



CENTAUR THEATRE

October 17 – November 5, 2023



CENTAUR THEATRE PRESENTS THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE
PRODUCTION OF MENUENTAKUAN'S

alterNatives

Playwright

Drew Hayden Taylor

Director

Xavier Huard



Intercultural Conversations



Production Partner

FREE

CENTAUR+

MUSIC

SERIES

Curated by Sarah Segal-Lazar



Photo: Nang K'uulas

Friday
October 27
9:30pm

moe clark + ahaū marino
wasênam | let the light in

Saturday
October 28
9:30pm

Wendat/Québécoise
musician
Sandrine Masse



CENTAUR THEATRE PRESENTS
THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PRODUCTION OF MENUENTAKUAN'S

alterNatives

October 17 - November 5, 2023

By **Drew Hayden Taylor**

Directed by **Xavier Huard**

With

(in alphabetical order)

Charles Bender	Dale
Natalie Tannous	Michelle
Étienne Thibeault	Angel
Lesly Velázquez	Yvonne
Nadia Verrucci	Colleen
Xavier Watso	Bobby

Xavier Mary	Set Designer
Meky Ottawa	Costume Designer
Gonzalo Soldi	Lighting Designer
Étienne Thibeault	Sound Designer
Trevor Barrette	Stage Manager
Mélanie Ermel	Assistant Stage Manager
Nathan Bois McDonald	Assistant Director

Intro song *alterIndiens* composed by **Saali Keelan** and **Étienne Thibeault**.

alterNATIVES premiered at the Bluewater Summer Playhouse and Lighthouse Festival Theatre in 1999 with David Ferry as dramaturg.

RUNNING TIME: 1H 50MIN



LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Montreal is an incredible place in which to have the privilege to make theatre. It has such a rich and unique story of its own.

Long before Cartier sailed up the St. Lawrence and encountered a nation of Iroquoian people in a place called Hochelaga, the island that the European settlers chose to call Montreal had been a point of conflict, conference, creativity and exchange since time immemorial for many Indigenous peoples including the Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabeg, Huron-Wendat, and Abénaki Nations. The people of the Kanien'kehà:ka Nation — known in English as the Mohawk — are now considered the caretakers of the unceded land and water around Montréal. In their language, this island bears the name of Tiohtià:ke, which means “broken in two,” because of the way the river breaks around it.

It is striking how the Kanien'kéha language identifies the island as part of the river because it reminds us that we are all in the flow of a much larger story. This mighty river has for centuries carried people here from all over the world in search of new opportunities and new lives, and the Lachine Rapids that sit just off the western tip of this island have given pause to many of those journeys. The river has made contemporary Montréal into a vibrantly diverse city. That diversity is inspiring because it compels us to share our stories with each other and build bridges between our different cultures and languages.



Photo credit : Andr e Lanthier

Welcome back to the theatre! As the leaves on the trees begin to turn and the evenings become chilly, it is the perfect moment to gather around a great story well told. You are in for a real treat with this provocative comedy by Anishinaabe (Ojibway) playwright Drew Hayden Taylor. On the surface it is a classic dinner party gone wrong. However, it becomes a window onto a group of people who are trying their best to find a balance between who they would like to think they are and who they actually become in a social situation where everyone's buttons get pushed. That is where the comedy comes from, but underlying that comedy is the tension that lives beneath the relationship between Indigenous communities in Canada and those of us who hail from a non-Indigenous background. In the hands of a master like Drew Hayden Taylor, who comes from a mixed-race background himself, no one is the enemy but everyone must confront their biases. He brings us together around the act of storytelling and his compassion for both sides of the argument allows us to laugh at ourselves and eventually tell ourselves the truth.

Before the lights go down, I want to take a moment to introduce you all to our new Executive Director H l ne Turp, who joins the Centaur Theatre team bringing a lifetime of experience in theatre in Montreal and beyond. I am thrilled to have the chance to work with someone with H l ne's combination of passion and expertise. We will work together to build the future of Centaur!

EDA HOLMES
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

In my first three months on the job, I've been on an exhilarating journey, fueled by inspiration at every turn. To all of you who've been my guiding lights in this adventure, I extend my heartfelt thanks.

First and foremost, thank you Eda Holmes; your unwavering support, vision, passion, and commitment are beacons of inspiration. It's an honour to walk alongside you as we forge the future of Centaur Theatre. To our dedicated Board of Directors, your unwavering commitment to the theatre fuels our dreams.

To the incredible Centaur team, your warm welcome and unwavering support have been very precious. Your dedication and talent form the very heart of what makes Centaur Theatre so magical. Together, we are destined to soar to new heights.

And finally, to our cherished Centaur audience, you occupy a special place in our hearts. Our theatre thrives because of you, and we're eternally grateful to our patrons who purchase tickets, subscribe, and generously champion our Annual Director's Circle Campaign. You are the reason behind our passion, and we're devoted to delivering extraordinary theatre experiences, just for you.

H L NE TURP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Photo credit : Andr e Lanthier



Photo : Sara Cornthwaite

Ahneen.

My goodness, it's been something like thirty years (and twenty pounds) since a piece of my work last graced the stage of the illustrious Centaur Theatre. A lot has changed since then. The Centaur has been renovated. I've gotten new socks. But the world continues to revolve. The one thing that stands eternal, though, is the art of storytelling. Technology comes and goes, and yet we continuously search for something interesting to entertain us. At least I do and I do not think I am that different from you who reads this.

alterNATIVES is about the clash between cultures. There are a lot of polar opposites in this play, but please keep in mind I personally believe we all have more in common than we have differences. So pull up a chair, pour yourself a glass of wine, and cut yourself a slice of moose (or lasagna if you prefer) and watch the fireworks.

I've been to these dinner parties, and I bet you have too. Bon appétit.

Miigwetch.

Drew

P.S. The playwright prefers Red... no metaphor intended.

Drew Hayden Taylor

GF Fondation
Cole
Foundation

**SUPPORTING THEATRES THAT PRESENT
THE STORIES OF THE MANY CULTURES OF OUR WORLD**



Photo : Jonathan Fouquart

I admire Drew Hayden Taylor for many things, but to set a social critique of our relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in the lightheartedness of a sitcom is a tour de force.

In recent years, Quebec has witnessed a new wave of interaction between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Are these new “allies” imposing their own visions in their own way? Is it a vision of the fantasized Indigenous person, whose primary purpose is to satisfy a need for meaning, a form of cultural and spiritual tourism whose appearances are designed primarily by the customer, the non-Indigenous person? How do I know if my openness, though rooted in the best of intentions, isn’t unconsciously taking care to comfort and validate my own values, and my own way of seeing things?

This play is disarmingly timely, and for the design team and performers it was the driving force behind this theatrical experiment. The power of the word is the main feature of this work, and what you’ll see today is our way of instilling it in you.

A Brief History of the Production

In 2018, when the Menuentakuan artistic direction collective first got together to work on this text, our ambition was unanimous: to introduce this playwright to our French-speaking audience. We couldn’t have foreseen that the show would unfold so remarkably well in Montreal, Quebec City and beyond. When Eda asked us to bring the production *alterIndiens* back into English, we knew we were up for the challenge. For me, it’s clear that in the future we must continue to create this space for non-Indigenous and Indigenous artists, regardless of colonial language. It’s a gathering place that we love. Thank you for being part of it, and thank you to the entire Centaur team for letting us see their sacred fire and unconditional love for theatre.

Xavier Huard

Co-founded in 2015 by Charles Bender, Marco Collin and Xavier Huard, Menuentakuan uses the codes of theatre and performance to create a meeting point between First Nations cultures and the other cultures that enrich the identity of Canada and Quebec. With the constant aim of creating and framing an intimate and meaningful encounter between these two overlapping realities, the company approaches its creations in a way that highlights Indigenous peoples’ perspectives on contemporary universal themes.



Upcoming Activities

In 2024, *alterIndiens* will be presented in Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Ottawa, Moncton, Caraquet, Jonquière, Alma and Dolbeau. In April, “Les autochtoneries”, an Indigenous theatre festival commissioned by Menuentakuan, will be presented at Théâtre aux écuries.

||| Manulife Vitality

PUT YOUR LIFE FIRST

With Manulife *Vitality*, we've changed insurance forever. Imagine a one-of-a-kind insurance program that rewards your healthy choices, so you can live your best life.

Reward your healthy choices today.



The Vitality Group Inc., in association with The Manufacturers Life Insurance Company, provides the Manulife *Vitality* program. The Manulife *Vitality* program is available with select policies. Vitality is a trademark of Vitality Group International Inc., and is used by The Manufacturers Life Insurance Company and its affiliates under license. Manulife, Stylized M Design, and Manulife & Stylized M Design are trademarks of The Manufacturers Life Insurance Company and are used by it, and by its affiliates under license. © 2022 The Manufacturers Life Insurance Company. All rights reserved. MP3064957E 02/23

PRE SHOW RITUAL

Reserve your table



447 rue St-François-Xavier
restaurantbonaparte.com



RESTAURANT
BONAPARTE

Proudly supporting Centaur Theatre



hydro
quebec
.com



infinithéâtre

PRESENTS

EXTRA/BEAUTIFUL/U

AS PART OF
CENTAUR THEATRE'S BRAVE NEW LOOKS
SELECTION FOR 2023/24

WRITTEN BY MICHAELA DI CESARE
DIRECTED BY CAITLIN MURPHY

NOV.30TH - DEC.9TH
CENTAUR THEATRE

BOXOFFICE@CENTAURTHEATRE.COM
(514)-288-3161



Photo : Sara Cornthwaite

DREW HAYDEN TAYLOR PLAYWRIGHT

Drew Hayden Taylor is an award-winning playwright, author, filmmaker and lecturer. Born and raised on the Curve Lake First Nation (Anishinaabe) in Central Ontario, he has done practically everything, from performing stand-up comedy at the Kennedy Center to serving as Artistic Director of Canada's premiere Indigenous theatre company, Native Earth Performing Arts. His 35th book, a novel titled *Cold*, will be released this winter, and the third season of his award-winning APTN documentary series *Going Native* will be aired fall 2023.

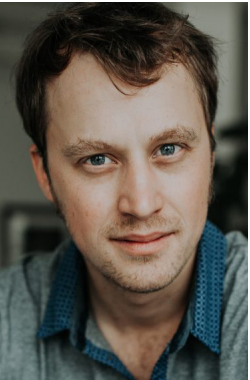


Photo : Camille Tellier

XAVIER HUARD DIRECTOR

A graduate of the National Theatre School of Canada, Xavier Huard has been involved in numerous theatre and television productions. Since graduating in 2013, he has directed theatre projects in remote First Nations communities and in Haiti. In February 2015, he co-founded Productions Menuentakuan with Marco Collin and Charles Bender, an organization that he continues to co-direct today. As a director, he has worked on *Puamun* (2013), *Muliats* (2015), *Je suis un arbre sans feuilles* (2016), *Mushum* (2017), *Nikomotan MTL* (2017-2019), *Bleuets et apricots* (2017), *Umanishish* (2018-2019), *Utei* (2019) and *AlterIndiens* (2020).



Photo : Brad Gros-Louis

CHARLES BENDER DALE

Charles is a Wendat actor, host, theatre director, and translator who has been a regular presence at the helm of the *Indigenous Day Live* event and is the host of *Sans réserve* on APTN. He was recently seen on CBC and APTN as the host of the *National Truth and Reconciliation Live Event*. He has also worked as host/facilitator for many Indigenous organizations and events across Canada. As an actor, you might have seen him in *Sioui-Bacon*, *Mohawk Girls* or, more recently, as Joe Naveau in *Eaux turbulentes* and Frère Brière in *Pour toi Flora*. On stage, he has worked with many companies who prioritize social justice as part of their mandate, such as Teesri Duniya, Ondinnok and Tableau d'Hôte. In 2015, Charles co-founded Productions Menuentakuan, an Indigenous theatre company invested in creating new paths for dialogue amongst Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada. He has translated various plays by Indigenous writers, such as *Where The Blood Mixes* by Kevin Loring, *Thunderstick* by Kenneth T. Williams, *Free as Injuns* by Tara Beagan, and *alterNatives* by Drew Hayden Taylor. He has just finished translating Maria Campbell's *Halfbreed* and is currently working on translating Tomson Highway's *Permanent Astonishment*. As part of his community involvement, he sits on a variety of boards and committees to make sure Indigenous voices are represented and heard.



Photo : Marili Clarke

NATALIE TANNOUS MICHELLE

Montreal-born bilingual actress Natalie Tannous is known for her work on stage and on screen. *Mama*, in which she portrayed the eccentric, emotional pill-pusher Mado, won her the Prix Première Fois during Théâtre Duceppe's 2022 season. Natalie has been seen on-stage in *Birthmark*, *Province*, *Refuge* (in Halifax), *State of Denial*, and Centaur Theatre's *The Baklava Recipe*, for which she was nominated as Best Female Lead at the 2018 META Awards. Her talent was also noticed in the music video for the song "Water" by De.Ville, for which she was nominated for Best Actress at the Prisma Rome Independent Film Awards, as well as the web series *Rima et Jacob*, for which she was nominated for Best Supporting Actress at the Film in Focus International Film Festival. On screen, you can see her in *Antigone*, *Les chambres rouges*, *Montreal Girls*, *Broken Waters*, *La face cachée du Baklava*, *Le dernier repas*, *Le ventre de Bassima*, *La Candidate*, *L'Empereur*, and *Sorcières*, to name a few. She is excited to be part of the English premiere of *alterNatives* at Centaur Theatre.



Photo : Rémy Savard

ÉTIENNE THIBEAULT ANGEL / SOUND DESIGNER

Étienne is an actor, musician, and sound designer who completed his professional training in Acting for Theatre in 2014 at L'École de théâtre professionnel du Collège Lionel-Groulx. Since then, he has been involved in several theatre productions as both actor and sound designer. He was recently seen at La salle Fred-Barry in *alterIndiens* (dir. Xavier Huard) as well as at Théâtre Duceppe in *Manikanetish* (dir. Jean-Simon Traversy), for which he served as both sound designer and live musician. Having recently completed training in sound design and sound mixing for video games, Étienne is eager to expand his sound practice into different domains.



Photo : Damián Siqueiros

LESLY VELÁZQUEZ YVONNE

Lesly Velázquez is a designer of Mexican origin who co-directs the company Coop-Ludotek-Art alongside Margarita Herrera Domínguez. After her studies in theatre, languages, and literature, she was involved in ORTEUV (the oldest theatre company in Mexico) for 2 years as a performer and assistant director. This collaboration, as well as her boundless curiosity, brought her to Montreal where she eventually settled. Her personal and professional life journey in this new host country has been nourished by all kinds of challenges, which she has faced with unabashed enthusiasm. Her talent, physical expressiveness, and charming accent have been noticed in a variety of Anglophone and Francophone productions such as *Fiel* with Théâtre INK, *Jean Dit* with L'Activité, *Valparaíso* with Singulier Pluriel, *Migraaaants* with Coop Ludotek-Art, *Habibi's Angels* with Talisman, *Jonathan Le Goéland* with Surreal Soreal Théâtre, and most recently in *Fausse Ball* with Hors-Taxes. Since 2021, she has been part of the cast of Production Menuentakuan's *alterIndiens* in its French and English versions. Although writing has always been part of her life, 2023 marks her tentative coming-out as an emerging writer and translator, all propelled by a deep desire to connect with others through her uniquely feminine, mixed, and imperfect voice.



Photo : Sabrina Reeves

NADIA VERRUCCI COLLEEN

Nadia is an actor, singer, director, choreographer, and former Artistic Director of In Your Face entertainment. Loyal video-game enthusiasts know her as the voice of Juno in the award-winning *Assassin's Creed* series. Other voice/TV/film highlights include *Far Cry*, *Deus Ex*, *Transplant*, *Being Human*, *Mohawk Girls*, *Most Wanted*, and *Mirror Mirror*. On stage, Nadia has performed with companies such as Repercussion Theatre, The Segal Centre for Performing Arts, Talisman Theatre, Persephone Productions and le Centre des auteurs dramatiques. In 2013, she had the honour of winning a META Award for Outstanding Lead Performer in *Jacques Brel Is Alive and Well* and *Living in Paris*. She is also busy as a director and choreographer, working with Kaleidoscope Theatre, In The Wings Promotions, The Dukes of Drag and various other theatre companies across Montreal. Nadia is thrilled to be back at Centaur Theatre after having recently appeared in *At the Beginning of Time*.



Photo : Guillaume Boucher

XAVIER WATSO BOBBY

Xavier Watso, Abenaki from Odanak, shared his passion for theatre for more than 15 years as a high school drama teacher. He is also a well-known content creator on TikTok, with 49,000 followers who watch his videos with enthusiasm and interest. Over time, Xavier also carved out a place in traditional media as a regular columnist for the *Journal Métro de Montréal* and *Currium* magazine. In addition, he is a familiar face on Radio-Canada (on both radio and television), appearing in shows such as *La journée est encore jeune*, *On va se le dire*, *Bonsoir Bonsoir*, *Il restera toujours la culture* and *Kwe Kwei*. Xavier also plays an important role in the preservation of Indigenous cultures as Master of Ceremonies at the Odanak, Wolinak and Cacouna powwows, as well as as host of the *Présence Autochtone Festival*. Xavier is a versatile communicator who excels both in the arts and media and in the preservation of Indigenous cultures.



Photo : Yako

XAVIER MARY SET DESIGNER

As a human experience designer, Xavier Mary is a collaborator in the creation of artistic and multimedia works. A graduate of the École Nationale de Théâtre du Canada in scenography, he is active in theatre, dance and artistic installations. He has collaborated with Jean-Simon Traversy, Solène Paré, Justin Laramée, Sovann Rochon Prom-Tep, as well as les Productions Menuentakuan, and on the stages of Théâtre Fred Barry, Prospéro, La Chapelle and La Roulotte. With mirari, Xavier created the set design for *King Dave* at Théâtre Jean-Duceppe and developed several installations for public spaces, such as *Duo* (Winner of Prix Numix International – experiential installation - in situ), as well as the immersive scenography of the Canadian Pavilion, guest of honour at the 2021 Frankfurt Book Fair (Prix Numix - immersive experience - in situ). Passionate about dance, his Master's was on space in contemporary Quebec dance. It is with this keen interest and openness to multidisciplinary forms that he approaches the living space.



Photo : Archives

MEKY OTTAWA COSTUME DESIGNER

Meky Ottawa is Atikamekw from Manawan. As a multidisciplinary artist based in Tio'tià:ke Montréal, she works with video, illustration, and installation. She is self-taught, and likes to sing karaoke in her spare time. She has worked as an illustrator for *Meshmag*, *Spirale*, and for many issues of *WIOT (Working It Out Together) Magazine*. She has also contributed to productions by Rezolution Pictures, namely the film *Rumble: The Indians Who Rocked the World* (2017). Her work has been shown in Mashteuiatsh, Nantes, and in Montréal, including at the Montréal Museum of Fine Arts as part of the group exhibition *Elles Autochtones* (2017). Her animated films have been presented in Canada (in Toronto, in the Rocky Mountains, and most recently as part of a screening event devoted to the work of Indigenous women artists, curated by Catherine Boivin at Centre CLARK) and internationally (in New York; Santiago, Chile; Paris; Sao Paulo; Marseille; and Guadalajara, Mexico).



Photo : Yako

GONZALO SOLDI LIGHTING DESIGNER

With his eclectic background, Gonzalo has always been interested in luminous and tangible mediums of expression. His approach started with his architecture studies in Peru, which he left in 2003 to settle in Montreal and deepen his work on sensitivity and perception in the performing arts. Whether as a performer or designer, he has been collaborating in the creation of circus, theatre and dance shows for the past ten years. He co-founded mirari in 2015, committed to making culture as accessible as possible by taking the performing arts outside the walls of the theatre. He has since been exploring public art installations and augmented scenography for large-scale events.



Photo : Christopher Moore

TREVOR BARRETTE STAGE MANAGER

Trevor Barrette (he/him) is a queer theatremaker, stage manager, performer, and teacher based in Montreal (Tio'tia:ke/Mooniyang). For Centaur Theatre, he played Steven Truscott in *Innocence Lost*, directed his superhero musical *Captain Aurora* for the Wildside Festival, and was apprentice stage manager on *MOB*. He has stage managed for the Segal Centre (ASM and apprentice), Scapegoat Carnivale, Troisième Espace Théâtre, and Kidoons Theatre, among others. Last summer, he directed *The Sages of Chelm* for the Dora Wasserman Yiddish Theatre and this past summer he assistant-directed *Les Belles-Soeurs* for the Stratford Festival. He has proudly served his community as past President of the METAs and Vice-President of QDF. For more, visit www.trevorbarrette.com.



Photo : Vision 3MC

MÉLANIE ERMEL ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

Mélanie most recently was Assistant Stage Manager for *Dracula: A Comedy of Terrors* (dir. Gordon Greenberg) and Stage Manager for *Prayer for the French Republic* (dir. Lisa Rubin) at the Segal Centre. She also worked on *Lies My Father Told Me* (dir. Bryna Wasserman), *RED* (dir. Martha Henry), *Equus* (dir. Domy Reiter-Soffer), *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change* (dir. Wade Lynch), *Vigil* (dir. Martin Faucher), *Scientific American* (dir. Andrew Shaver) and many Yiddish shows. In addition, she has worked for Geordie Theatre, Teesri Duniya, Youththeatre, Theatre Lac-Brome and l'Université de Montréal. She also has many other areas of expertise, including being a trained dancer and dance teacher. It is very important for her to love what she does and to keep a young soul.



Photo : Malina Corpadean

NATHAN BOIS MCDONALD ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Nathan Bois McDonald is a 2023 graduate of the Dawson College DOME program, holding both the Willy and Beryl Moser Award for exceptional acting ability and the Cynthia Hendrickson Memorial Award for his collaborative spirit. During the past summer, Nathan had the privilege of joining *alterNatives* actress Nadia Verrucci in Repercussion's enthralling touring production of *Cymbeline*. Now immersed in Montreal's dynamic artistic community, Nathan eagerly seeks opportunities to share his passion. He's deeply grateful for the support of his mentor, Laurent Pitre, and the guidance of his incredible acting coach, Bryan Doubt. Nathan had the pleasure of working with a wonderful team and shadowing a true creative guru, Xavier Huard, as Assistant Director for *alterNatives*. He is honoured to have contributed to this play in Tiohtià:ke/Montreal. Catch him in the spring of 2024 in the McGill Savoy Society's production of *Princess Ida* at McGill University. Nathan extends his best wishes for your well-being and that of your loved ones. You can also enjoy his music on Instagram @nathan.mcdo.



Nothing
moves you
like

viarail.ca



A CO-PRODUCTION WITH
THE ROYAL MANITOBA THEATRE CENTRE

FEATURING "YOU'VE GOT A FRIEND",
"WILL YOU LOVE ME TOMORROW",
AND "NATURAL WOMAN"

Beautiful The Carole King Musical

BOOK BY DOUGLAS MCGRATH

WORDS AND MUSIC BY GERRY GOFFIN & CAROLE KING | BARRY MANN & CYNTHIA WEIL

MUSIC BY ARRANGEMENT WITH SONY/ATV MUSIC PUBLISHING

ORCHESTRATIONS, VOCAL AND INCIDENTAL MUSIC ARRANGEMENTS BY STEVE SIDWELL

WITH
TESS BENDER
AS CAROLE KING

A CO-PRODUCTION WITH
ROYAL
MTC
MANITOBA THEATRE CENTRE

PRODUCTION SPONSOR

 DELMAR
www.delmarargo.com

514-739-7944 / segalcentre.org

Oct 15
- Nov 5

2023

CENTAUR+



SUNDAY CHAT-UP

October 22 @ 12:30pm

with **Lucinda Chodan**
and playwright
Drew Hayden Taylor



FREE



INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE FORUM

October 26 @ 5pm

with Artist-in-Residence
Ange Loft and
Menuentakuan co-founder
Charles Bender



FREE

SPECTACLES
SURTITRÉS
en Français

2 novembre @ 20h

3 novembre @ 20h

4 novembre @ 14h



CENTAUR STAGE

A Conversation between Eda Holmes and Charles Bender

EDA HOLMES: We were so grateful for your participation in our pandemic-era ADD (Artistic Diversity Discussion) @ Centaur panel. Your insight was really key in demonstrating the role that settler institutions can (and must) play in amplifying Indigenous voices and supporting Indigenous flourishing and creativity. So thank you again for that. You've had a profound impact on the future of Centaur.

CHARLES BENDER: Thank you Eda! :)

EH: What made you want to translate *alterNatives* into French for the production of *alterIndiens* that you performed at Denise-Pelletier? How do you think this play speaks to Montreal audiences specifically? The original text was set in Toronto's Annex neighbourhood, which you've cleverly updated to Westmount for our production here at Centaur. Does that move from Ontario to Quebec change anything for the characters?

CB: The idea to translate *alterNatives* actually came from Paul Lefebvre at the CEAD. I remember discussing it with him, along with *Almighty Voice and His Wife* (which I'm currently translating as well) back in 2015. He mentioned it again to Xavier a few years back and he decided that he really wanted to mount it. We discussed it and thought the themes of the play, even though it was written in 2000, could resonate quite well with an audience in the 2020s. All that was needed was a few little tucks to update a few references and set it in Montreal to make it all the more relevant for our audiences. Of course, changing the language and the location brought a lot of complicated reflections regarding the identity of Colleen as a non-practicing Jew. In the Anglophone community, there is very little divide between non-practicing Catholics and non-practicing Jews. In Quebec, this melding did not happen quite as seamlessly in the Francophone community. We also had to ask ourselves if Yvonne's Master's thesis could be on the same subject as in the original version (*The Peterborough Petroglyphs*). We had to find something that could make both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people feel a bit cringy about her position. It was also important for the Native characters to be from Quebec as well, so that our audiences would feel like they were being talked to by someone who's from the same province, who has skin in the game so to speak, and not being talked down to by someone from another province.



Étienne Thibeault in *alterIndiens*
Photo: Marie-Andrée Lemire



EH: In the past, theatre companies in Canada and the U.S. have sometimes been reluctant to do Indigenous-themed shows because of a perceived worry that they wouldn't be able to cast them appropriately (i.e. not enough Indigenous actors in the casting pool). Do you think this is changing? How do you and Menuentakwan approach the casting of Indigenous characters in your productions?

CB: Every Indigenous company is now doing their best to augment said pool. We're always on the lookout for new talent, spending a lot of time and energy creating spaces to welcome Indigenous people of all ages that might be inclined to try their hand at theatre. We do that through creating theatre troupes in communities and creating workshops in town, facilitating casting for theatre, film, and TV. That being said, the pool can't be magically enhanced to the level that everybody would like to see. There is a lot of demand for Indigenous creators right now. Here in Quebec, the interest in hiring Indigenous people on productions has augmented quite a bit, which is good, but also brought a problem of over-solicitation for those of us who were already involved in bringing our stories forward. Being able to speak French and hold our end on-stage was, until recently, not a very sought-after intersectional skill, but that has changed drastically. The pool is growing fast, but we're still trying to make sure that we're not sending people into situations where they might end up being used as tokens. It's hard when you've just started in this field to feel at ease in expressing concerns about content and whatnot. That being said, I believe we're moving in the right direction, but it takes a lot of work.

As for casting, our company decided to try something a bit different that may not please everybody, but we had to think outside of the box. We might not always get the casting that would be rubber-stamped by proponents of a colour-(or other identities-)correct casting but we don't mind playing with the idea of having people from other intersectionalities play something that they are not and allowing Indigenous actors to do the same. The ideal ratio is to have as many Indigenous actors on-stage as there are roles, but not be obligated to play the Indigenous roles (as is the case in *alterNatives*). This leaves us open to bringing people from outside and having them walk in our shoes. We don't know if we'll get flack from it, but right now it makes our productions less complicated to cast. If we have to cast a young Indigenous woman and we can only find a couple of middle-aged Indigenous actors still available, instead of cancelling the production, we'd rather hire a young non-Indigenous actress to play the role and have our two Indigenous actors take on the roles of the non-Indigenous characters. That way, we don't have to postpone or abandon projects because the pool is too small and over-solicited. It's also a lot more fun to walk through someone else's shoes as an actor than to play different versions of who you are in every production. As the pool grows, we might end up moving in a different direction and start casting according to nation of origin and specific intersectional identification.



Marco Collin and Charles
Bender in *Where the Blood
Mixes* Photo: Archives

Charles Bender in *Muliats*
Photo: Colin Earp Lavergne

EH: What can non-Indigenous theatre companies do to ensure Indigenous-inclusive casting?


CB: Help us create the next generation. Like Duceppe did with *Manikanetish* or the FTA is doing with the Eka shakuelem program. We need our non-Indigenous allies to give us support in creating these initiatives to introduce more Indigenous people to theatre. We also need these allies to understand that none of us are Indigenous casting directors, we're not there to provide them with a list of potential faces to fit a quota, we're there to create welcoming and safe spaces of inclusion for voices that we absolutely need for our own productions first and then to provide the rest of the world with cherished collaborators that we'll be happy to see take their space in non-Indigenous productions.

EH: In a cheeky reversal of the old (and hopefully dead) practice of having white actors play Indigenous characters in redface, in this production we have an Indigenous actor (yourself) playing a white character! What's that experience like for you?

CB: Love it! I love the character of Dale. He's so clueless about Indigenous stuff and so awkward, but he's the only non-Indigenous character who ends up creating a genuine connection with an Indigenous character because he sees the common interest instead of seeing the political/ethnic identity. And he's hilarious. I'm the one who actually told Xavier I'd do the show if I was allowed to play Dale. He's the one I like the most out of all the characters.

EH: Can you tell me about your company Menuentakuan and how it came into being? You have a very unique mission which includes non-Indigenous artists in your leadership structure - what is the goal of that?

CB: Menuentakuan's very idea is to create relationships and collaborations. The name could be translated as "That's good!" or, if we take it apart further, "It feels good to visit you with a nice cup of tea" (I admit to taking a bit of poetic licence here). It started off as a bunch of Indigenous actors (Marco Collin and Charles Buckell among them) and a bunch of freshly graduated non-Indigenous actors (Xavier being their ringleader) who got together and travelled around from one Indigenous community to another putting on a show about the gap between these other two solitudes in Quebec. I joined the gang after seeing the performance of a piece they had created and presented at the MAI. This piece would eventually become the backbone for *Muliats*, our first creation. Charles Buckell had decided to go back to school, so I jumped on board and we incorporated the company to produce and tour *Muliats*. Since then, we've tried our best to always have an eye on collaborations.



Empowering
creative
young minds

Proud to support arts that teach and
connect us on a deeper level.

Canada Life and design are trademarks of The Canada Life Assurance Company.

canada ™



GO WELL

a journey home

WITH
**MAURICE
PODBREY**

NOVEMBER 8 AT 8 P.M.

Tickets: segalcentre.org

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING CENTAUR

Centaur Theatre gratefully acknowledges the following corporations and foundations, whose generous support allows us to continue to be a beacon of excellence, relevance, and diversity.

2023/2024 Sponsors

Subscription Campaign Sponsor

Hydro-Québec

Theatre of Tomorrow Sponsor

Canada Life

alterNatives Production Partner

Manulife

Partner

Bonaparte

Transportation Partner

Via Rail

Accommodation Partner

Cantlie Suites

Members of the National

Assembly of Quebec

Supporting Centaur's

Indigenous Artist Residency

Chantal Rouleau, Minister Responsible for Social Solidarity and Community Action

Ian Lafrenière, Minister Responsible for Relations with First Nations and Inuit

Céline Haytayan, MNA for

Laval-des-rapides

Elisabeth Prass, MNA for d'Arcy-McGee

Alejandra Zaga Mendez, MNA for Verdun

Mathieu Lacombe, Minister of Culture and Communications

André A. Morin, MNA for Acadie

Alexandre Leduc, MNA for Hochelaga-Maisonneuve

Sona Lakhoyan Olivier, MNA for Hochelaga-Maisonneuve

Jennifer Maccarone, MNA for Westmount-Saint-Louis

Titans \$25,000+

Cole Foundation

BMO Financial Group

Olympians \$10,000-\$24,999

Power Corporation of Canada

The Côté Sharp Family Foundation

Fondation J. Armand Bombardier

Fednav Ltd.

Norton Rose Fulbright*

The Polar Foundation - Polar Securities

The Peacock Family Foundation*

Zeller Family Foundation**

Argonauts (\$5,000-\$9,999)

The Lloyd Carr-Harris Foundation**

Ratuos ULC

The Kent Group, RBC Dominion Securities Inc.**

Stikeman Elliott LLP / S.E.N.C.R.L., s.r.l.*

Miriam Roland

Sun Life Financial

Cogeco Communications Inc.*

Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt LLP

The Hay Foundation

Graces (\$2,500 - \$4,999)

The Marvin A. Drimer Foundation

The Hylcan Foundation**

Nova Steel**

Resolute Forest Products

RBC Corporate Client Group*

RBC Investor & Treasury Services*

Fondation Pierre Desmarais Belvédère

R. Howard Webster Foundation*

Brian Bronfman Family Foundation*

The Velan Foundation*

The Trottier Family Foundation

Muses (\$1,000 - \$2,499)

Scotiabank Global Banking and Markets*

Redbourne Realty Management Decolin

PIMCO Canada Corp.

Canderel Management Inc.

Claudine & Stephen Bronfman Foundation

The Irving Ludmer Family

Foundation**

Litho-Pak Inc.

Redemac Inc.

Kruger Inc.

Manulife Financial/Manuvie*

MacKinnon, Bennett & Company Inc.

Aliments Luda Foods

McCarthy Tétrault Foundation*

Eric T. Webster Foundation

Nova Steel

Blake, Cassels & Graydon LLP (Blakes)

Fates (\$500-\$999)

Gestion Cabinet Woods*

Haven Studios

TD Asset Management*

Mercer (Canada) Limited

The Valerie Pasztor Foundation

The Henry & Berenice Kaufmann Foundation**

Fort Insurance

*In Support of the Indigenous Artist Residency

**In Support of Theatre of Tomorrow

CENTAUR GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES OUR DIRECTOR'S CIRCLE OF DONORS WHO MAKE SO MUCH POSSIBLE THROUGH THEIR GENEROSITY

Luminary (\$5000+)

John Gallop
Hugh & Beth McAdams*
Alena Perout
The Estate of Alison Piper
Alan & Roula Rossy Family
Foundation
Timothy Southam
Valerie and David Shannon
Marisa Testa in loving memory
of Francesco, Filippa, Magno
Testa and Tiziano Giacomini
Anonymous (3)

Superstar (\$2,500-\$4,999)

Dr. & Mrs. John Chen
Robert Yalden & Pearl Eliadis*
Robert & Junith Mee
Christopher Winn

Star (\$1,000-\$2,499)

Carlo Alacchi
Michael Baratta*
Diana & James Bouchard
Linda & Gordon Crelinsten
Hera Bell & Anthony Czahary*
Victor & Leslie Eiser
Silvia Galeone, Manulife Financial
Kristine & Steve Hurlburt, The
Highwater Foundation
Howard & Joan Golberg
Brigitte and Hart Hanson
Diane King
Jean Marchand
Anastasia Nakis
Jim Haiman & Thao Phan*
Christopher Kim Playle
Mary Poland
John & Phyllis Rae
Caitlin E Rose
Sofia Ruggiero*
Susan Da Sie
Allan & Linda Stephens
John A. Stewart
Denyse & Robert Walsh
Anonymous (3)

Leading Role (\$500-\$999)

Janet Black

Mladen Palaic & Gerry Chase
Barbara & Stephen Coplan
In memory of Wendy Emerguy
Martin Farnsworth
Manulife Financial
Susan Fitzpatrick
Hugo-Pierre Gagnon
Pierrette & Stephen Gaty
Ernie & Belle Grivakis*
Peter Guay
Dominique Hamel
Lee Harris
John Henry Jones
Ann Lambert
Martin R. Landry
Senator Tony Loffreda
Domenica Pulcini
Aaron Rand
Monique Daigle & Dale Reid
Pat Riva
Jane & Ron
Connie & Eric Rose
Wanda & Mark Sadowski, in
honour of John Louis Ariano
Guillaume Saliah
Michael Tsapraillis*
Dr. David Kostiuik & Ms. Jill de
Villafranca
Ronald & Carmela Vincelli
Brian Williams
Dr. Lorne Wiseman
Anonymous (4)

Featured Player (\$250-\$499)

Varouj Artokun*
Trevor Bishop
The Paul Butler and Chris Black
Foundation at Toronto
Foundation
Jack Buksbaum
Nora & Miguel Burnier
Chuck Childs & Anne Clark
Lorena Cook
Michael & Tatsuko Cooper*
Christine Decarie
Dr. Marc Donato*
Anne & Mark Drake
Peter Duffield
Bonnie Auger and Greg Dunning*

Senator W. David Angus, Q.C.,
Ad.E.
N.J. Economides
Linda Gaboriau
Norm Gharibian*
John Maag, In Honour of Rimma
Grepmpel
John & Helga Hobday
Anne Holloway
Christopher Houle, In Honour of
Michael Baratta
Knut & John*
Ian Knowles
Judy Koonar
Marc L. Belcourt, In memoriam
of Lorraine
Ron Meisels & Nancy Lydon
Stuart MacLeod
Toni Marcogliese
Judith Mendelsohn, In Honour
of Eda Holmes and Howard
Mendelsohn
Allen Mendelsohn, In Honour of
Howard Mendelsohn
Fatima & Konrad Muncs
Elsa Bolam Podbrey
Vincent M. Prager*
Alex Reford
Katherine & James Robb
Eloi Savoie
Dorothy Sims
Alison Stevens
Shaun G. Lynch & Jean Stutsman
Mr. & Mrs. Scott Taylor
Norma Tombari
Andrea Vickers
Donald T. Walcot*
David Laidley & Ellen Wallace
Anonymous (4)



CENTAUR THEATRE

BOARD CHAIRMAN

Michael Baratta, CPA, CA
Partner, KPMG LLP

BOARD TREASURER

Susan Da Sie, CFA

Dr. Patricia A. Baker

Chief Executive Director, Waterford Consulting PB Inc.

Anthony G. Czaharyn, MD CM

Paola Farnesi, CPA, CA
Vice-President, Domtar

Rimma Grepel, CPA, CA
Senior Director –
Finance, EssilorLuxottica Canada

Martin R. Landry

Alisa Palmer
Executive Artistic Director,
National Theatre School of Canada

Richard Pan
Vice-President, Power Corporation of Canada

Sofia Ruggiero
Senior Legal Counsel, Bombardier Inc.

Guillaume Saliah
Partner, Fasken Martineau DuMoulin

Robert Yalden
Sigurdson Professor in Corporate Law,
Queen's University

Founders

Herbert C. Auerbach
Founding Chairman

Maurice Podbrey
Founding Artistic & Executive Director

centaurtheatre.com

Eda Holmes Artistic Director
Hélène Turp Executive Director

ADMINISTRATION

Micaela Fernandez Box Office Manager
Victoria Hall Assistant Box Office Manager
Scott Leydon Outreach Coordinator
Sajida Masih Accounting Assistant
Charlie McKendy Maintenance
Haleema Mini Director of Development
Aleksandra Oleszkiewicz Accounting Manager
Rose Plotek Associate Artist
Eloi Savoie Communications & Marketing Manager
Layne Shutt Front of House Manager
Megan Siow Development Assistant

PRODUCTION

Daniel Barkley Head Scenic Painter
Luciana Burcheri Associate Producer
Peter Cerone Audio & Video Engineer
Mary Hayes Scenic Painter
Howard Mendelsohn Production Manager
Liana Rose Mundy Technical Coordinator
Michael Tonus Head Technician

TECHNICIANS/SET-UP CREW

Gordon Barnett
Georgia Holland
Catherine Sargent
Corey Weiser

FOR THIS PRODUCTION

Paméla Brisson Makeup
Chelsea Dab Hilke Surtitles
Julia Lenardon Voice Coach
Claire Macauley Props
Sonya Vallis Head of Wardrobe



Quebec Drama
FEDERATION

BUILDING THE FUTURE

@ CENTAUR SEASON
23/24

SUBSCRIBE AND SAVE!

Put the price of your
alterNatives ticket
toward a Season 55
subscription!

MARCH 12 – 30

CENTAUR THEATRE PRESENTS
THE TARRAGON THEATRE PRODUCTION OF

GUILT [a love story]

Written and performed by Diane Flacks
Directed by Alisa Palmer

Pictured: Diane Flacks



APRIL 23 – MAY 12

CENTAUR THEATRE IN
PARTNERSHIP WITH REPERCUSSION
AND TABLEAU D'HÔTE PRESENTS

THY WOMAN'S WEEDS

Written by Erin Shields
Directed by Amanda Kellock



Pictured: 1st row: Espoir Segbeaya, Felicia Shulman, Julie Tamiko Manning,
Warona Setshwaelo. 2nd row: Deena Aziz, Leni Parker, Joy Ross-Jones

SUBSCRIBE NOW!
centaurtheatre.com
514-288-3161

