

Poster Artwork by Rebekah Ogdén

Cottagers & Indians

Play by Drew Hayden Taylor

May 9, 2023 - May 27, 2023



MESSAGE FROM OUR ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Bronwyn Steinberg



Cottagers and Indians has been provoking both side-splitting laughter and deep conversations all over Canada ever since its premiere in Toronto a few years ago. I had the pleasure of catching that original production when it was touring in Ottawa in 2019, and Arthur and Maureen have stayed with me since then. With his signature humour and wit, Drew Hayden Taylor has created two deeply relatable characters and put them into direct conflict. This fight is not just about wild rice, but about our very relationship to ourselves, each other, and the land. That's a lot to fit into a "food fight."

Drew Hayden Taylor is an incredibly prolific Indigenous writer from Curve Lake First Nation in Ontario. He frequently works out of Toronto, and he told me that he likes to say he "lives in Curve Lake but has a cottage in Toronto." He's an award-winning writer with over 30 plays, tons of books, articles, films, and the way he manages to bridge the gap between cultures is always with comedy.

This story takes place in the Kawartha Lakes region, right on the land and waterways that Drew grew up on. Clearly the true story of this controversy captured his imagination. In fact, he's also made a documentary with CBC of the same name, featuring the real local people, including James Whetung and Larry Wood, whose conflict inspired this play. But I love that in this theatricalized version of the story, we find our way into the story through Arthur and Maureen's dialogue. Somehow, through the magic of live theatre, these fictional characters' stories get to a place of "truth" that just resonates so deeply.

Although the story takes place in Ontario, it has clear parallels here in Alberta. I can't help but see how much Arthur has in common with Niitsitapi water-protectors, and our Torontonians Cottager Maureen will be very recognizable to Calgarians who enjoy time at the cabin. These conversations are happening all across Turtle Island—this land that we call Canada. This story allows us a chance to see ourselves and our conflicts reflected onstage in a way that opens up conversation thanks to Drew Hayden Taylor's warmth, humour and respect for the people at the heart of this issue.

CAST & CREATIVE

Garret Smith Arthur Copper
Barbara Gates Wilson Maureen Poole
Madeline Blondal Lighting Designer
Ruby Eagle Child Elder
Drew Hayden Taylor Playwright

Meredith Johnson Stage Manager
Frances MacDonald Apprentice Stage Manager
Amelia Newbert Scenic Builder
Valerie Planche Director
Joy Robinson Sound Designer
Lindsey Zess Costume & Set Designer

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Heidi Damayo Dramaturge
Frances MacDonald Stage Manager
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Joy Robinson Designer
Fangzheng Wang Director
Allison Weninger Production Manager

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Valerie Planche



I always dreamed of spending summers at a cottage. My family camped across Ontario and Quebec and those waters are in my blood. Those memories are some of the happiest in my life.

My family also lived near two reservations Kanesatake and Kahnawake, on the south shore of Montréal. I saw first-hand how the Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) people struggle(d) to protect their land as "progress" encroached.

Dealing with grief and loss can level the best of us, and if then we are faced with something else in the middle of that grief, something that threatens our sense of who we are and the land we hold deep in our bones, well up go the stakes!

In Southern Alberta particularly we can't grow manoomin (wild rice), but we face huge issues with water conservation and management. As Canadians relearn and become aware of our shared history with Indigenous people, some for the first time, we face some strong realizations, disconcerting emotions, and wrestle with how we move forward.

So do our imperfect heroes Arthur and Maureen.

Based on true events, *Cottagers and Indians* raises some tough issues of food sovereignty, colonization, assimilation, property ownership, racism, and privilege. Drew Hayden Taylor tackles these issues by putting real people, on the land, to work it out together. We all come back to the land.

I love this play's deep humor and heart. Drew makes both sides of the discussion come alive with wit and care. We laugh and feel for them both.

Thank you for coming to sit with Arthur and Maureen on the Kawartha Lakes deep in Anishinaabeg territory, in cottage country, Ontario.

Maybe we'll all laugh, maybe shed a tear together... and maybe, see each other differently in the process.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We at Lunchbox Theatre are grateful to live and create here in Mohkinstsis, and the Treaty 7 region of Alberta.

We acknowledge the traditional caretakers of these lands including the people of the Blackfoot Confederacy, Tsuu t'ina, and Stoney Nakoda Nations, as well as the people of the Metis Region of Alberta, Region 3.

THANK YOU

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Garret Smith - Arthur Copper

Garret is a proud member of the Piikani and Kainai Nations of the Blackfoot Confederacy in Southern Alberta. A graduate of the Centre For Indigenous Theatre in 2013 and a Founder of the "Mohkinstsis" healing camp, 2018, previously located in downtown Calgary, Alberta. Currently Garret and his family host Tipi Harvest workshops in the summer months that are open to the general public.

Recent theatre credits include: *O'kosi*, *Time Stands Still*, (*Making Treaty 7: MT7 Cultural Society*), *Deceitful Above All Things* (Factory Theatre & Summerworks), *Thunderstick* (Centre for Indigenous Theatre), *Dreary and Izzy* (Western Canada Theatre), *The Honouring* (Kahawi Dance Theatre), and *Stopheart* (Factory Theatre). Film/T.V. credits include: *Tribal*, (APTN), *Canada The Story Of Us*, (Canada Heritage), *The Cycle of Life*, (Kahawi Dance), and *Dreamkeepers*, (Hallmark).



Barbara Gates Wilson - Maureen Poole

Over the years Barbara has had the pleasure of appearing in many Lunchbox Theatre productions including *The Exquisite Hour*, *Fritters In Kandahar*, *The Life History Of The Elephant*. Other theatre credits include *Deathtrap*, *Blithe Spirit*, and *Evelyn Strange* (Vertigo Theatre); *True Love Lies*, *Proof* (ATP); *An Ideal Husband*, *Our Town*, *Dracula*, *Rough Crossing* (Theatre Calgary); *A Farndale Christmas Carol*, *They Came From Mars* (Pleiades Theatre); *Mover Over Mrs. Markham*, *Not Now Darling* (Stage West); *I Love Mondays* (Ghost River Theatre); *The Occulist's Holiday*, *Fever-Land*, *Cocktails At Pam's* (Teatro la Quindicina) . Film and TV credits include *Faultline*, *Fargo*, *Heartland*, *19th Wife*, *September Dawn* and *Boot Camp*.



Madeline Blondal - Lighting Designer

Madeline Blondal (she/her) is an emerging set, costume and lighting designer. Producing art in fast paced and collaborative settings, she seeks to explore theatre through her designs that focus on blending functionality with architecture and its effects on movement and mood. Recent design credits include *Smoke* (Tiny Bear Jaws), *Stone and Soil* (Nextfest), *Caribbean Muskrat* (Teatro Quindicina), *Ministry of Mundane Mysteries: Sound Off* (Outside the March), *Hireath* (Bright Young Things).



Drew Hayden Taylor - 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*.



Meredith Johnson - Stage Manager

Meredith is a Calgary based stage manager. Previously for Lunchbox: *Brave Girl*, *Last Christmas*, *Woman Against Gravity* (*Workshop*) *Miss Caledonia*. Meredith has worked with the likes of Alberta Theatre Projects, Bad Knaps Theatre, Black Radish Theatre, Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, Calgary Young People's Theatre, Handsome Alice Theatre, Heritage Park, Making Treaty 7, Major Matt Mason Collective, One Yellow Rabbit, Theatre Calgary, The Shakespeare Company,

Spontaneous Theatre/Arts Club Theatre, Quest Theatre, Vertigo Theatre and Verb Theatre. Meredith would like to thank the team at Lunchbox for their patience and thoughtful audacity.



Frances Macdonald - Apprentice Stage Manager

Frances MacDonald is delighted to be working with Lunchbox Theatre! Frances has had the pleasure of working in Calgary as a (non-union) Stage Manager since 2019. Apprenticeship credits: *Stone Soup & Festive Favorites* (Calgary Opera), *Cipher* (Vertigo Theatre). Stage Management credits: *Grace & Glorie*, *A Christmas Carol* (Rosebud Theatre); *Wandering with Wonder* (Storyfair Productions); *Snowblind* (Lunchbox Theatre & Making Treaty 7), *Matilda* (Storybook Theatre). Assistant Stage Management credits: *O'kosi* (Making Treaty 7); *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (Rosebud Theatre).



Valerie Planche - Director

Based in Calgary Alberta, Valerie is an award-winning Metis/Settler heritage actor, director, arts educator, and voice and text coach with over 35 years' experience on Stage and in Film and Television. Her work ranges from classical to contemporary, to new play development, and has taken her across Canada and into the US. She is a recurring sessional at many post-secondary institutions across Alberta, has worked with the Birmingham Conservatory for the Stratford Festival, and coaches privately for theatre and film.

She completed her MFA in 2014 where she garnered a graduate teaching award from the University of Alberta. In 2015 she was awarded *The Gina Wilkinson Prize* from the Shaw Festival, *The Michelle Dias Award* from Theatre Alberta in 2018, and the *Flare Creativity Award* from the Banff Centre for the Arts in 2019. She is a member of Canadian Actors Equity, the Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists, the Association of Acting Coaches and Educators, and the Canadian Guild of Stage Directors and Choreographers.
www.valerieplanche.com - Valerie Planche - IMDb



Joy Robinson - Sound Designer

Joy is a graduate of the Ambrose University theatre program and is a sound designer, actor, musician, and singer/songwriter, having recently released her original music into the world on all streaming platforms. She is thrilled to be a member of the Artistic Associate Company at Lunchbox Theatre this season, delving deeper into the craft of theatre and sound design. She hopes today's story will leave you enriched. Recent design credits include *The Christians**, *Sunny Side Up*, *Mary Jane*, *Communion* (Fire Exit Theatre, *Hit & Myth/Ambrose University). Other favourite credits include playing Louise in *Marion Bridge* (Fire Exit Theatre), 6 seasons with the Badlands

Passion Play, and the many devised theatre projects she has collaborated on at Ambrose University.

Follow all of Joy's creative endeavors: @KeyWordJoy on Instagram & YouTube and @JoyRobinsonMusic on Facebook.



Lindsey Zess - Set & Costume Designer

Lindsey is a Métis director, designer, maker, and arts educator. She creates for both film and theatre, specializing in scenography, directing, devised performance, and physical theatre practices. Her design methodology places a strong emphasis on the material, mythological and metaphysical. Recent design credits include *Bombay Black* (ATP), *The Canterville Ghost* (CYPT), *John Ware Reimagined* (The Blyth Festival), and *Heaven* (Lunchbox Theatre).

Indigenous Gathering Place

Come and spend a day with the creative team on this show and the Lunchbox staff and board members in the beautiful outdoors near Pincher Creek.

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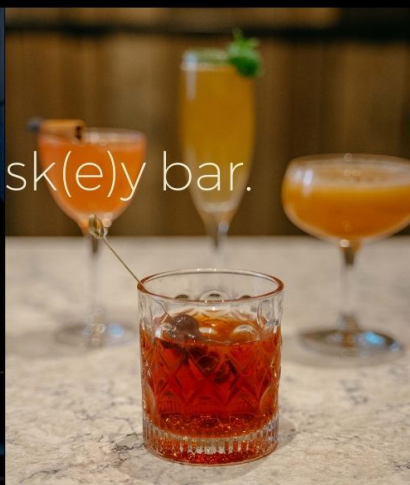
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If you are interested in what our Adopt-An-Artist program is about or are wanting to adopt one of our available artists please reach out to General Manager Patti Neice at admin@lunchboxtheatre.com

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