

Produced by
THOU ART
HERE
THEATRE
Co-presented by



CIVIL BLOOD

A TREATY STORY

CO-CREATED BY
JOSH LANGUEDOC AND NEIL KUEFLER

JULY 24 – AUGUST 4
PERFORMED AT THE HISTORIC
OLD FORT
AT FORT EDMONTON PARK

Choose between two
intertwining stories in
this epic two-play
adventure



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WELCOME TO CIVIL BLOOD: A TREATY STORY

As you begin or perhaps reflect on your experience at *Civil Blood*, we wanted to take a moment to welcome everyone to this land and space. Thou Art Here Theatre has been around since 2011 and the seed of this show started in 2016. We are thrilled to be presenting it today in the Old Fort at Fort Edmonton Park in Amiskwacîwâskahikan also known as Edmonton on Treaty 6 territory.

This territory is the traditional gathering place of many Indigenous peoples including the nêhiyawak (Cree), Saulteaux, Métis, Papaschase, Stoney, Nakota Sioux, and many more. We honour and respect the history, traditions, and culture of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit who have cared for this land and called it home. On behalf of Thou Art Here, we want to acknowledge our treaty obligations and our commitment to working together in peace and friendship with the community.

One of the core values of Thou Art Here is collaboration.

Collaboration can be seen and felt from Neil and Josh's friendship, to the creative team's camaraderie, the community building through support from Common Ground Arts, Nextfest Arts, Rubaboo Arts Festival, Flying Canoe Volant Festival, Victoria School for the Performing Arts, Fort Edmonton Park, and the dozens (hundreds?) of artists and community members who have provided insight and value to this process, performance and experience. This collaboration extends to the local, provincial, and national support and feedback we have received from our funders the Edmonton Arts Council, the Alberta Foundation for the Arts and the Canada Council for the Arts.

We believe *Civil Blood: A Treaty Story* (both the play and its creation) encapsulates collaboration.

THANK YOU ALL and enjoy the show!

Alyson, Andrew, & Dayna
Co-leaders of Thou Art Here

CIVIL BLOOD: A TREATY STORY

Co-created by Josh Languedoc & Neil Kuefler
World Premiere

June 24 – August 4, 2024
The Old Fort at Fort Edmonton Park

CREATIVE TEAM

Playwright	JOSH LANGUEDOC
Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Cultural Consultants	WILSON BEARHEAD, MJ BELCOURT, HUNTER CARDINAL, JACQUELIN CARDINAL, LEWIS CARDINAL, JERRY SADDLEBACK, JO-ANN SADDLEBACK, NICHOLLE WEASEL TRAVELLER, RON WALKER
Co-Director	NEIL KUEFLER
Co-Director	MARK VETSCH
Choreographer	REBECCA SADOWSKI
Fight Director	NATHAN LOITZ*
Costume Designer	PATRICIA PICHE
Music Composition & Musician	JAY KUCHINSKY
Musician	TIM RUTTER
Stage Manager	ANDREA MURPHY*
Assistant Stage Manager	ISABELLE MARTINEZ*
Community Gathering Coordinator	DANIELLE LAROSE
Lead Producer	MONICA GATE
Emerging Artist Producer	KATELYN CABALO
Community Gathering Technician	AMELIA CHAN
Dance Captain	GABRIEL RICHARDSON
Fight Captain	ELENA PORTER

CAST

Ekah	EMILY BERARD
Lily Sampson	CHRISTINA NGUYEN*
Astekamah	REBECCA BISSONNETTE
Takah	MARIA BUFFALO
Pauline	IVY DEGAGNÉ
Governor Sampson	DOUG MERTZ*
Father Gabriel	CODY PORTER*
Agatha Sampson	ELENA PORTER*
Julian	GABRIEL RICHARDSON*
Kahkakis	COLBY STOCKDALE
Waciy	DYLAN THOMAS-BOUCHIER*

*The participation of these Artists is arranged by permission of Canadian Actors' Equity Association under the provisions of the DanceOperaTheatre Policy (DOT)

PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTES

Truth and Reconciliation. What does it REALLY mean? Where are we on our journey towards healing the wounds of the past? To stop the ongoing harm of the present? And to create the best future possible so Indigenous teachings can live on? Not easy questions to answer, yet in this play, I feel we have found some sort of answer. While it is not my job to tell you as the playwright, I can share with you what this project has meant to me and what I feel it means for the future. This play really began as a casual conversation. A vision that Neil shared with me. We saw a sharing of gifts we could have together. Neil had the vision, and I would offer the words. However, not unlike the signing of the treaty, that sharing of gifts changed along the way. This was no longer just "his vision, my words." This play became an eye-to-eye sharing of ideas, offers, and conversations. We shared. Compromised. Learned. Grew. And found consensus between our sharings every step of the way. To me, THAT is reconciliation. Together, we made an agreement on a vision. We went on a journey. Not only does the content of this play provide some thoughts around reconciliation, I firmly believe the process can offer all of us just as much. That is my sharing and my offering to all of you. — Josh

DIRECTORS' NOTES

As an audience member, you've intentionally been separated from others and have not seen the entire story. There's no way you can know everything that happened today. We hope that you find a chance to speak with someone during the community gathering who saw the alternate track of the show - the other side of history - the story you perhaps saw a piece of, but don't understand out of context. This is the duality of the show that has permeated the entire process - how do we recognize and value experiences out of our context?

Directing a full production of *Civil Blood* at Fort Edmonton Park is nothing short of surreal. About 8 years ago, a rag-tag bunch of theatre artists who also worked at Fort Edmonton Park, booked a meeting with our bosses to pitch the idea of a theatre show at the park. The executives were so lovely and polite to us, and informed us of the long road ahead to produce a show of the caliber in our imaginations. Fast forward to today, and the dream has come true - and proudly - all of those rag-tag kids who were at that meeting are STILL actively connected to the production.

We have learned a lot since this dream began. Some practical lessons, some cultural, and many more personal ones. The biggest lesson is that we will always have more to learn from each other and that everyone has a teaching to offer.

— Mark & Neil

CREATIVE TEAM



JOSH LANGUEDOC Co-Creator/Playwright

Josh is a proud member of Saugeen First Nation and lives as a guest in Treaty 6 Territory as an Anishinaabe playwright, producer, storyteller, and teacher. Since 2018, Josh has been touring his solo performance *Rocko and Nakota: Tales From the Land* to theatres and festivals all across Turtle Island. Some of Josh's other plays include *Feast* (Gwaandak Theatre 2023, NewWorks and Fringe 2022), *The Eyes Of Spirits* (Native Earth Performing Arts), and *IN-COR-RI-GIBLE: The Legend of Thundervoice* (Blyth Festival). Josh also teaches around the Edmonton area with the Citadel's Foote Theatre

School, Edmonton Public Schools, Artstrek, Northern Alberta YMCA, and runs the teen playwriting program #WritesOfPassage at Workshop West Playwrights' Theatre. As a producer, Josh has curated the p̄hon̄n Series (Fringe Theatre), the Indigenous Pavilion (Silver Skate Festival), Connections//Collisions (Mile Zero Dance), and #ReconcileThis (National Arts Centre Indigenous Theatre). You may have also seen Josh dawn a leather jacket as Sonny Boy in the Indigenous hit *Bear Grease* (LightningCloud Productions). Josh recently finished his MFA Theatre Practice with a focus on Indigenous Playwriting, where he is officially the third Indigenous person to ever finish this program.



NEIL KUEFLER Co-Creator/Co-Director

Neil is an educator and artist, humbled by all the knowledge and lessons he has been gifted through the development of this story. He is grateful to the many people who have graced him with their collaboration. Much love to his family. Trust your guts.



MARK VETSCH Co-Director

Mark is a director, performer, and teacher in Edmonton who has a passion for creating and developing new work. Mark has directed and created original work for companies including: Grindstone Theatre, Thou Art Here Theatre, Freewill Shakespeare, Dell Arte International, Fort Edmonton Park, Nextfest, Kaleido Festival, and Play the Fool. He is a graduate of the BA Drama program at the UofA and of Dell Arte International. Select directing credits: *Civil Blood 2023/2024* (Thou Art Here), *Pretty Boy: the musical* (SkinnyLove), *Spring Awakening* (Scona Theater Co.), *11 O'Clock Number* (Grindstone Theatre).



REBECCA SADOWSKI Choreographer

Rebecca is a Métis/queer performer and choreographer based in amiskwaciwâskahikan. Rebecca is an artistic member of the Good Women Dance Collective and teaches dance with DancED Movement Project. Recent credits include: *You Used To Call Me Marie* (Savage Society/NAC), *Ayita* (Skirtsafire Festival), *Two-Headed Half-Hearted* (Northern Light Theatre), *BEARS* (Punctuate Theatre), *Minosis Gathers Hope* (Alberta Aboriginal Arts), and has recently toured a piece to the Dancing on the Edge Festival. Rebecca has produced and choreographed several dance films including *THE*

SASH MAKER with Native Earth Performing Arts, as well as *BREAKING BAPTIST* with the Catalyst Theatre. Rebecca has a passion for sharing Indigenous narratives and historic arts. She strives to decolonize spaces and continues to deepen her connection to her Métis roots by connecting with elders, jigging, and finger-weaving sashes.



NATHAN LOITZ Fight Director

Nathan is Métis Dene from Fort McKay First Nation. He has worked in Theatre and film for many years. He is a Fight Director, Stuntman and Actor. Nathan has performed and choreographed fights all across Canada. His most recent credits include working as a; Stunt-Actor on *Billy the Kid* and *The Last of Us*; as a Fight Director on *Pawakan MacBeth* with Akpik Theatre and Neptune Theatre in Halifax N.S. and was fortunate enough to teach stage combat in Whitehorse with Gwaandak Theatre.



MJ BELCOURT Costume Consultation

Melissa-Jo Belcourt Moses, known as MJ, is deeply rooted in her Métis heritage, enriched by the knowledge imparted by Métis and First Nation Elders across northern and central Alberta. Dedicated to exploring and understanding her ancestral legacy, she is passionate about her cultural heritage. As a certified instructor, MJ has been pivotal in teaching decorative arts and creative skills through Indigenous cultural art programs. She extends her expertise to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, conducting workshops that delve into historical contexts and traditional artistic techniques.



ANDREA MURPHY Stage Manager

Andrea is delighted to be a part of this process! Andrea lives in Edmonton, went to the U of A for Stage Management, and has worked in the Edmonton theatre community for a decade now. Recent credits include: *Talk Treaty to Me*, *Tiny Beautiful Things*, *Civil Blood*, and *Mine*.



ISABELLE MARTINEZ Assistant Stage Manager

Isabelle (she/her) is a proudly Métis stage manager who is based in Edmonton on Treaty 6 territory. She just recently obtained her BFA in Production from the University of Alberta, and is joining Thou Art Here for the first time. Recent credits include: *Grease*, *Canada Rocks! The Reboot* (Mayfield Dinner Theatre); *Nevermore in Concert* (Catalyst Theatre); *Rough Magic*, *Everybody* (UAlberta); *Stir-Crazy*, *Sweet Jesus* (Edmonton Fringe). She's truly excited to be working with a whole new crew, and hope you all enjoy the show! Extra love to her family, and partner Everett.



JAY KUCHINSKY Music Composition & Musician

Jay is a life long Edmontonian and lifelong musician and multi-instrumentalist. Jay was a student at Grant MacEwan jazz college in the late '70's. His travels and interest in ethnic music have taken him to many world destinations, fiddle always in hand. His Ukrainian heritage and playing in Ukrainian orchestras in his youth have given him an inside perspective on this beautiful age-old music. And though Jay has no Indigenous or Métis blood he has always had a relationship with the community. As early as 1978 Jay fiddled for Métis dancers. Along the way he has performed with Lyle Donald and the Ed-

monton Métis Dancers. Jay taught the Métis Fiddle class at Ben Calf Robe School from 2007 to 2020. As well Jay has written a Tune Book *100 Ukrainian Dance Tunes from East Central Alberta*.



TIM RUTTER Accompanying Guitarist and Mandolinist

Tim is excited to be a part of *Civil Blood*. Tim spent years accompanying dancers in Vinok World Dance. A well-trained and versatile musician, he's played in festivals, bars, senior homes and even the Winspear Centre with the ESO. Other activities include gigging regularly as a freelance player and singer, teaching guitar and selling music equipment at Amadeus Music in Edmonton. More information can be found at timruttermusic.com. He wants to thank his family and friends and Thou Art Theatre for their support and this new opportunity.



MONICA GATE Lead Producer

Monica (@monicaagate) is a mixed-race actor, playwright, and producer based in Treaty 6. She's worked with many theatres across Canada, and loves workshopping new work, exploring Indigenous theatre creation processes, and creating accessible performing arts education through her own company. Monica recently finished writing her first full length play, *Not Again*, which was featured at Script Salon and Workshop West's Springboards festival. She is currently writing her first one-woman show, *Donut Holes*, which explores the politics between culture vs. tradition, and the lifestyles of mixed-raced people. Kisu'lk wela'liek wjtl wla Na'kwek kisi lknmuiek.



DANIELLE LAROSE Community Gathering Coordinator

Danielle (she/her) is a multidisciplinary artist of Métis/Mennonite heritage based in amiskwaciwaskahikan (Treaty 6, Métis Region 4). After graduating from Grant MacEwan University, she went on to obtain her Master's degree from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and work in theatres across the UK for eight years. Upon returning to Turtle Island, she has appeared on stage as a performer, off-stage as a director, has written several plays, and composed original musical scores for the stage. She is currently developing her new play *The Poisoner's Daughter* as member of the Punctuate! The-

atre & Pemmican Collective Creatives' Cohort and through Catalyst Theatre's Confluence Artistic Fellowship.



KATELYN CABALO Emerging Artist Producer

Katelyn (she/her) is a first-generation Filipina Canadian performing artist based in amiskwaciwaskahikan/ Edmonton. She is a recent graduate of the University of Alberta with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Drama and Political Science. Katelyn is passionate about doing and creating work that emphasizes the members and stories of marginalized communities, specifically IBPOC. She believes that theatre is a beautiful platform in which these crucial stories can be told in a way that inspires empathy. Katelyn is an emerging producer and was a participant of this year's Emerging Assistant Prouder Program with Nextfest.

CAST



EMILY BERARD *Ekah*

Emily Berard (she/her) is a mixed Métis actor from Treaty 6 territory and is a recent graduate from the University of Alberta's BA Drama program. She is very grateful and excited to work with this awesome group of artists! Select credits include *Marat/Sade* (University of Alberta 2024), *Stir-Crazy* (Fringe Festival 2023), *Cats and Other Miscellaneous Pleasures* (Common Ground Festival 2023), *Omisimawiw* (RISER 2023), *Way To Go Neil* (Fringe Festival 2022), *Feast* (Fringe Festival 2021).



CHRISTINA NGUYEN* *Lily*

Christina is a mixed-race performer hailing from amisk-waciwâskahikan (Edmonton). Selected credits include: *The Sound of Music* (Citadel/Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre); *Going Solo*, *Jersey Boys*, *Christmas Carol*, *Clue* (Citadel Theatre); *Romeo and Juliet*, *Twelfth Night*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Winter's Tale* (Freewill Shakespeare); *Alina*, *Michael Mysterious* (Pyretic Productions); *Sprouts!* (Concrete Theatre); *Here There Be Night* (Workshop West Theatre); and *Chrysothemis*, *Revolt. She Said. Revolt Again* (Studio Theatre). Christina is a graduate of the University of Alberta's BFA Acting Program. Much love to C.



REBECCA BISSONNETTE *Astekamah*

Rebecca is a Cree, Queer, Female performer, proud to be making her Thou Art Here debut. Rebecca is Artistic Director at DEPTH Perception Productions, where she wrote, directed and acted in the sold-out Fringe hit *I'll Have Another*. Rebecca's dance company, Shift Happens Dance, has been a part of Fruit Loop events, Mile Zero Dance's Magpie Festival and Fierce Onstage presents Villian Mode. Other favourite roles include: Parsons in *1984*, Kate in *Drinking Habits 2* and Mrs. Mullin in *Carousel*. When not performing, Rebecca is happily an arts educator with Workshop West, FACE, and MUSE Canada, as well as Operations Manager for CRIPSiE.



MARIA BUFFALO *Takah*

Maria Buffalo a Nêhiyaw iskwêw from Samson Cree Nation in Maskwacis. She's a multidisciplinary artist, beader, part time filmmaker, and model. In addition Maria works as a library coordinator at her library branch in Maskwacis doing programming and creating Cree resources for the Parkland Regional Library System. She studied drama in highschool at Ermineskin Junior Senior High, a Cree emersion school in Maskwacis. And for 2 years at the University of Alberta, where she completed the Transition Year Program (TYP).



IVY DEGAGNÉ *Pauline*

Ivy DeGagné (she/her) is a Canadian actor, singer, and musician. Selected production highlights include *Jane Eyre*, *A Christmas Carol* (Citadel Theatre), *Slight of Mind* (Theatre Yes/ Citadel Theatre co-production), *Civil Blood* (Thou Art Here Theatre), and *Matilda: The Musical* (Victoria School of the Arts). Ivy enjoys creating through theatrical, musical, visual, and literary arts. She would like to thank her family, teachers, and friends for their support and encouragement.



DOUG MERTZ* *Governor Sampson*

Doug is thrilled to be a part of the world premiere of *Civil Blood*, having been involved with the show since 2021. Doug previously appeared for Thou Art Here as Leonato in *Much Ado About Nothing* at the Lougheed House in Calgary in 2016. Recent productions include: *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and *Clue* (Citadel Theatre), the world premiere of *10 Funerals* by Darrin Hagen (Shadow Theatre), and *Lenin's Embalmers* by Vern Thiesen (Studio Theatre). Doug is an Assistant Professor of Music Theatre Performance at MacEwan University and serves on the board of Thou Art Here.

THOU ART HERE THEATRE

OUR MISSION We are an artist-driven theatre collective creating audience-engaged immersive experiences.

OUR VISION Our theatre is authentically and intentionally Edmontonian

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Ben Osgood (Vice-President), Brendan Thompson (President), Christina Nguyen (Secretary), Doug Mertz (Past President), Liz Page, Naomi Pela (Treasurer), Sarah Dawson, Ren Pilkington, Waishing Lam

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 Artistic Director: Andrew Ritchie
 Artistic Leadership Mentee: Dayna Lea Hoffmann

Associate Artists: Neil Kuefler, Josh Languedoc, & Mark Vetsch
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You get all the above, recognition in our production playbill and website, and a shout-out at an in-person Thou Art Here event.

Huge thanks to our Placemakers!

Doug Mertz, Mac Brock, Ruth Alexander

We couldn't create theatre in this PLACE without the support of community members like you.

