

**TARRAGON**  
THEATRE



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# Cottagers and Indians

Feb. 5 – Feb. 24,  
2019

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# Cottagers and Indians

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Written by  
Drew Hayden Taylor

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SPONSORED BY



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## CREATIVE TEAM

**Melody A Johnson**  
Director

**Nick Andison**  
Lighting Designer

**Beau Dixon**  
Sound Designer

**Robin Fisher**  
Set Designer

**Sage Paul**  
Costume Designer

**Kate Redding**  
Stage Manager

Original Direction by  
**Patti Shaughnessy**

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## CAST

**Carmen Grant**  
Maureen Poole

**Billy Merasty**  
Arthur Copper

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Tarragon Theatre is an active member of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres (PACT), the Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts (TAPA), Creative Trust Working Capital for the Arts, and Theatre Ontario, and engages professional artists who are members of Canadian Actors' Equity Association under the terms of the Canadian Theatre Agreement.

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## PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTE

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It's been said that everything is political - where you come from, what you eat, where you spend your recreational time, what cereal you eat, etc. A story like this epitomizes the unfortunate differences between cultures, economic status, and people. In one way, its quite sad that Cottagers and Indians is loosely based on real events. On the other hand, its quite silly too. You'll find this happens frequently in the First Nations community... and in a few others I've heard but can't confirm. Please enjoy the story, the barbecue chicken, the manoomin, and the people (you may know people like this).

Special thanks to Richard, Tarragon, Patti and the cast and crew for bringing my story to life. If there is a theatre heaven, I'll make sure you have front row seats. If you're a theatrical agnostic, never mind.

Ch'meegwetch,

Drew Hayden Taylor

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The cast and crew of Cottagers and Indians would like to thank the Centre for Indigenous Theatre for the loan of the canoe. The canoe frame was constructed by Tim Hill of The Rabbit's Choice.

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## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

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Among the most exciting and compelling aspects of Cottagers and Indians is its topical narrative—one that continues to unfold each day across our country. This provocative argument asks us to listen and watch actively as jurors and confidantes, and then to weigh each of the characters' vivid testimonies. The premise—about our intense connection to land and water—demands that we look deeply at what's truly important to us in terms of tradition and the preservation of our own lives and families. And although this battle is both current and serious, it is depicted here with compassion and humour. Lakota author and scholar Vine Deloria once wrote, "When a people can laugh at themselves and laugh at others and hold all aspects of life together without letting anyone drive them to extremes, then it would seem to me that the people can survive."

I hope you'll be ignited by our play, and enjoy the great spirit of its' humour.

Melody A. Johnson



**Nick Andison - Lighting Designer**

**For Tarragon as Lighting Designer:** *Mustard, Midsummer (A Play with Songs)*  
**as Assistant Lighting Designer:** *The Realistic Joneses, Wormwood, The Valley, No Great Mischief*

**Elsewhere:** Theatre Smash (as lighting designer: *Das Ding*), Shaw Festival 2017 (as assistant lighting designer: *The Madness of George III, Dancing at Lughnasa, A Christmas Carol*), Mirvish (as assistant lighting designer: *Butcher*), Soulpepper (as assistant lighting designer: *True West, Farther West*), Thousand Islands Playhouse (as lighting designer: *Das Ding*, as assistant lighting designer: *No Great Mischief*),

Fujiwara Dance Inventions (as Technical & Lighting Director: *EUNOIA*).

**Other:** Graduate of Ryerson Theatre School, BFA Honors 2013.

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**BEAU DIXON - Sound Designer**

**Selected Performance Credits:** *Harlem Duet, Hamlet*, (Tarragon) *Next To Normal* (Clearwater), *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* (Soulpepper), *Guys and Dolls, HMS Pinafore* (Stratford Festival), *Othello* (Mysterius Entity). Nominated for a Dora and Toronto Theatre Critic's recipient for Best Lead Male in a musical; *Passing Strange* (Musical Stage Company/ Obsidian), *Motherf!@#er With The Hat* (ATP/Calgary), *Titus, As You Like It* (Shakespeare In High Park/Canstage).

**Selecting sound design credits:** *Cottagers and Indians* (Tarragon), Dora nomination for sound design/composition; *Rifles* (Shaw Festival/Praxis Theatre/Next Stage Theatre Festival), *The Big Sleep* (Vertigo Theatre), *When The World Was Green* (Surface Underground Theatre), *Oregano* (Theatre Rhea) *Othello* (Mysterious Entity), *291 Letters* (Ryerson Theatre/New Voices), *Berlin Blues, Bad Luck Bank Robbers* (4th Line Theatre).

**Selected writing credits:** *Once A Flame, From Here To Africville* (Factory Theatre). *Beneath Springhill: The Maurice Ruddick Story* (Thousand Islands/Firebrand Theatre/ Lunchbox Theatre/ Theatre Collingwood) received three DORA nominations (TYA) and awarded for best new play and best individual performance, two Calgary Critic's nominations and respectively won for best solo performance, along with a Betty Mitchell nomination (Calgary).

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**Robin Fisher - Set Designer**

**Select designs include set and costumes for:** *The Jungle Book* (Manitoba Theatre for Young People), *Avenue Q* (Citadel Theatre), *Obeah Opera* (Culchaworks/Panamania), *The Boy in the Moon* (Great Canadian Theatre Company), *Fiddler on the Roof* (Western Canada Theatre), *The Black Bonspiel of Wullie MacCrimmon* (Globe Theatre), *Hand of Bridge/Telephone* (Canadian Opera Company).

**Set:** *Acquiesce* (Factory Theatre) and *Munschtime!* (YPT).

**Costumes:** *Dream a Little Dream* (The Grand Theatre), *Minotaur and The Wizard of Oz* (Young People's Theatre).

**Other:** Robin is the recipient of three Dora Mavor Moore awards and the 2015 Virginia and Myrtle Cooper Award for Costume Design.

[www.robinfisher.ca](http://www.robinfisher.ca).



**Carmen Grant - Maureen Poole**

**For Tarragon Theatre:** Debut

**Selected Credits:** Stratford Festival, Soulpepper, National Arts Centre (Ottawa), Artistic Fraud of Newfoundland (St John's), Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre (Winnipeg), Belfry (Victoria), Segal Centre (Montreal), Persephone (Saskatoon), Alberta Theatre Projects (Calgary), Toronto Young People's Theatre, Neptune (Halifax), Grand (London, ON), Aquarius (Hamilton), Globe (Regina).

Originally from Tisdale, Saskatchewan, Carmen currently makes her home in Stratford, Ontario.

At 46, Carmen is absolutely thrilled to finally be working at Tarragon Theatre. #smileyface.

Social Media: [www.carmenhilarygrant.ca](http://www.carmenhilarygrant.ca)  
[twitter@carmengrrr72](https://twitter.com/carmengrrr72)

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**Drew Hayden Taylor - Playwright**

Drew Hayden Taylor is an award-winning playwright, journalist, novelist and filmmaker. Born, raised and living on the Curve Lake First Nation, Drew had done practically everything from performing stand up comedy at the Kennedy Centre in Washington D.C. to serving as Artistic Director for Canada's premiere Native Theatre Company, Native Earth Performing Arts. Currently, Drew is developing an television series for the CBC and expecting the release of his 31st book.

A special thanks to all the people in the production, to Tarragon Theatre, and James Whetung.

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**Melody A Johnson - Director**

Melody has enjoyed three decades moving between Toronto's theatre and comedy scene and is pleased to return to Tarragon, where she premiered her Dora nominated, *Miss Caledonia* (UK, Canada tour, awarded Ontario Touring Artist of the Year), co created *Mimi, A Poisoner's Comedy*, with Rick Roberts and Allen Cole, won the Dora for the titular character in Morwyn Brebner's *Little Mercy's First Murder*/Tarragon-Shaw Festival, and originated roles in *It's All True* and *Well*.

**Upcoming:** Her new work *Person of Interest* will be a part of Convergence Theatre's Catapult! series this May.

Favourite roles include work in *Assassins*/MTC, *7 Stories*/ Theatre Calgary/CanStage (Betty Mitchell award nomination), *Trout Stanley*/Factory Theatre, *I Think I Can* YPT/NAC (Dora nomination), *Our Town*/Two Planks, (Merrit nomination), *An Awkward Evening with Martin & Johnson* with Bob Martin, (Canadian Comedy Award nomination).

An alumna of The Toronto Second City, Melody has directed the Mainstage, Touring Company, comedyturged Chicago Second City's #DateMe, and the Dora award winning *One Night Only*.

When not at the theatre Melody writes, voices animation, teaches/directs at Humber's School of Comedy Writing & Performance, and enjoys family. [www.melodyjohnson.ca](http://www.melodyjohnson.ca)



**Billy Merasty - Arthur Copper**

Billy Merasty (Metis/Cree from Northern Manitoba), is currently celebrating 35 years in the Performing Arts, and has recently become a member of **D.O.T: Dance**, with Kaha:wi Dance Theatre's production of *Transmigration*; Opera - with the Canadian Opera Company's production of *Louis Riel*; and, Theatre - with a long list of credits including, Kevin Loring's *Where the Blood Mixes*, Tomson Highway's *Dry Lips Oughtta Move to Kapuskasing*, Daniel David Moses' *Indian Medicine Show*, Omari Newton's *Sal Capone*, and many others.

Some of his recent television credits include: *Murdoch Mysteries* (CBC), *Cardinal* (Global TV), *Elijah* (CTV), The Canadian Heritage Minute - *Queenstown Heights*, and currently...*Frontier* (Discovery & Netflix) - on which he is also the Cree Consultant/Translator. He will also be seen this year, in the Shelley Niro Feature Film: *The Incredible 35th Year of Mitzi Bearclaw*, where he will be playing Mr. Bearclaw.

He dedicates his role of "Arthur Copper" to his father, Pierre, and to all his Grandfathers. Teeniege!



**Sage Paul - Costume Designer**

Sage Paul is an urban Dene woman and a member of the English River First Nation. She champions community, sovereignty and resistance for balance and makes fashion, costume and craft. Some design credits include: *Awakening* (Short Film, Danis Goulet), *Robin's Hood* (Short Film, Kent Monkman), *Munschtime!* (Young Peoples Theatre), *Almighty Voice and His Wife* (Theatre Kingston), *Divine* (Storefront Theatre), and *Gashkigwaaso* (Dance, Waawaate Fobister).

Some of her work has shown at the Royal Ontario Museum, The Centre for Craft, Creativity and Design (North Carolina, USA), and a curated program at Western Canada Fashion Week by Ociciwan Contemporary Art Collective. In 2017, Sage received the Design Exchange RBC Emerging Designer Award in the fashion category, was recognized by *FLARE Magazine* in their *#HowIMadeIt* campaign that celebrates 100+ talented and ambitious Canadian women and was honoured by the Ontario Ministry of the Status of Women as a trailblazing woman who is transforming Ontario. Sage is the founder of Indigenous Fashion Week Toronto and is working on two fashion-based projects: *Giving Life* and *The Mint Sweater Project*.

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## PERFORMERS AND CREW

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### **Kate Redding - Stage Manager**

A Halifax native, Kate is thrilled to be making her Tarragon debut.

**Selected credits include, SM:** *Alice in Wonderland*, *Twelfth Night*, *Peter Pan*, *Julius Caesar*, *Pinocchio*, *King Lear*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *I Am My Own Wife* (SBTS), *The Happy Hobo in Moon Land* (Neptune/ToD), *Lullaby: Inside the Halifax Explosion* (EFT/Neptune), *The Donahue Sisters* (LunaSea), *Speed Dating for Sperm Donors* (Neptune/DMV), *The West Woods* (MRT), *Creepy and Little Manson* (EFT), *Where Poppies Blow*, *David for Queen*, *In This World* (HTYP), *Diligent River Daughter* (Ship's). ASM- *RED* (Neptune), *Woman and Scarecrow* (LunaSea).

All the love and gratitude go out to the cheerleading squad- especially my husband and my mom.

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### **Patti Shaugnessy - Original Direction**

Patti Shaugnessy works locally, nationally and internationally as a curator, director, performer and artistic producer of a range of theatre and multidisciplinary arts projects.

**Selected directing credits** from the National Theatre of Greenland are, *Ananna A/S* (Casa Matriz); *Rosa Marie-ptiquartikkaluarnera* (The Occupation of Heather Rose); *Arnatsialaat*, (The Rez Sisters); and at Tarragon Theatre in Toronto, the world premiere of Drew Hayden Taylor's, *Cottagers and Indians*. Patti is Mchi Saagig Nishnaabe from Curve Lake First Nation #35, otherwise known as Wshkigimong, a curvy peninsula set between Chemong and Buckhorn Lakes and is a descendent of Irish superheroes who settled in the Kawartha Lakes region circa 1825. Most recently, Patti has been focusing on organic food production at a farm near Indian River located east of Peterborough.

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Tarragon Theatre would like to acknowledge this sacred land on which we gather and operate is the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat and Petun First Nations, The Seneca, the Mississaugas of the New Credit, and any other nations who cared for the land in its history.

The territory is the subject of the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and Confederacy of the Ojibwe and allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes.

Today, the meeting place of Toronto is still the home to many indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to work in the community, on this territory.

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## THANK YOU TARRAGON DONORS!

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Tarragon Theatre is extremely grateful for the support of our donors. Your gifts support not only our outstanding professional theatrical productions, but also contribute directly to our important play development programs and our innovative outreach and youth programming.

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If we have made any errors in the spelling, listing or omission of your name please accept our apologies and contact:

Courtney Fiddis, Director of Development at 416-536-5018 x 243 or [courtney@tarragontheatre.com](mailto:courtney@tarragontheatre.com)

Individuals recognized for donations made up to December 31, 2018.

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# TARRAGON THEATRE

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Tarragon Theatre has been Canada's home for groundbreaking contemporary plays since 1970.

For 49 years, Tarragon has created, developed and produced new plays by home-grown artists as well as significant works from the world stage. Tarragon assists over 30 emerging and established playwrights each year through residencies, grants, dramaturgical support, and training programs. Since its founding, over 190 works have premiered at Tarragon and over 500 scripts have been created and workshopped, receiving The Trillium Book Award, as well as 34 nominations and 11 wins for the Governor General's Literary Award.

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*Production Manager*

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*Technical Director*

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*Interim Head of Wardrobe*

### **Shaw Forgeron**

*Interim Head of Props*

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*Extraspace Technician*

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# On stage this February

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## New Magic Valley Fun Town

Feb 20 - Mar 31, 2019

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Written by **Daniel MacIvor**

Co-produced by Prairie Theatre Exchange

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Cape Bretoner Dougie hasn't seen his best childhood pal Allan in twenty-five years, so it's no surprise that their reunion is a boisterous night of memories, laughter, drinking and dancing. But as evening becomes day, as the smiles begin to fade and the bottles sit empty, the old friends revisit other memories, uncomfortable ones that force them to confront the realities of who — and what — they really are.

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# Coming soon in March

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## Guarded Girls

Mar 26 - May 5, 2019

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Written by **Charlotte Corbeil-Coleman**

In association with Green Light Arts

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The psychological destruction brought on by solitary confinement is at the heart of this wrenching and powerful new play. When 19-year-old Sid is transferred to a new prison, she finds friendship with Britt — but also forms a complicated relationship with the guard who seems to be watching their every move. Soon, it's the guard who's being watched, and this playful, theatrical, mysterious work heads toward its shocking conclusion..

Photos Featuring Daniel MacIvor, Tamara Podemski, Michaela Washburn, Vivian Endicott-Douglas, Virgilia Griffith by Jim Ryce.

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