



LUNCHBOX
THEATRE

Media Release

Lunchbox Theatre is proud to welcome the hilarious political satire *Cottagers and Indians*. Tickets on sale now.

CALGARY, AB – April 25, 2023 — Lunchbox Theatre's final production of the 2022-23 season is the play *Cottagers and Indians*. **Created by award-winning playwright and journalist Drew Hayden Taylor**, this funny and witty comedy is sure to be a favourite. The play features Barbara Gates Wilson & Garret Smith and is directed by Valerie Planche. The show will be live and in-person in the Studio Theatre at Vertigo. This production will preview on May 9 and 10, and will run until May 27, 2023. The official opening show is on May 11.

Tickets are on sale now, range in price from \$21-\$31 per performance, and can be purchased at LunchboxTheatre.com.

***Cottagers and Indians* explores the politics and issues surrounding a real-life event still occurring in the Kawartha Lakes region of Central Ontario.**

Bronwyn Steinberg, Lunchbox Theatre Artistic Director:

“This play has been provoking both side-splitting laughter and deep conversations all over Canada ever since its premiere in Toronto a few years ago. Although the story takes place in Ontario, it has very clear parallels here in Alberta. *Cottagers and Indians* allows us a chance to see ourselves and our conflicts reflected onstage in a way that opens up conversation, partially thanks to the setting, but mostly thanks to Drew Hayden Taylor’s fantastic and funny writing.”

Synopsis:

In this funny and fierce play, an Indigenous man, Arthur Copper, has taken it upon himself to repopulate the lakes of his home territory with wild rice—known amongst the Anishnawbe as Manoomin. The local non-Indigenous cottagers, Maureen Poole in particular, are NOT impressed. She feels the plant interferes with her favourite lake activities and is an eyesore that brings down the property value. Based on real-life events in Ontario's Kawartha Lakes region, the story infuses contemporary conflicts between Indigenous and non-Indigenous sensibilities with Drew Hayden Taylor's characteristic warmth and humour.

Note: show contains some strong language

About the Playwright

Drew Hayden Taylor is an award-winning playwright, novelist, journalist and filmmaker. Born and living on the Curve Lake First Nation in Ontario, Drew has done practically everything from performing stand-up comedy at the Kennedy Centre in Washington D.C. to being Artistic Director of Canada's premiere Indigenous theatre company, Native Earth Performing Arts. Currently,

Drew's 35th book will be out this winter, and he is busy working on season three of his award-winning documentary series on APTN, *Going Native*.

The original Tarragon Theatre production toured to Ottawa, Thunder Bay and St. John, and the script has also been produced in theatres across Canada. Drew Hayden Taylor has also created a CBC documentary of the same name, focused on the true story that inspired this fictional play.

Cottagers and Indians was featured in 2022 at the Ontario Blyth Festival: "Audiences are loving this show...the play is hilarious... Drew Hayden Taylor's biting comedy about communities in conflict in Ontario's Cottage Country exploded onto the theatre scene in 2019, garnering rave reviews before COVID-19 shut down our theatres. This powerful (and hilarious!) play opens a much-needed dialogue about Indigenous rights, and what happens at the grassroots when consumerism comes into conflict with environmentalism."

"I laughed out loud"... "If you like the jokes in *Come From Away*, then look into *Cottagers and Indians*." – The Globe and Mail

"Drew Hayden Taylor has a deft touch for mixing comedy and commentary in an entertaining and all-Canadian form of social satire." – Vancouver Sun

Cottagers and Indians will be performed by Barbara Gates Wilson (Maureen Poole) and Garret Smith (Arthur Copper).

The creative team for *Cottagers and Indians* includes Valerie Planche (director), Ruby Eagle Child & Harvey Bastein (elders), Lindsey Zess (set & costume design), Joy Robinson (sound designer), Madeline Blondal (lighting designer), Meredith Johnson (stage manager), and Frances MacDonald (Apprentice Stage Manager).

Masked Performances – May 16 and 23

Our priority is providing a safe environment for our patrons, staff, volunteers and artists. In an effort to support the comfort levels of all our guests, Lunchbox Theatre has made the decision to offer select Masked Performances this season. This decision was made to address the accommodations requested by some of our patrons, either for preference or personal health reasons.

We hope this option gives reassurance of Lunchbox Theatre's support of all our patrons, and ask that all in attendance respect these special accommodations for these performances. The masked performances for *Cottagers and Indians* will be at 12 p.m. on Tuesday, May 16 and 23.

Relaxed & ASL – May 14

Lunchbox is partnering again with Inside Out Theatre with their [Good Host program](#) to provide a Relaxed and ASL-interpreted performance of *Cottagers and Indians* at 12 p.m. Sunday, May 14.

Relaxed performances are designed to welcome audience members who would benefit from a more relaxed environment. Anyone can purchase tickets to attend the relaxed show but the people who have gained the most benefit from relaxed performances in the past include individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder, Dementia, Sensory Disorders, Young Families with small children and more! Small modifications are made to the production and the patron experience to "relax" the experience. All are welcome at a Relaxed Performance. Whether you

may need to make some noise, move around a bit, leave for a break in the lobby, you're welcome in our theatre.

Note: All reviewers need to book complimentary tickets for the 1st week of the run. No exceptions.

About Lunchbox Theatre

Lunchbox Theatre presents an enriching and engaging theatre experience with an emphasis on accessibility for audiences and artists. We create and produce one-act plays primarily at noon, focusing on entertaining new Canadian works that examine and explore socially relevant issues. The theatre seeks to provide rewarding and memorable experiences to its audiences, casts, and supporters by delving into a variety of works that reflect our audience and their particular world, as well as works that will offer fresh experiences and new understandings. Lunchbox is a hub for artistic development—for artists as well as plays, with emerging artists working alongside established professionals.

For ticket and season pass information, please visit lunchboxtheatre.com

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For interview requests or more information, please contact:

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