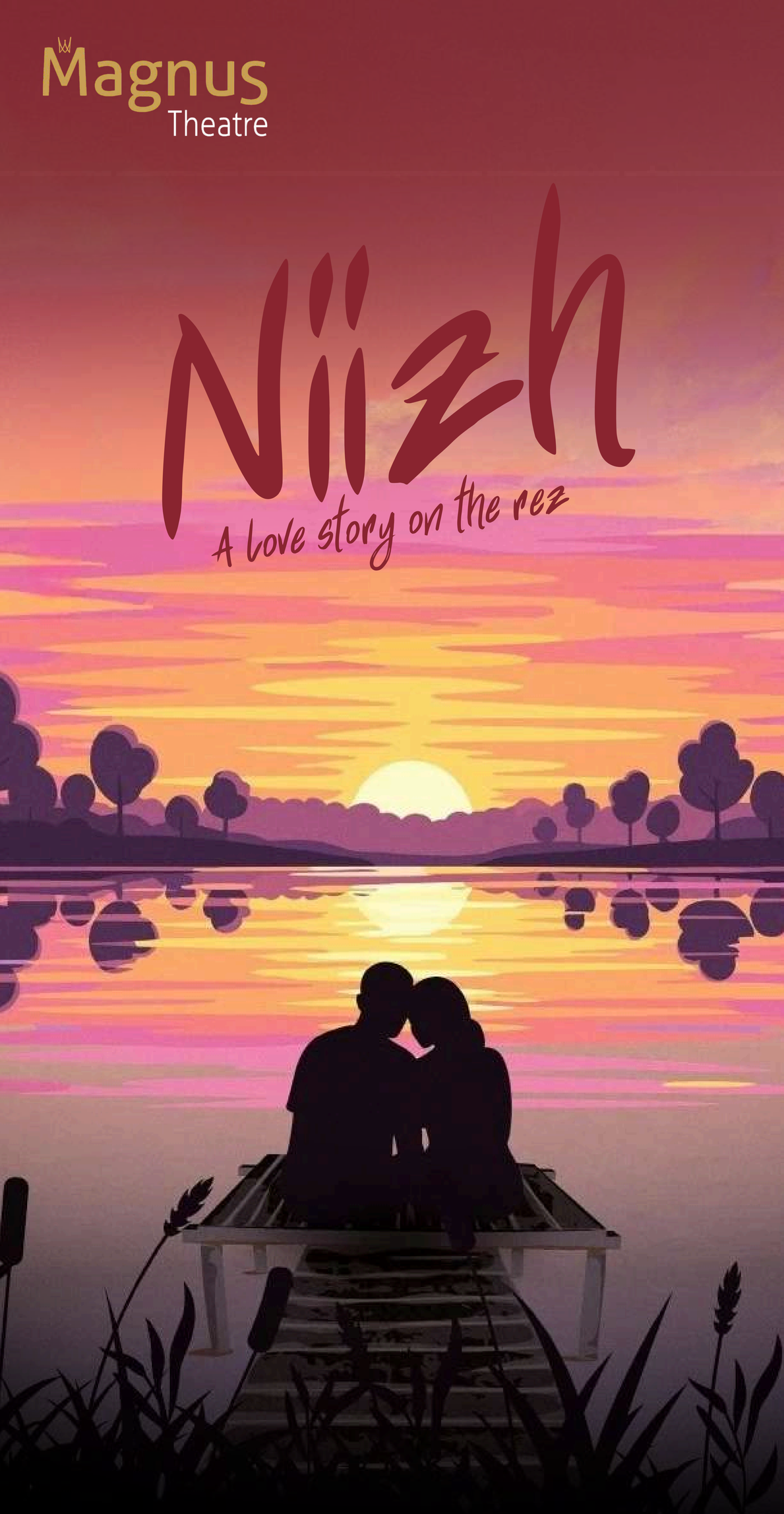
Magnus Theatre

Niizh

A Love story on the rez



A ROMANTIC COMEDY BY JOELLE PETERS

NOVEMBER 12-28, 2026

Magnus Theatre

Artistic Director
Thom Currie

Executive Director
Alexis Rowlinson

Niizh

A ROMANTIC COMEDY BY BY JOELLE PETERS

CAST

LENNA LITTLE	Jaeli Rae
SAM THOMAS	Grayson Bird
BILLY LITTLE / VOICE OF RADIO	James Dallas Smith
JAY LITTLE	John Seymour
KC / BIRD / VOICE OF SIRI	Nicole Joy-Fraser

DIRECTED BY
Richard Comeau

SET DESIGNER
Jo Pagnan

COSTUME DESIGNER
Jeff Chief

LIGHTING DESIGNER
Anika Binding

ANIMATION
Jarin Brown

SOUND DESIGNER
James Dallas Smith

SPECIAL THANKS

Will Morin
JP Chalykoff
Lowen Morrow
Ashley Donahue
desirée leverenz
Joelle Peters

BEHIND THE SCENES

STAGE MANAGER
Gillian Jones

HEAD CARPENTER
David A. Brown

HEAD OF WARDROBE
Lisa Macchione

HEAD OF PROPS
Nadia Cheechoo

INTERIM PRODUCTION COORDINATOR
Sarah Furlotte

SCENIC PAINTER
Alex Pilon

The videotaping or other video or audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited. The production runs approximately 120 minutes, including a 15-minute intermission.



Joelle Peters

(Playwright)

Joelle Peters is an award-winning Indigenous (Anishinaabe) actor and playwright working in theatre, television, and film. She is the current Artistic Director of Native Earth Performing Arts. Her plays include Niizh, Frozen River (co-written with Michaela Washburn and Carrie Costello), and do you remember? Joelle has performed at theatres and festivals across the country, including the Stratford Festival, SummerWorks, Thousand Islands Playhouse, Western Canada Theatre, and more.
She appears in the hit TV show Shoresy (Crave/Hulu), the film In Her City (Raven West Films Ltd.), and Web of Lies (Discovery+). Joelle has also narrated multiple audiobooks for Penguin Random House Canada. In 2020, she was selected as the playwriting protégé for the Siminovitch Prize by laureate Tara Beagan. In 2021, Frozen River received the Sharon Enkin Plays for Young People Award at the annual Tom Hendry Awards. In 2023, the premiere production of Niizh was nominated for four Dora Mavor Moore Awards.
Keep up with Joelle at joellepeters.ca.

ABOUT THE SHOW

NIIZH

A Romantic Comedy By Joelle Peters

It's summertime on the rez. Lenna, the youngest of the Little family, is preparing to leave home for her first year of college, with little enthusiasm or help from her stubborn father and reckless brother. Amidst lingering doubts about departing the family flock, Lenna collides into a meet-cute with the charming and awkward Sam Thomas, who is returning to the reserve after many years away. With the promise of a romance budding between them, Lenna is caught in a whirlwind of uncertainty, wondering if she's ready to bid farewell just as she's about to take flight. A true romantic comedy, Niizh is a refreshing coming-of-age romcom about two young lovebirds leaving the nest.



The cast of Niizh
Magnus Theatre Mainstage, November 12-28, 2026
In this photo (L to R): John Seymour, Jaeli Rae, Richard Comeau, Grayson Bird, James Dallas Smith, and Nicole Joy-Fraser



At Tbaytel, we believe the arts enhance quality of life and are a key part of building more vibrant communities.

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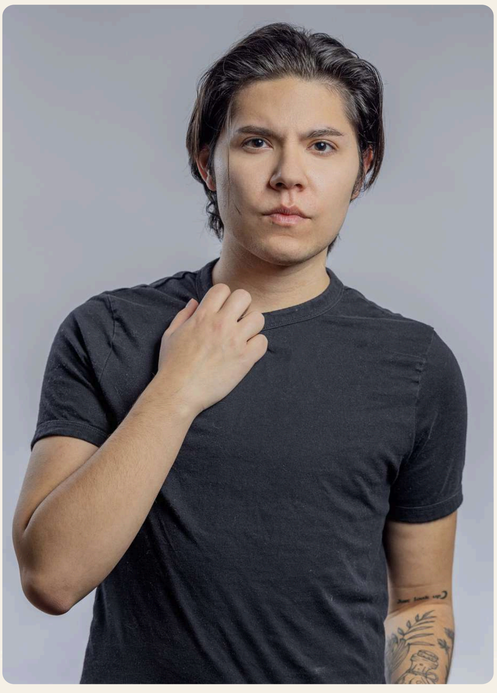
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THE COMPANY



Jaeli Rae
(Lenna Little)

Jaeli Rae is an actress from Onion Lake Cree Nation, SK. Passionate about acting, dance, music, and the arts from a young age, she pursued her craft despite limited resources and the responsibilities of a large family. Following the COVID pandemic, Jaeli committed to transforming childhood dreams into lifelong goals, relocating to Toronto for professional training as she is now a Centre for indigenous theatre Graduate. Through perseverance, self-discovery, and artistic growth, she continues to develop as a disciplined, dedicated professional artist, actress, and dancer



Grayson Bird
(Sam Thomas)

My name is Grayson Bird, and I am 2-Spirit actor born and raised in Selkirk, Manitoba. I have been a professional actor in film for the past 2 years; most notably in TV series Acting Good, Mayflower, and the feature film Neechies. But I made my theatre debut just this past summer of 2026 in Sandra Laronde's She Holds up the Stars! I am very excited to be portraying Sam in Niizh, and hope to bring a joyful and comedic energy to the stage!



James Dallas Smith
(Billy Little / Voice of radio / Sound Designer)

James Dallas Smith is an actor, musician, writer & storyteller with Oshweken Mohawk (Turtle Clan) & Scottish heritage from the Six Nations of the Grand river reserve. He was born in Brantford, Ontario, raised on beautiful Lake Huron in Port Elgin, Ontario and now lives in Toronto with his wife, beloved kitten and small, dictatorial child.
He has been performing on stages and screens across Turtle Island for almost thirty years Favourite theatre

credits include: Almighty Voice & His Wife (Dora nomination for Outstanding Performance), Where the Blood Mixes, King Lear, Our Town, The Time of Your Life, Three Sisters (Soulpepper), In the Shadow Beyond the Pines MT C), The Secret to Good Tea (MTC/NAC/Grand), Hamlet (No More) (Canadian Stage , The Donnelly's Trilogy, Sir John A: Acts of a Gentrified Ojibwe Rebellion, Ipperwash, Cottagers & Indians, A Quiet in the Land, Powers & Gloria, The Berlin Blues (Blyth), Wicked Nix (YPT), Hard Times for These Times (NAC), and Proof, The Drawer Boy (Centaur).



John Seymour
(Jay Little)

John Seymour is an Anishinaabe actor, filmmaker, and writer from Winnipeg, Manitoba, and a member of Peguis First Nation. As a performer, his screen credits include Acting Good, Aberdeen, Heartland Homicide, and Sunshine Slayings. John is also a writer-director whose work centres contemporary Indigenous stories, with a particular interest in Urban Indigenous life, identity, family, humour, and connection. His short film Stay Awhile has screened at festivals across Canada and the United States, and his experimental work continues to explore new approaches to storytelling and performance. A graduate Of the National Screen Institute's CBC New Indigenous Voices program, John works across film, television, and the arts in Winnipeg. He is excited to be joining the company Of Niizh and to return to live performance.



Nicole Joy-Fraser
(KC / Bird / Voice of Siri)

Nicole Joy-Fraser is an award-winning, multidisciplinary artist with mixed Settler and Indigenous bloodlines from Horse Lake First Nation, AB. They are thrilled to be back at Magnus Theatre after their portrayal of “Denise Winters” in Keith Barker’s “The Hours That Remain” drew attention to the continuing calls to action for MMIW2S. For over 25 years they have been storytelling for stage and screen, across Turtle Island and beyond, and they are also a regular facilitator of Community Arts, invited Cultural Carrier and Oshkabewis or “Helper to the Elder”. As a proud Bear clan matriarch, 60’s scoop witness and 2Spirit Helper, supporting each other through healing and the Indigenous arts continues to be a passion of theirs. They have worked with many celebrated companies such as the National Arts Centre, Stratford Festival, Shaw, Mirvish, Soulpepper, Tarragon, CBC, CBS, BBC and Telefilm. Nicole has recently been developing their own original storytelling in the Onguiaahra region where they reside with their son and are an emerging director, playwright and dramaturge.

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Magnus Theatre is the only professional theatre in northern Ontario, an important part of the cultural life and economy of Thunder Bay and region, and a wonderful way to spend an evening or afternoon. We work very hard to keep our programs affordable and accessible to our entire community, maintaining some of the lowest ticket prices for professional theatre in Canada. As such, we rely on donations and the generous support of our patrons and sponsors to maintain our programming. We hope you will consider a gift to Magnus Theatre, helping to fuel professional arts in the North. Your gifts supports artists, school tours, productions, and community access across Northwestern Ontario.

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BEHIND THE SCENES



Richard Comeau
(Director)

Richard is an actor and a Certified Fight Director with Fight Directors Canada. He made his directorial debut at Magnus Theatre last year when he co directed Women of the Fur Trade with Amy Sellors. Richard is thrilled to return to Magnus, having performed in Fur Trade and Liars at a Funeral, and fight directed On Thin Ice. He fight directed the world premiere of Niizh at Native Earth and is incredibly honoured to have the opportunity to now help tell this story from a different vantage point. It feels like a full circle moment for him. To be working with such an incredible cast, crew and design team is a dream. Richard has performed at the Stratford Festival, Canadian Stage, Centre for Indigenous Theatre, YES Theatre, the Blyth Festival, and more. He's choreographed the violence for such theatres as the Shaw Festival, Soulpepper, Pleaides Theatre, Canadian Stage, Native Earth, etc. This one's for the best storytellers I've ever known and the reason I've become one myself. My Mom & Dad. Wela'lin



Jo Pagnan
(Set Designer)

Jo Pagnan is an award winning, multi-hyphenated artist joining from the Thousand Islands. Their work is concerned with environmentalism, queerness and education. Working mostly in design and direction, they are a professor of scenography at Queen's University. A board member of the Arts Council of Kingston, committee member of the ADC Green Alliance, and member of the planning committee for the 2027 Canadian Exhibition for the Prague Quadrennial! A lover of nature, board games, ttrpgs, and telling a good story, Jo launched Living Edge, a theatre company daring the point between here and there. He most recently created and directed (Saint) Joan, a new edition of the George Bernard Shaw play starring seven of Canada's top intersectional artists. Past Magnus credits include: The Jungle Book, A Christmas Carol, We Will Rock You, Shout!, Jacob Marley's A Christmas Carol, and Tell Me on a Sunday. Past notable works include: Once and Mary's Wedding (Thousand Islands Playhouse), She's Not Special (Tarragon Theatre), What She Burned (New Zealand with Talk is Free Theatre). Upcoming projects to look forward to: 9 to 5 and Stag and Doe (Thousand Islands Playhouse), the Eastern Canadian premier of Hairspray (Highland Arts Theater), and SPOILERS. Can't give it all away. Check out livingedge.ca for more. Thank you to the incredible team at Magnus, it feels great to be back. As always, my unyielding love to Jeff and my coyote Aspen.

The Only Professional Theatre Company Between Winnipeg and Barrie

Artists engaged in Magnus Theatre productions are members of Canadian Actors' Equity Association, a national association representing artists working in theatre, opera and dance from coast-to-coast-to-coast. Equity's membership includes performers, directors, choreographers, fight directors and stage managers.

Magnus Theatre is a proud member of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres. PACT is a member-driven organization of professional Canadian theatres which serves as the collective voice of its members for the betterment of Canadian professional theatre.

Associated Designers of Canada is a national, professional non-profit arts service organization dedicated to representing the interests of set, costume, lighting, projection and sound designers working in the live performing arts in Canada.

SOCAN is a performing rights society that licenses the public performance and communication of the world's repertoire of copyright- protected musical works in Canada and then distributes royalties to its members and affiliated international societies.

Magnus Theatre engages stagehands and craftspeople who are members of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, Moving Picture Technicians, Artists and Allied Crafts of the United States, Its Territories and Canada (IATSE), Local 467.

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Jeff Chief
(Costume Designer)

Jeff Chief (he/him) is Plains Cree from Onion Lake First Nation on Treaty 6 territory in Saskatchewan. He currently makes his home in Saskatoon. Jeff's recent costume design credits include: Women of the Fur Trade (Belfry Theatre), Murder on the Orient Express (Theatre NorthWest), The Watch List (25th Street Theatre), Awowakii, Honour Beat (Theatre Calgary), Women of the Fur Trade (Magnus Theatre), Pow wow, Leave it to Weavers (GTNT), Women of the Fur Trade, Café Daughter, Sir John A: Acts of a Gentrified Ojibway Rebellion (Globe Theatre), The Diviners, Women of the Fur Trade (Stratford Festival), King Lear (GTNT/La Troupe du Jour), The Fiancée (Persephone Theatre), Iago Speaks (Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan), The Rez Sisters (Royal MTC), Gabriel Dumont's Wild West Show (National Arts Centre), Flush, Life After Hockey (La Troupe du Jour), Yaga, Ministry of Grace (Belfry Theatre), Hedda Noir, Dreary and Izzy (Theatre NorthWest).



Anika Binding
(Lighting Designer)

Anika Binding is a multidisciplinary theatre artist born and raised in Winnipeg, working primarily in Lighting and Costume design. She would like to thank her mentors, family, friends, and partner for their endless support.
Lighting Design: Glory (PTE); The Undeniable Accusations of Red Cadmium Light (PTE); Holland (RMTC & TPM); CROQUIS (WCD); Prophecy (TPM); Women of the Fur Trade (Magnus); Afterlight (The Keep).
Assistant: Little women (RMTC); The recipe (RMTC & TPM); among men (RMTC & TPM).
Costume Design: Gaslight (Capitol Theatre); Next To Normal (WST); The Perfect Man (WST & Gargoyle Players), Every Christmas Story Ever Told (Magnus); Waiting for Godot (SIR); Macbeth (SIR); Liars at a Funeral (Magnus).
Associate Set & costume: Serving Elizabeth (PTE)

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Gillian Jones
(Stage Manager)

This is my bio all about how, my life got flipped turned upside down and I'd like to take a moment before the show starts to tell you how I became involved in the live arts. In North Thunder Bay, I was born and raised. On a playground is where I spent most of my days. Chillin out max and relaxin all cool, but never shootin' B-ball outside of the school. When a couple of folks who were up to some good, started a rehearsal in my neighbourhood offering me a job at Magnus Theatre.



David A. Brown
(Head Carpenter)

David joined Magnus in 2019 as the Head Carpenter after working as the canoe builder/shipwright at Old Fort William for 40 years.
Dave wore many hats while at the Fort, building canoes and boats. He has been involved in many movie and television productions, from an IMAX production in the early 1980's to many commercials and print productions, appearing in National.
Enquirer in the same year. He was heavily involved in "The Haunted Fort" building props, animatronic effects and lighting as a licensed pyrotechnician. Dave is getting used to building square and level; he would still like everything to be curved like a canoe or boat.



Lisa Macchione
(Head of Wardrobe)

Lisa is a passionate devotee of the performing arts and all things adornment. In 1999 she graduated from Seneca College's Fashion Arts program and has had the opportunity to use her skills in costuming to work onset of local films, historical reenactments, as well as her own performance art. Researching characters, creating one-of-a-kind pieces, and the spark of a thrift store treasure hunt are what she enjoys most. She is thrilled to be a part of the team at Magnus Theatre.

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Nadia Cheechoo
(Head of Props)

Nadia Cheechoo is an Indigenous woman from Wik-wemikong, Ontario. She is back at Magnus Theatre, adding yet another position to her repertoire. She has had previous props experience working in film, but this is her first time in this position at Magnus. With carpentry and wardrobe already under her belt, she's ready to continue honing old and new skills. Then she plans to carry those skills into future shows, theatres, and film projects.Magnus Theatre has been a major stepping stone in her career as an artist, and she hopes to continue to share her skills with them and others.



Sarah Furlotte
(Interim Production Coordinator)

Thunder Bay-based artist and production professional, Sarah Furlotte holds an Honours Bachelor of Fine Arts and brings nearly two decades of experience in theatre and film to the team. Furlotte returned to the Magnus Theatre production team after a 16 year Hiatus where she served as Props Coordinator and Set Painter. As a practicing visual artist for many years, Furlotte has developed A reputation for her skills as a fabricator and designer her early career included an apprenticeship in Theatre set design At the Arts Club Theatre which laid the foundation for a transition into production design for film.
In the film industry, Furlotte has taken on diverse roles including wardrobe, Artistic Director and a Position as the Production Design teacher for the film program at Confederation College. Her multidisciplinary experience allows her to approach each project with versatility, creativity, and a deep understanding of visual narrative.

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Alex Pilon
(Scenic Painter)

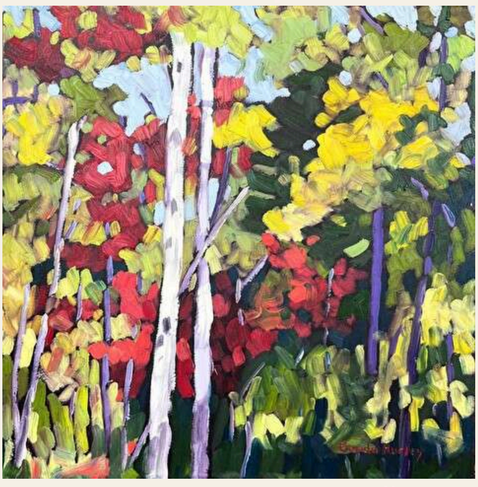
Alex Pilon grew up in Quebec and spent over a decade in British Columbia, where he built a dynamic career in the arts. With a background in Fine Arts and training in hair design from Nelson, BC, he brings a unique blend of technical skill and creative flair to his work.
He joined the Magnus Theatre team in March as a scenic painter, where he is excited to help bring stories to life through bold and imaginative environments. Throughout his career, he has remained deeply involved in theatre, both onstage and behind the scenes.
While living in BC, he contributed to a variety of productions, including a street puppet show celebrating Canada's 150th anniversary, where he worked as both painter and director. No matter the role, he is always driven by a love of storytelling and visual expression.

Featured Artist (located in the lounge)



Brenda Hurley Artworks

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~

For more information, please contact:

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Magnus Theatre

THE NEXT STAGE



THE NEXT STAGE PROJECT CONTINUES!

Magnus Theatre has thrived as Northwestern Ontario's only professional theatre since 1971. With increased demand for programming and arts spaces, Magnus Theatre continues its' mission to enhance arts possibilities within our community.

The Next Stage Project began to restore, upgrade, and expand the Magnus Theatre facility to meet the emerging needs of the community. So far, the project has seen the addition of a brand-new Studio Theatre, expansion and upgrade of all production facilities, an overhaul of the building HVAC systems, all-new public washrooms, lounge, and iyouth classrooms, all done while carefully maintaining and respecting the heritage features of the Historic Central School. The project continues, as we endeavour to make our heritage building greener and energy efficient, with plans to replace windows, improve the parking lot, convert stage lighting to environmentally friend LED fixtures and upgrade all hearing-assist systems.

The Next Stage Project has been funded in part by the Government of Canada, FedNor, the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation, the Trillium Community Building Fund, the Trillium Resilient Communities Fund, TBXI and the Thunder Bay CEDC. The project continues to be supported by many private donors and sponsors who believe strongly that professional arts are an integral part of a strong and healthy community.

If you would like to get involved in supporting Magnus Theatre's Next Stage Project and in strengthening the arts scene in Northwestern Ontario, please reach out to Glenn Coulson, Magnus Theatre's Director of Development at Glenn.Coulson@magnustheatre.com, or call 807-345-8033.

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Emma Stam
Jeff & Anna Sampson
Jim Bishop
Tonny Ogwal
Greg Anderson

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Glenn Coulson, Director of Development | development@magnustheatre.com

99.9 THE BAY

70's, 80's & 90's

Thunder Bay's FAVOURITE MORNING SHOW

WEEKDAYS 6:00 AM - 10:00 AM



mornings in the bay with Danny Foresta

Kai A.
Kristy Baxter
Ginette Blier
Kirsty Bourret
Sarah Brown
Fiona
Liz Buset
Bill Campbell
Allan Campbell
Janis Cox
Crawford
Michael Danielewski
Catherine Degiacomo
Lee Detlor
Cheryl Dillon
Luc Dillon
George Doig
Mitch Dupuis
Michelle Emson
Susan Fabius
Glenn Fillis
Marie-Claude Gauthier
Jason Giertuga
David Giuliano
Donna Goodman
Igor Grabarski
Paul Greenwood
Peter Gushel
Meladina Hardy
Karen Harju
Mike and Karen Hartviksen
Monika Holenstein
Gordon Hollway
Patricia Hovi
Mike Huneau
Richard and Rowena Husch
Yvon Joubert
Emily Joubert
Sherry Kelly
Mary Jane Lewandowski
Sophie Kuhn
Ryan La Via
Kim Latimer
Val
Mr. Kari Lehtinen
Laurie Leslie
Marlene Lindsay
Marty Mascarin
Abby & Lucy
Willis M
Melanie
Jen Meservia
Kathleen Michon
Barb Midgley
Krystal Murray
Swag Events
Diane Neale
Rosemarie North
Andrea North
Eugenio Padovese
Gail Palko
Alison Parsons
Kevin Ramcharan
Bill and Nancy Ringham
Eugene Sacevich
Christa Savietto
Kelsey Smith
Nadine Sorokopud
Susan Taylor
Elizabeth L Thomson
Avery Lee
Tribe
Justine Waite
Diane Walker
Gerry and Lucy
Suzanne Hanlon
David Murray
Choco
Shirley
Dorothy Campbell
Kathleen Colosimo
Shawn Corrigan
Arley Cox
Sherri Daniels
Cindy Dunning
Darryl Fawcett
Rikel Fors
Jasmine Gabrijelcic
Krystal & Judy Prokosh
Margaret Hackner
Angela Hill

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Jennifer Kinisky
Hayleigh LaVallee
Susan Lester
Chengning Li
Bryanna Lund
Mary-Anne Mackett
Jenna McQuaker
Deano Michieli
Paul Moore
David Morris
Kathy-Ann Ramdass
Vincenzo Riccio
Brandon Rodeghiero
Rhi
Nihita
Kesavan Sathanantham
Leane Shuttleworth
Fonda Skinner
Abbey Sprickerhoff
Frances Talarico-Lampson
Oye-Sem Won
Leigh Wood
Nancy Hudyma
Brenda Kehoe
Samantha Rizzo
Kiel
El Gabriele
Joy Harrison
Tracy Shields

We Will Rise Again Tent Campaign

Brian Walmark
Brickhost
Ken Boshcoff
Kim Koivukoski
Martin and Jamie Maki
Stan & Jean Vincent
Kathy Novak in honour of Alycia Novak

Theatre in Education

Danielle Chandler
Kiwanis Club of Thunder Bay

In Memoriam

In Honour of George Coulson

Glenn Coulson

In Honour and Memory of Dr. Peter Neelands

Peter and Diane Boyle
E. Maurer

In Honour and Memory of Elizabeth Long

Eleanor Murie
Janice, Alison and Ralph Neelands
Barbara Hanchard
Kim, Kai & Moyra - Remembering Beth, Thinking of you
Karin McIntosh
Dr. David Legge
Lori Husiak and Family

In Memory of Hester Jane Simser

Laura Spiller

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Executive Director | Alexis Rowlinson

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Theatre in Education Instructors | Nico Harding
TYA Tour Coordinator | Shannon Vancook

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Marketing & Publicity Coordinator| Ayush Arry
Social Media Coordinator | Sociable Solutions

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Head of Wardrobe | Lisa Macchione
Head of Properties | Nadia Cheechoo
Interim Production Coordinator | Sarah Furlotte
Scenic Painter | Alex Pilon
Production Assistant | Tim Walters
Production Assistant | Todd Smith

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Box Office Representative | Sandra Snider
Patrons Services Manager | Kait Blake
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Bar and Concessions Manager | Jodi Mason
Facilities Caretaker | Alex Campbell-Belandiuk

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