farm Theatre. Brefny is also a co-creator of The Solitudes (Aluna Theatre/Nightwood Theatre), a collective-creation piece centred around the histories of eight ensemble members, inspired by the world of One Hundred Years of Solitude by Gabriel García Márquez, which had its world première in January 2020. Most recently, Brefny participated in Aluna Theatre’s Winter Artist Residency, and she is currently a part of Native Earth Performing Arts’ Animikiiig Creators Unit.

LISA CROMARTY
2021: Marie-Adele Starblanket in The Rez Sisters. Fourth season. Acting: The Unnatural and Accidental Women (National Arts Centre); Moose on the Loose (Sudbury Theatre Centre); An Honour Story (The Debajehmujig Theatre Company). Film/TV: Wild Indian (30WEST), Unsettled (APTN), Antlers (Fox Pictures), Burden of Truth (CBC), The Silencing (Anova Pictures), Indian Horse (Screen Siren Productions), Wave a red Flag (National Film Board).

JONATHAN FISHER
2021: Standby in The Rez Sisters. Stratford debut. Jonathan Fisher is Anishnabe from the Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory on Manitoulin Island, Ontario. Selected credits: Almighty Voice and His Wife (Native Earth Performing Arts); Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing (Red Roots Theatre); farewel (Prairie Theatre Exchange); A Trickster’s Tale (Theatre Direct); New France (VideoCabaret); Raven Stole The Sun (Red Sky Performance); Copper Thunderbird (National Arts Centre); Stretching Hide (Theatre Projects Manitoba); Toes of an Urban Indian (Talk Is Free Theatre); 400 Kilometers (Lighthouse Theatre); Medicine Boy (Anishnabe Theatre Performance); Night (Human Cargo); The Hours That Remain (Magnus Theatre); Elle (Theatre Passe Muraille); The Berlin Blues, Ipperwash (Blyth Festival); Reckoning (Article 11); Home Is A Beautiful World (Persephone Theatre); Weaving Reconciliation: Our Way (Vancouver Moving Theatre Company); The Mush Hole (Kaha:wal Dance Theatre).

CHRISTINE FREDERICK
2021: Veronique St. Pierre in The Rez Sisters. Stratford debut. Elsewhere: Momma Bear in Bears, Kokum, Grandmother Moon in Minosis Gatherers Hope (Dreamspeakers and Punctuatu! Theatre); 9 Parts of Desire (Maggie Tree); The Rez Sisters (Old Earth Productions); Sound & Fury’s Macbeth; Flint & Feather: Story of Tekahionwake E. Pauline Johnson (Edmonton Fringe). Film/TV: The Sashmaker; White Face; The Louder Silence; A Frosty Affair; It’s Not My Fault and I Don’t Care Anyway; APTN’s Blackstone and Mixed Blessings. Training: University of Alberta, Banff Centre for the Arts and University for Peace (Costa Rica). Awards: 2007 Esquao Award in Arts; 2016 Mayor’s Award for Excellence in Artistic Leadership. Et cetera: Executive Director of Dreamspeakers (Film Fest and Rubaboo), first Indigenous Associate Artist of the Citadel Theatre, Iniw River Lot 11 Indigenous Art Park Committee, National Arts Centre’s Creation Fund.

NICOLE JOY-FRASER
THE COMPANY

JANI LAUZON
2021: Pelajia Patchnose in The Rez Sisters. Third season. Stratford: Huumittuq/Panik/Marianne in The Breathing Hole. Elsewhere: Trebonius/Cato in Julius Caesar (Groundling/Crow’s); Cordelia/Fool in King Lear (NAC); Elder in Apocallypsis (Luminato); Neighbour/Servant in Blood Wedding (Modern Times/Aluna Theatre); Shylock in The Merchant of Venice (SITR). Film/TV: Guest appearances: Saving Hope, Hard Rock Medical, Destiny Ridge, Conspiracy of Silence. Puppeteer: Grannie on Mr. Dressup, Pa Foley on Big Comfy Couch, Seeka on Wumpa’s World. Awards: Gemini Award for Wumpa’s World, Best Actress, Doris in Windigo Tale, American Indian Film Festival and Dreamspeakers Film Festival, ACTRA Toronto Award of Excellence. Online: janilauzon.com; papercanoeprojects.com; @janilauzon. Et cetera: Her company, Paper Canoe Projects, produces her original work including A Side of Dreams, I Call myself Princess and Prophecy Fog. Jani is the Associate Director of English Acting at the National Theatre School.

KATHLEEN MacLEAN
2021: Emily Dictionary in The Rez Sisters. Second season. Elsewhere: Marie-Angelique in Women of the Fur Trade (Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre); #7 in The Wolves (Live Five Saskatoon); Head Full of Lice in The Third Colour (Prairie Theatre Exchange); Thanadelthur in Torn Through Time (Manitoba Theatre for Young People). Other: Pimootayowin Indigenous Playwright Circle (Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre). Training: National Theatre School of Canada. Online: Instagram @katmaclean. Et cetera: Kinanâskomitin to my family and those who worked so hard so that I may stand on their shoulders.

TRACEY NEPINAK
2021: Philomena Moosetail in The Rez Sisters. Stratford debut. Tracey Nepinak came full-circle in Prairie Theatre Exchange’s 2019 world premiere of The Third Colour by Ian Ross. Tracey has been fortunate to have a long, satisfying career in mainstream theatre, primarily because of Ian Ross’s fareWel, which also premiered at PTE in 1997. Some of Tracey’s most recent work: Punctuate! Theatre’s Bears by Matthew Mackenzie (Belfry/Factory theatres); Tara Began’s Honour Beat (Theatre Calgary); Patrick Friesen’s A Short History of Crazy Bone (Theatre Projects Manitoba).

IRENE POOLE
2021: Standby in The Rez Sisters. Eighth season. Stratford: Queen Katherine in Henry VIII, Catalina in Mother’s Daughter, Jean Louise Finch in To Kill a Mockingbird, Cassius in Julius Caesar, Breath of Kings, Kate in The Little Years, Katherine in The Taming of the Shrew, Olga in Three Sisters. Elsewhere: Happy Place, The Gigli Concert (Soulepper); How Do I Love Thee? (Canadian Rep); The Bokelitè Masterpiece, The Little Years (Tarragon Theatre); Manon, Sandra and the Virgin Mary (Buddies in Bad Times); Escape from Happiness, Better Living, The Glace Bay Miners’ Museum (Factory Theatre); Age of Arousal (ATP). Film/TV: Frankie Drake (CBC), Indian Horse (Elevation Pictures), Cardinal, Reign, Murdoch Mysteries, Republic of Doyle, Carrie (MGM), Breakout Kings. Awards: Dora Awards for The Little Years, The Last Days of Judas Iscariot, The Leisure Society; nominations for How Do I Love Thee? and Happy Place.

ZACH RUNNING COYOTE
2021: Nanabush in The Rez Sisters. Stratford debut. Zach Running Coyote (he/him) is an interdisciplinary storyteller and theatre maker. Adopted at six months old, with Mi’gmaq and settler ancestors, Zach’s work focuses on stories for the displaced and disenfranchised, the marginalized and oppressed, as he continues his own search for community, healing and the unwinding of generational trauma. Stratford: Workshop of Pawâkan Macbeth. Elsewhere: Snowblind (Lunchbox Theatre/Making Treaty 7), Bright Star (Rosebud Theatre), Cariboo Magi (Far From the Tree Productions), Kohkum & me (self-produced). Awards: RBC Emerging Playwright Award, Tarragon Theatre.
ARTISTIC COMPANY

ASA BENALLY
2021: Costume designer of The Rez Sisters. Second season. Navajo and Cherokee Nations. Elsewhere: Blues for an Alabama Sky (Keen Company, Drama Desk nomination); Venus and Adonis (New Camerata Opera); Too Heavy for Your Pocket (George Street Playhouse); Skeleton Crew (Westport Country Playhouse); Father Comes Home... (Juilliard); Measure for Measure (The Public Theater Mobile Unit); Cymbeline (Yale Repertory Theatre); The Robot Johnson Experience (The Bushwick Starr); Tricks the Devil Taught Me (Minetta Lane Theatre); Coriolanus and The Seagull (Yale School of Drama); Whale Song (Perseverance Theater); The Crazy Shepherds of Rebellion, Roberto Zucco (Yale Cabaret); A Midsummer Night’s Dream (Frog and Peach Theatre Company); The Winter’s Tale (HERE Arts Center); Peer Gynt (Amherst College). Training: MFA Yale School of Drama. BFA Parsons School of Design. Online: asabenally.com. Instagram: @Asa_Benally_Design.

JESSICA CARMICHAEL
2021: Director of The Rez Sisters. Fourth season. Stratford: Assistant director of The Aeneid, Christina, The Girl King. Elsewhere: Directing (selected): Embodying Power and Place (Nightwood Theatre/Native Earth); Apathy (Concordia University); Liperwash (Blyth Festival); Boys, Girls, and Other Mythological Creatures, Tick, iChild, Hana Hashimoto, Sixth Violin (Carousel Players); Two Indians (SummerWorks); Savage (Native Earth Performing Arts); Treaty No. 9 (reading, Aluna Theatre/Rutas Panamericanas). Training: MFA Directing (University of Alberta); MA Text and Performance Studies (Royal Academy of Dramatic Art/King’s College London); Acting Program (National Theatre School of Canada). Et cetera: Jessica is of mixed Abénaki/Euro heritage. She is a tenure-track assistant professor in Theatre at Concordia University in Tiohtià:ke/Molian/Montréal. Dedication: This performance is personally dedicated to my best friend, my beloved sister, Tegan Carmichael, 1986-2019.

MEGHAN CALLAN
2021: Production stage manager of the Tom Patterson Theatre Canopy. 21st season. Stratford: In Meghan’s 20 seasons she has served as production stage manager at all of the Festival’s stages. Some of her favourite productions have been Paradise Lost, A Midsummer Night’s Dream (2014), The Tempest (2010), A Little Night Music, Jesus Christ Superstar and Tommy. Training: Meghan holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theatre Production from York University. Elsewhere: Meghan has most recently stage-managed The Goat, or Who Is Sylvia and The Virgin Trial at Soulpepper Theatre. She has worked at the National Arts Centre, Citadel Theatre, toured New Brunswick (twice), and stage-managed car and industrial trade shows and concerts. Not since her beginnings as a stage manager at Canada’s Wonderland has she worked in an outdoor theatre under a canopy and she’s grateful to be back.

BONA DUNCAN
SARA JARVIE-CLARK

2021: Assistant director of The Rez Sisters. Stratford debut. Concordia University: Actor, writer, composer and musical director, Apathy Project (2019); director, Eurydice Project (2019); actor and creator, Dwellings (2017); actor, Yerma (2017). Elsewhere: Puppeteer and musical director, Selah’s Song workshop (Theatre of the Beat); puppeteer and musician, The Echoes Project (Clay and Paper Theatre); puppeteer and musician, Fables for the Future (Clay and Paper Theatre). Music: Vocalist on Suzanne Jarvie’s 2019 album in the Clear. Training: Concordia University, BFA in Theatre and Development. Online: sarajarvieclark.com; @sarajarvieclark. Currently: Sara is recording her debut album, Analogues of May, to be released via Wolfe Island Records this fall.

WAYNE KELSO


HOLLY KORHONEN


ELIZABETH McDERMOTT

2021: Production stage manager of the Tom Patterson Theatre Canopy. Eighth season. Stratford: Production stage manager, Festival Theatre, 2020. Assistant stage manager: Billy Elliot, Othello, The Music Man, To Kill a Mockingbird, Shakespeare in Love, The Hypochondriac, The Sound of Music, The Taming of the Shrew, Love’s Labour’s Lost, As You Like It, King of Thieves. Elsewhere (selected): King Lear, Twelfth Night (SiHP); A City, Divisadero (Necessary Angel); Cracked: new light on dementia (UW/Collective Disruption); Comfort (Red Snow Collective); The Road to Paradise, Night (Human Cargo); Miracle on 34th Street (STC); Bella (HGJTC); Anne of Green Gables, Canada Rocks! (Charlottetown); Falling: A Wake (Blithy); The Barber of Seville (Soulpepper); Binti’s Journey, Head à Tete, Old Man and the River (Theatre Direct); Danny, King of the Basement (Roseneath); Othello, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Twelfth Night, All’s Well That Ends Well (SLSF).
ARTISTIC COMPANY

ANITA NITTOLY

JOYCE PADUA
2021: Assistant costume designer of The Rez Sisters, I Am William and Serving Elizabeth. Stratford debut. Previous theatre credits include: Costume Design: Defined by Bone (CanAsian Dance Festival), The Life and Death of Fred Herko (Rendezvous With Madness Festival), Orlando (Theatre@York), Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat (Crescent School), Assistant Costume Design: Alice in Wonderland (Bad Hats Theatre), Marjorie Prime (Coal Mine Theatre), Much Ado About Nothing (Canadian Stage), Sweat (Canadian Stage). Head of Wardrobe: TOKA (Theatre Passe Muraille), 21 Black Futures (Obsidian Theatre Company), Acts of Faith (Factory Theatre), Lady Sunrise (Factory Theatre). Upcoming credits: Bock in ’59 (Thousand Islands Playhouse). Online: @joycepadua.jpg. Et cetera: Joyce is thankful for the support of her friends and family, and hopes to continue creating art that opens doors and broadens horizons.

JOSHUA QUINLAN

BETH RUSSELL
2021: Casting director for the Stratford Festival. 13th season. Broadway and West End: As Senior Vice President, Casting and Creative Development for Livent, Beth was responsible for productions including Parade, Ragtime, Candide, Show Boat and Kiss of the Spider Woman; as well as productions of Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, Show Boat, Sunset Boulevard, Aspects of Love and The Phantom of the Opera in Canada, the United States, Australia, Singapore and Hong Kong. Elsewhere: Co-Producer of CBC-TV’s Triple Sensation, National Casting Director for CBC Radio Drama and Artistic Associate for Toronto Arts Productions (now Canadian Stage). Also, as an agent, Beth has represented actors, directors, choreographers, writers and composers.
ARTISTIC COMPANY

ROSARY SPENCE
2021: Cree/Ojibway Language Consultant for The Rez Sisters, Stratford debut. Elsewhere: Dialect coach for This Was the World (Tarragon Theatre); Cree translator and reader for The Rez Sisters, Treaty 9 (Native Earth Performing Arts); music composer and performer in Nagamo (Jumbies Theatre); music composer and performer in Like an Old Tale (Jumbies Theatre). Film/TV: Navajo Storekeeper in Paranormal Witness: Season 4; Cree translator and voiceover in Chasing Lear, by Lorne Cardinal; Storyteller in Naskumtowin: Treaty in Heritage Minutes for Historica Canada; Storyboot School feature on CBC Toronto. Radio/Recordings: Recording: I Fell in Love (Marilainen Music); OEN radio commercial recording (Gravity Inc). Album release: Maskawasiwin (Marilainen Music); Women’s Voices for Attawapiskat (compilation). Composer/Singer: Condor & Eagle by New Tradition Music; Black Showl by Classic Roots. Training: Banff Centre for the Arts. Online: rosaryspence.ca, @rosaryspence.

ALYSSE SZATKOWSKI
2021: Cree/Ojibway Language Consultant for The Rez Sisters, Stratford debut. Elsewhere: Dialect coach for This Was the World (Tarragon Theatre); Cree translator and reader for The Rez Sisters, Treaty 9 (Native Earth Performing Arts); music composer and performer in Nagamo (Jumbies Theatre); music composer and performer in Like an Old Tale (Jumbies Theatre). Film/TV: Navajo Storekeeper in Paranormal Witness: Season 4; Cree translator and voiceover in Chasing Lear, by Lorne Cardinal; Storyteller in Naskumtowin: Treaty in Heritage Minutes for Historica Canada; Storyboot School feature on CBC Toronto. Radio/Recordings: Recording: I Fell in Love (Marilainen Music); OEN radio commercial recording (Gravity Inc). Album release: Maskawasiwin (Marilainen Music); Women’s Voices for Attawapiskat (compilation). Composer/Singer: Condor & Eagle by New Tradition Music; Black Showl by Classic Roots. Training: Banff Centre for the Arts. Online: rosaryspence.ca, @rosaryspence.

SOPHIE TANG
2021: Apprentice stage manager of The Rez Sisters. Stratford debut. Elsewhere: Orestes (Tarragon Theatre), The Seagull (Soupepper Theatre), Copy That (Tarragon Theatre), BOOM X (Thousand Islands Playhouse), Copenhagen (Soulepper Theatre), Shirley Valentine (Thousand Islands Playhouse), Two Planos Four Hands (Thousand Islands Playhouse), The Flick (Single Thread Theatre Co.), The Mountaintop (Theatre Kingston), Venus in Fur (Theatre Kingston). Education: Queen's University, Bachelor of Music. Et cetera: Alysse is extremely excited to be making her Stratford debut, and is very thankful to every single person who helped her get here.

IMOGEN WILSON
2021: Assistant lighting designer of A Midsummer Night’s Dream, The Rez Sisters, I Am William and Serving Elizabeth. Fourth season. Stratford: Assistant lighting designer of Billy Elliot the Musical, The Merry Wives of Windsor, The Front Page, Long Day’s Journey Into Night, Brontë: The World Without. Elsewhere: Lighting design credits include La Bohème: A National Tour of Opera in Bars (Against the Grain), What I Call Her (Crows’ Theatre), Dark Heart (Thought for Food). Assistant lighting designer of Caroline, or Change (Musical Stage Company), How to Fail as a Popstar, Let’s Run Away, Every Brilliant Thing (Canadian Stage), Bat Out of Hell (Mirvish), A Beautiful View (Festival Players of Prince Edward County). Imogen is also a scenic artist and proud member of IATSE ADC659. Et cetera: Imogen is honoured to be back at the Festival this year and is grateful for every day that we can gather to tell stories.

2021 PRODUCTIONS STREAMING THIS FALL
WATCH FOR DETAILS: STRATFORDFESTIVAL.CA/ATHOME
THE LANGHAM DIRECTORS’ WORKSHOP

Overseen by Antoni Cimolino, Artistic Director, and Langham workshop alumnus Esther Jun, Director of the Langham Directors’ Workshop, this program seeks the most promising directing talent and provides them with fertile ground to explore, play, and hone their craft. The Workshop endeavours to help cultivate the directors’ interests, refine their aesthetics, and enable them to create inspired and boundary-pushing work – not only for the Stratford Festival’s stages, but across the globe.

Participants this season: Marie Farsi, Sadie Epstein-Fine, Christine Horne, Sara Jarvie-Clark.
Alumni this season: Jessica Carmichael, Ravi Jain, Esther Jun, Julia Nish-Lapidus, Peter Pasyk, James Wallis.

We extend our thanks to the Department of Canadian Heritage and to the Philip and Berthe Morton Foundation.

The Langham Directors’ Workshop is sponsored by Emerging Artists Project.

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THE STRATFORD FESTIVAL LABORATORY

Founded by artistic director Antoni Cimolino in 2013, and overseen by Antoni and Ted Witzel, the Laboratory is the Stratford Festival’s research and development wing: a suite of experiments and investigations that drive our artistic and organizational evolution in an era of exciting cultural change.

Advancing inclusive and innovative practice, the Lab:

- **INCUBATES NEW WORKS** for our stages by supporting long-term and unconventional development processes.

- **CONDUCTS EXPERIMENTS** through our resident Lab Ensemble, to build our capacity to support other forms and cultural protocols, and to create new relationships with artists from across Canada and beyond.

- **BUILDS CONNECTIONS** with the national artistic community by hosting and supporting gatherings of makers to share practices, questions, challenges and strategies.

- **FOSTERS ENSEMBLE** by offering full-company sessions to encourage horizontal learning and build a shared spirit among the huge group of artists who come together at the Festival every season.

- **OPENS DIALOGUE**, internally and externally, by creating spaces to reflect on the Festival’s role as a heritage institution and the growth and change necessary to ensure that it remains a vital asset to Canada’s cultural ecology.

Like any successful R&D wing, the Lab will be agile and flexible in its response to the changing landscape. The scope of its activities will expand and shift as we identify new challenges and opportunities to serve our community of artists and audiences, locally, nationally and beyond.

Support for the Laboratory is generously provided by the Dalio Foundation and by an anonymous donor.

The services of the Metcalf Foundation Dramaturgy Intern were made possible through Theatre Ontario’s Professional Theatre Training Program, funded by the Ontario Arts Council.

Funding for artisan apprenticeships is provided by the William H. Somerville Theatre Artisan Apprenticeship Fund, funded by the J.P. Bickell Foundation and by Robert and Jacqueline Sperandio.

A member of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres, the Stratford Festival engages, under the terms of the Canadian Theatre Agreement, professional artists who are members of Canadian Actors’ Equity Association. Stage crew, scenic carpenters, drivers, wigs and makeup attendants, wardrobe attendants, facilities staff and audience development representatives are members of Local 357 of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE). Scenic artists are members of IATSE Local 828. The musicians, musical directors, conductors, and orchestra contractors engaged by the Stratford Festival are members of the Toronto Musicians’ Association, Local 149 of the American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada.

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The Stratford Shakespearean Festival Endowment Foundation Board mourns the loss of Director Robert Badun, a member of the Endowment Foundation Board from 2017, and as its Chair from 2020, until his passing in April of 2021. Rob is remembered by his fellow Directors for his unwavering service and unique combination of expertise, wisdom, leadership and humility.

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Masks are encouraged to be worn at all indoor and outdoor venues, as per government health guidance. Please respect physical distancing and the direction of Stratford Festival staff and volunteers working to keep everyone safe.

CAMERAS, CELL PHONES AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES

We welcome your photo memories of your Stratford Festival experience; however, all cameras, audio and video recorders must be turned off during the performance. In addition, please turn off all mobile devices, as their sounds and lights will disturb actors and other guests.

FOOD AND DRINK

We offer a selection of snacks and beverages. However, in accordance with COVID-19 protocols, guests must be seated to consume any concessions. While masks can be removed when enjoying food and beverages, they are encouraged to be worn at all other times. Drinks can be enjoyed throughout the performance, but no food may be consumed while actors are on stage.

LATE ARRIVAL AND READMISSION

If you arrive late or leave the auditorium during the performance, we will make every effort to seat you at a suitable break. Please follow the direction of ushers at all times.

FIRST AID

We take patron health and safety seriously. Any member of our team will coordinate first-aid assistance for you if required. Automated external defibrillators (AEDs) are available at all our venues.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

In case of an evacuation, please follow the instructions of Stratford Festival staff, who will escort you to safety. If you discover a fire, please activate the fire alarm and notify a Stratford Festival team member.

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