



STUDY GUIDE

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THE PLAY

Map of the Land, Map of the Stars

This play begins with a story about a woman travelling back and forth along the Alaska Highway for work. One night, she is convinced there is someone in the car with her. She drives all the way home, too scared to stop. When she looks, though, there's no one else in her car. Later, she tells an elder what happened. The elder says spirits used to know the map of the stars, but since the highway was built, they've lost their way.

Before the highways, Yukon peoples freely traveled the rivers and trails, guided by the stars and their knowledge of the land. This play is about searching for our stories, gathering them, honouring them. It celebrates people's deep connections between the land and the sky, which go back thousands of years for Yukon First Nations – the Indigenous people who lived here first.

In Andra's story, we learn about many generations of women in her family who walked the trails in the southern Yukon.

We even make a map with her family's trails. In other parts of the play, people work hard at a summer fish camp along the river. They remember stories they heard as children, about how the world was made, giant animals, and more.



Premiere, Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre, May 2017. Photo credit: Bruce Barrett

This play happens in many times and places. The audience time-travels back and forth with the seven performers to hear stories, songs, and dances from different times and people. Sometimes a whole story is told; sometimes only a little piece of the story (a snippet) is remembered. In one scene from a true story, a man named Tom – a former slave – moves into the Yukon in the late 1800s.



Andrameda Hunter and Santana Berryman, Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre, May 2017. Photo credit: Bruce Barrett

This play explores how major events disrupted people’s way of life on the land. The Klondike Gold Rush was one. Thousands of stampeders came to the Yukon hoping to get rich. The building of the Alaska Highway during World War II brought more incredible changes to Yukon people. It also was very hard for the American soldiers who had to build it, many of them young African-American men.

Some stories are about the colonization of Indigenous people. Leonard Linklater, one of the artists who helped to create this play, describes colonization as “the process

where one group imposes its values and cultural beliefs on another group over time.” This happened over and over in Canada, as new groups of people moved in and did not respect the values, laws, cultural beliefs and territories of Indigenous people.

The Canadian government made new laws to control what Indigenous people could and could not do. The government took their territory away and forced many of them to live on small reservations. Churches brought new religions. First Nations children were taken away from their families and sent far away to residential schools. This was a painful time for families.

The play also looks at how people come together in positive ways. New people come to the Yukon for many reasons, such as for work (Andra’s dad) or for peace and freedom (Tom). Many fall in love with this land, and people already living here, and start new lives together. With this play, we’re trying to search for a good trail forward together, with reconciliation and harmony, for all of us.



Premiere, Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre, May 2017. Photo credit: Bruce Barrett

PLAY-VIEWING NOTES FOR TEACHERS

Map of the Land, Map of the Stars is a dense, layered production that invites an audience to participate actively in the theatre experience. Seven performers dance, sing, speak, create images with their bodies and a few sticks. Marten Berkman's video images are projected on Linda Leon's set that evokes a historical Yukon – fish racks and hides – as well as on the performers themselves. Scott Maynard's soundscape offers yet another layer, evoking times gone by or playing with what we think we know about the Yukon by manipulating sound.

Some audience members may find it challenging to receive all the information. Your eye may be caught by the images on the hides, and you may be drawn into the story that is being told there. You may find the performers so compelling that you “miss” the projections that support the story being told. The soundscape may take you away from the room you are in, transport you to a place of memory every bit as real as this place and time.

This layering is purposeful, reflecting both Indigenous storytelling and the experience of living in the Yukon itself. Where to look? As you walk a trail, gaze up at the sky, hear the river at your left, you may miss the eagle circling just over your shoulder, not see the canoers floating by. Every journey is different. So it is with *Map of the Land, Map of the Stars*.

Your neighbour will not have exactly the same experience you do; in fact it is likely no two people in the room will. You may discover that you want to see the show again, to enjoy another similar, but different, journey.



Promotional photo, 2017. Photo credit: Marten Berkman

WORDS FROM THE CO-DIRECTORS



YVETTE NOLAN

The work of *Map of the Land*, *Map of the Stars* is very much like the work we as Canadian and First Nation inhabitants must do in order to go forward into the next 150 years.

In the beginning, we sat together, Canadian and First Nations artists, and talked about what stories compelled us, what histories we knew, and what histories we wanted to unearth and examine more closely. Every artist who participated in the creation of the play brought their knowledge and teachings and ancestors into the room. Some of us brought in just hints of histories, stories we knew only parts of, like the blind men feeling different parts of the elephant, not being able to imagine the whole, but being fascinated by this one part I could feel: this serpentine trunk, this leathery ear. Together we mined the stories, filled in each other's blanks, went out looking for more parts to fill in the gaps.

We are not all the same, but we agree to some basic conventions in the room: we will listen to each other, we will hear each other, we will try to move together for a while, we will learn things from each other. We will attempt to learn each other's languages, be they song or dance, English or French or Tlingit. We will attempt to orient ourselves using each other's guideposts, using each other's positions, each other's maps, whether they are within, below us, or above our heads.

In this way do we go forward. Not just the artists who came into the room to make this work, but (we hope) all the people who inhabit this land that is currently called Canada.



MICHELLE OLSON

What is history? Society tells us what is significant and this creates a dominant narrative filled with events and dates that become our history. This becomes the textbooks for our schools, the news casts for our evenings, the slogan for our tourist campaign. The dominant narrative is what we begin to accept as our personal and cultural history.

But what do our bodies have to say? If we delve into our physical selves, we delve into a collection of experiences, stories, desires and emotions that have

been gifted to us from our ancestors. Stories stir and resonate inside our blood and bones and yearn to be remembered through shape and form, movement and song, story and text. Like an archeological site, our rehearsal room is a place where we hone in on places to be dug up, sifted through, and brushed off to find the stories that have been forgotten, not acknowledged, hidden and waiting to be rediscovered. It is through shaping and moving our bodies and minds that these impressions, stories and emotions surface and to our surprise (or not) they are in stark contrast to the dominant narrative.

Map of the Land, Map of the Stars is sourced from our bodies. Our body map connects story and emotion to place and time and we create a map that embraces all that we are individually and collectively.



Andromeda Hunter, Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre, May2017. Photo credit: Bruce Barrett

HOW WE CREATED THE PLAY

There are many different ways to create a play. Sometimes one person writes a play from beginning to end, or two people write it together. Sometimes theatre artists work in a group to make a play. Working together in a group is called “collaborating.”

Artists collaborate to bring together different creative ideas, points of view, stories and skills. Sometimes, collaborating is called “devising”. The term “devised theatre” usually means the play was made using group collaboration.

Map of the Land, Map of the Stars is a “devised theatre” play. One of these methods we used is called “Storyweaving”.



Performers, designers, directors and co-creators working together in rehearsal in March 2017 at the Old Fire Hall, Whitehorse. Photo credit: Gwaandak Theatre

STORYWEAVING

Co-Directors Michelle Olson and Yvette Nolan taught us a devised theatre technique which she learned from an artist named Muriel Miguel. Gwaandak Theatre honours Muriel and her sisters Gloria Miguel and Lisa Mayo. These Indigenous theatre artists started Spiderwoman Theatre in New York City. Since 1976, Muriel and her sisters have made and performed dozens of plays using their Storyweaving method. Muriel also travelled to Whitehorse and gave a three-day Storyweaving workshop in 2016. She is happy to share her teachings.

Storyweaving builds many layers of stories, images, sound, movement and music to create a kind of living tapestry with many story-threads woven in. We used Storyweaving to create theatrical versions of our stories about our relationship to the land and waters of the Yukon. Look for examples in our play: lines of text from a story might be found in a recorded soundscape; photographs we saw in books about Yukon history might become shapes made on stage with wooden sticks; bits and pieces of a longer story might turn into a short dance.

For example, Leonard Linklater told us stories about the land and people in the Yukon and Mackenzie River Delta where he grew up. While Leonard spoke, we watched his movements carefully. Afterwards, we created a dance based on Leonard's gestures. This dance is near the beginning of the play. Watch for it!



Ensemble co-creators working together during a creation week, February 2016, Odd Fellows Hall, Dawson City. Photo credit: Chris Healey

Think and Talk

- > Can you remember a time when you created something (a story, a painting, a project) by yourself? What was satisfying, or made you happy, about creating something by yourself?
- > Can you remember a time when you created something (a story, a painting, a project) in a group? What was satisfying, or made you happy, about creating in a group?
- > What do you think is challenging about both situations?
- > What is positive about both situations?

Hands-on Activity

DRAW A MAP TOGETHER

Materials: paper, drawing materials

Time: 15-25 minutes

Form groups of four or five. Divide paper and drawing materials between groups. Each group has 15 minutes to draw a map of the traditional territories in your region. *The point is not to make a perfect map, but to work together for a shared outcome!* Listen to one another's ideas and follow each other's routes.

After the 15 minutes is up, each group shares their map with the class. Ask each group about the process behind drawing their unique map.

- > How do you make decisions as a group?
- > How is each group member represented in the map?
- > How is knowledge about places and place names shared?

WORDS FROM A CO-CREATOR/PERFORMER

ANDRAMEDA HUNTER

We began the process of creating this production by asking ourselves: “What is my connection to the land and waters of the Yukon?” Being born and raised in the Yukon, I’ve always felt a powerful connection to both of those things, but I’d never really articulated it to anyone before. I decided to reflect on this question as I took a drive through Ax léelk’w has aani – the lands of my ancestors on my mother’s side. I personally don’t get to travel on the land and spend much time there, but I was affected on a deep emotional level with the realization that I have a type of genetic memory and tie to the land and the waters that flow through it.

In my family it seems to be the women who pass on the stories, and the stories I’ve heard from my mother have mostly been about our female ancestors. This makes me realize we exemplify the matrilineal concept. When a man and woman marry, they must be from opposite clans. Their children become part of the same clan as their mother, thus the lineage is traced through the mother’s bloodline.

My father’s immigration to the Yukon was part of a larger time of social change. The 1960s and 1970s brought many people from other parts of the world to work in various mines. Many of them fell in love with the land and people here and stayed long after the mines closed, contributing to the diversity of people who made their home in the Yukon.

It was a pleasure to share these stories within our collaborative group, and together, we brought them to life onstage. It is a vulnerable feeling to share my family history in this public way, but going through this process has inspired me to do some research – reading, discussing, asking questions – which has deepened my understanding of my part in the story of the Yukon.



**Andrameda Hunter, Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre, May 2017.
Photo credit: Bruce Barrett**

ANDRA'S STORY, YOUR STORY

In one scene in our play, called, “Andra’s Story,” Andrameda Hunter’s family history comes to life in an onstage map. All of the performers play different roles including Andra, her mother Sally, her grandmother and others. All but one of the ancestors are women; Tagish Jim is the only man.

Andrameda shared her family history as we made this play. She noticed that in her family, it was mostly women telling stories about female ancestors. The women’s stories are passed down on her mother’s side.

This is not surprising. Indigenous people in the Yukon traditionally were “matrilineal.” That means ancestry was traced through the female line on the mother’s side. Some other cultures in the world are “patrilineal.” Ancestry was traced through the male line.

Different families, groups and cultures have their own ways of passing down stories, belongings and special parts of who they are.



“Andra’s Story,” Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre, May 2017. Photo credit: Bruce Barrett

WRITING EXERCISE - YOUR STORY

1. Fill out the following for yourself, your parents, grandparents, and your great-grandparents. If you are not sure of all of the details, take a guess.

- > My name is....
- > I was born at/in.... (location)
- > My birth order (for example, I am the oldest of three children)
- > I grew up/was raised at....
- > An interesting story detail about my life... (2-4 sentences)
- > My mother is...
- > An interesting story detail about her is...
- > My father is...
- > An interesting story detail about him is...
- > My grandparents are...
- > An interesting story detail about one of them is...
- > My great-grandparents are...
- > An interesting story detail about one of them is...

2. Share a story detail about one (or more) ancestors with the class.

3. For each student: Place objects (whatever is handy) throughout the room. Each object is a place (Whitehorse, Kitchener or Vancouver, for example) from your family's story. Walk through the objects and explain what happened to your family in each place.

4. Take this exercise home to your family. Do some research, ask your family members for help, and write a revised version.

BUILDING THE ALASKA HIGHWAY

During our creative process and performances, we honour the African-American soldiers who helped build the Alaska Highway from Dawson Creek, B.C. to Fairbanks, Alaska. 2017 is the 75th anniversary year for completion of this huge construction project.

During World War II, after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour in 1941, the United States decided to build the Alaska Highway. They feared a Japanese invasion and wanted to connect Alaska to the rest of their country in the “lower 48” states by road.



About one-third of the American soldiers building the Alaska Highway were African-American. (Yukon Archives, R.G. Gabriel Fonds 2005/10, #18)

Right before the building of the Alaska Highway, less than 5,000 people lived in the Yukon. Then almost 11,000 American soldiers came with the U.S. Army Corps of

Engineers. That's more than double the Yukon population back then. ¹ It was a time of massive change.

About one-third of the U.S. soldiers were African-American. This is a story you don't always hear about the highway. Three mainly Black regiments – the 93rd, 95th and 97th – worked very hard on the 2,400-kilometre highway between 1942 and 1943. The land was rugged. The highway had to cross five mountain ranges. The soldiers pushed forward, though.

They did so at a time of open racism and strict legal racial segregation in both the U.S. and Canada. Segregation is the forced separation of people from different racial groups or with different skin colours. The black soldiers had white army officers commanding them. (In Canada, groups including Indigenous people, Black people, Japanese-Canadians and others faced segregation too).



Performers march as soldiers in Highway scene, Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre, May 2017. Photo credit: Bruce Barrett

“It was a lonely time”, said Staff Sgt. Clifton B. Monk, one of the men who built the highway, “We couldn't enjoy ourselves much in the wilderness. They didn't want Black men coming in contact with any people.”²

Many soldiers were from much warmer places in the southern U.S and had never known a cold winter. That Yukon winter of 1942 was one of the coldest on record. The army

¹ Yukon Archives, *Hidden History*, *Black History of the Yukon* website.

² John Virtue. *The Black Soldiers Who Built the Alaska Highway: A History of Four U.S. Army Regiments in the North, 1942-1943* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 2013) 141.

did not provide proper winter clothes and other supplies. Some soldiers died in accidents and from freezing to death.

Despite these hardships, the Black soldiers succeeded in pushing through the highway in only eight months. The road was finished on October 25, 1942. It was also known as the Alcan Highway.

In March 2017, the Alaska State Senate passed a bill recognizing the African American soldiers' efforts. It means that October 25 of each year will be African American Soldiers' Contribution to Building the Alaska Highway Day.

IMPACT OF THE HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION ON YUKON FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE

Map of the Land, Map of the Stars tells stories about some of the ways the Alaska Highway affected Yukon First Nations people. The highway was a major cause of dramatic changes that began to take place in First Nations communities from the 1940s on. The new road brought new foods, cultures and jobs. It also brought diseases and alcohol.

Yukon First Nations people's way of life was based on a close relationship with and respect for the land. Events such as the fur trade and the gold rush had interrupted this balance. The Alaska Highway's impact was more permanent. It contributed to the breakdown of traditional ways of life on the land. First Nations people became the minority in the Yukon.³

Some Yukon First Nations people found wage work, which was different than living and working off the land as hunters and trappers. Some men worked as guides on the survey crews mapping the road routes, with their horses or sled dogs and knowledge of the land. Some women "...worked as launderers, cooks, cleaners, sewers and sold handicraft work to male highway workers."⁴



Belle Desrosiers (nee Dickson) holding a food tray in Champagne, summer 1942. (Yukon Archives, Bob Ormbrek fonds, 90/52, #36, PHO 406)

Newcomers brought diseases such as measles and meningitis. This caused epidemics and deaths in villages such as Teslin and Burwash Landing. Some First Nations people

³ *Our Stories of Residential Schools in Yukon and Canada: Seeking Understanding – Finding our Way Together* timeline (Whitehorse: Yukon Education, 2015). Yukon Archives. *Alaska Highway – A Yukon Perspective* website.

⁴ *Ibid.*

reported that construction workers had stolen objects from graveyards. The construction workers also brought alcohol into communities along the highway route.”⁵

After the highway was built, more people used cars to travel around. It made it easier for other people to hunt and settle on Yukon First Nations lands. Younger people started to lose some of the skills that had been passed down over many generations.



George Blondin and his father Little Edward Blondin, Sheldon Lake, 1943. These men were hired find a route for the Canol Pipeline from Norman Wells over the Macmillan Pass to Ross River. They traveled with dogs, starting in the fall of 1942, with very little snow. This led to worn out toboggans by the time they reached Ross River. The Army supplied their dogs with an inadequate diet of cornmeal and lard, forcing the First Nations men to hunt for sheep, caribou and moose to provide enough food for themselves and their dogs. (Richard Finnie, photographer, Yukon Archives, Finnie Family Fonds, 81/21, #688, PHO 142)

“...Not all the impacts of the Alaska Highway were negative. Improved communications and transportation helped First Nations people organize themselves politically. This new political strength helped them regain authority over their lands. The highway improved the standard of living of many First Nations as road access to communities facilitated the improved delivery of services, such as medical care. The highway also provided an alternative way to ship goods into the territory, making them more readily available.”⁶

The highway also made it easier to take children away to the residential schools. In the years after World War II, “new roads and airplanes increased access to communities, permitting enforcement of school attendance and removal or more Aboriginal children by church and government officials, as [church] denominations competed to fill new schools...”⁷ These included Whitehorse Baptist Indian Mission School, Lower Post Roman Catholic Indian Residential School and Chooutla in Carcross, and later, Yukon Hall and Coudert Hall. Also St. Paul Residential School in Dawson City operated from 1920-1943 and then was converted into St. Paul's Hostel.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ *Our Stories of Residential Schools in Yukon and Canada: Seeking Understanding – Finding our Way Together* timeline (Whitehorse: Yukon Education, 2015).

Think and Talk

- > Why were soldiers from the American South sent all the way to the Yukon to build the Alaska Highway?
- > If you had never seen winter before, what would you think of it?
- > What does “segregation” mean? What are some examples of segregation?
- > Remember a time you felt included (or welcomed) into a group. Remember a time you felt excluded (or not welcomed) into a group. What was different about each situation?
- > What kinds of life skills do young people today have?
- > What kinds of life skills did our parents and grandparents have that we might have lost?

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS IN THE YUKON AND CANADA

Sometimes a play tells difficult stories. In the scene “Truck” in *Map of the Land, Map of the Stars*, the performers make an image of a truck filled with children, bumping along the Alaska Highway. The performers use sticks and their bodies to do this. The truck is taking the children away from their families to Chooutla Residential School in Carcross.

We created this scene for the play after hearing Chris Clarke, one of our play’s co-creators, share Ronald Johnson’s story about leaving his home for residential school as a boy. His story is in the scrapbook *Tr’ëhuhch’in Năwtr’udăha/Finding Our Way Home*, which was created by the K’ănăchă Group of residential school survivors in Dawson City.



Students in front of Chooutla Residential School, around 1935. (Yukon Archives, Anglican Church, Diocese of Yukon Fonds, 86/61, #635)

Here are some of Ronald Johnson’s words: *“All those years they tried so hard to make us into white people, but the only time they succeeded was when we arrived at that school after 500 miles in the back of that truck...all covered in white dirt.”*⁸

⁸ Chris Clarke, Sharon Moore and the K’ănăchă Group, *Tr’ëhuhch’in Năwtr’udăha/Finding Our Way Home* (Dawson City: Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in Publications, 2009), 61.

The Canadian government set up Indian Residential Schools in the late 1800s under the Indian Act. Most were run together with Anglican, Catholic, United and other Christian churches. These schools tried to end Indigenous ways of living and thinking. Children could not speak their languages. The schools tried to assimilate Indigenous children – to make them fit into ‘white’ Canadian culture, religion and values.

Many schools were far away. Lots of kids did not see their families for months or years. Many children became sick at residential schools; some died there. Many suffered mental, physical and sexual abuse. Some children did not get enough to eat, or were forced to be in medical experiments. This caused great harm to children and families.

Over 150,000 children went to these schools. In the Yukon region, Whitehorse Baptist Mission School closed in 1968, Chooutla in 1969 and Lower Post in 1975. Yukon Hall did not close until 1985. The last of these schools in Canada closed in 1996.

2017 is the year of Canada’s 150th birthday. Yukon First Nations people have experienced great changes in that time. “...Throughout all these changes, they remained strong and resilient, grounded by their languages and cultures.”⁹

In 2008, the Government of Canada made a public apology to students who attended these schools, their children and families. A national Truth and Reconciliation Commission also heard people’s stories and published a major report in 2015. It has 94 recommendations for our governments and all of us.

Nowadays, many people talk about the need for “reconciliation” between Indigenous people and other Canadians. There are many definitions for this word. It can mean restoring friendly relations, bringing people together again, reaching peace and understanding, and more.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission writes this about reconciliation: “*Collective efforts from all peoples are necessary to revitalize the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and Canadian society – reconciliation is the goal. It is a goal that will take the commitment of multiple generations but when it is achieved, when we have reconciliation - it will make for a better, stronger Canada.*”¹⁰

⁹ Our Stories timeline.

¹⁰ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. *Reconciliation...Towards a New Relationship*. Website.

Judy Gingell is a Kwanlin Dün Elder and Member of the Order of Canada who has worked for Aboriginal rights and governance for more than 40 years. She says, “... *it’s important to share these stories. Not to blame, but to move forward with understanding and compassion. Most importantly, to help our children and our grandchildren understand what we have faced, why we are the way we are, how difficult the healing journey has been for us, and how far we have come.*” ¹¹

By learning about the past and sharing our stories, we can make sure that this difficult history is not forgotten, and that this painful history is not repeated. There are many ways to learn more about the residential schools and their legacy. In the Yukon and across Canada, many groups and First Nations have supported healing projects and special events.

¹¹ *Our Stories* timeline.

Think and Talk

- > What do you know about residential schools?
- > Why were students sent there?
- > Who ran residential schools?
- > What were some of the experiences of children at residential schools?
- > When did the last residential school in your area close?
- > What were some effects of residential schools on Indigenous families in your area?
- > Why do you think it might be important to learn about residential schools?

TELLING OUR STORIES

“For me, theatre is all about voice. Giving voice to characters whose stories might otherwise disappear, giving voice to questions that challenge us – about being marginalized, about being invisible, about aging, about grief, about our responsibility to each other and to the world.” - Map of the Land, Map of the Stars Co-Director, Yvette Nolan ¹²

Gwaandak Theatre made this play, *Map of the Land, Map of the Stars*, because we wanted to hear and share many different northern stories and voices. We wanted to share stories from Indigenous people, women, and people of colour, people whose stories are not always featured in mainstream histories.

Theatre shares memories and keep stories from deep within us, alive. Remember this as you listen to stories around you everywhere – what is *your* story, how will you tell it? Your stories matter. They are your identity. They are you.

Award-winning Canadian writer Thomas King says,

“The truth about stories is, that’s all we are.” ¹³



Santana Berryman, Andrameda Hunter, Wren Brian, Jordan Reti, “River stories”, Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre, May 2017. Photo credit: Bruce Barrett

¹² Kim McCollough, “Yvette Nolan on Dramaturgy and the Activism of Art: An Interview”, Room Magazine, 2014.

¹³ Thomas King, *The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative*. (Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 2003).

WHO WE ARE: THE ARTISTS

The artists working on this play come from many different backgrounds. Some of us were born and raised in the Yukon. Some of us moved here. All of us have our own stories. Some of us have Indigenous ancestry. Some of us don't. All of us have mixed ancestry.

We trace our Indigenous ancestry to the Algonquin, Cree, Tagish, Tlingit, Mi'kmaq, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, Shinnecock, Vuntut Gwitchin peoples and more.

Our roots are from other parts of Canada too – including B.C., Quebec, Manitoba and Ontario – and elsewhere including England, France, Hungary, Ireland, Jamaica, Norway, Scotland, Spain, the Philippines, Trinidad, the United States and elsewhere.

The artists who gathered and shaped the stories in this play are:

Co-Creators

Chris Clarke, Geneviève Doyon, Patti Flather, Andrameda Hunter, Leonard Linklater, Yvette Nolan, Michelle Olson, Aimée Dawn Robinson

Directors

Yvette Nolan, Michelle Olson

Performers

Santana Berryman, Wren Brian, Andrameda Hunter, Jordan Reti, Austin Roe, Léa Roy Bernatchez, Brandon Wicke

Designers

Marten Berkman (Projections), Linda Leon (Set, Props, Costumes,) K. Scott Maynard (Sound Design, Composition,) Alex Robinson (Lighting, Technical Direction,) Heather Bell Callaghan (Set, Props, Costumes Assistant)

ABOUT GWAANDAK THEATRE

ONE MEANING OF “GWAANDAK” IN THE GWICH’IN LANGUAGE IS “STORYTELLER”.

Gwaandak Theatre, the Yukon’s only Indigenous theatre company, was founded in Whitehorse in 1999 by theatre artists Leonard Linklater and Patti Flather.

Gwaandak Theatre’s vision is to illuminate Indigenous and Northern stories around the world.

We develop, produce and tour plays for both youth and adults. Our programming also includes new play workshops, readings and training for theatre artists.

Our stories question, honour and celebrate. We explore themes around decolonization, cultural identity, social justice, underrepresented voices and human rights. We tour to many places, from tiny Yukon communities to major cities across Canada.

THEATRE 101

I WANT TO BE ONSTAGE!

On stage or off stage, there are many roles to play in theatre. Maybe you want to design the lighting. Or build the set. Or promote the play. Or direct the action.

There's lots of ways to get involved in theatre. If you want to study theatre, drama class or a production at your school are a great start.

Keep an eye out for drama and theatre workshops in your community. If you can't find any, why not start your own? Put on a play with your friends. Talk to your teachers, families and friends – see who might want to be involved.

There are many college and university programs across Canada for all aspects of theatre – writing, directing, acting, stage managing, designing and more. There also are Indigenous-focused programs including The Centre for Indigenous Theatre in Toronto.

RESPECT!

Creating and performing a play is hard work. It takes a lot of guts to get on stage. So, please, when you are in the audience, show respect to the performers, and everyone involved in the play. Be sure to:

- > Only get up, move around, and/or talk before or after the play
- > Turn off your cell phone and other electronics
- > If you liked the play, clap loudly when the theatre company takes their bow
- > If there is a Talkback session with the artists after the play, don't be shy – ask questions!

SELECTED RESOURCES

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