

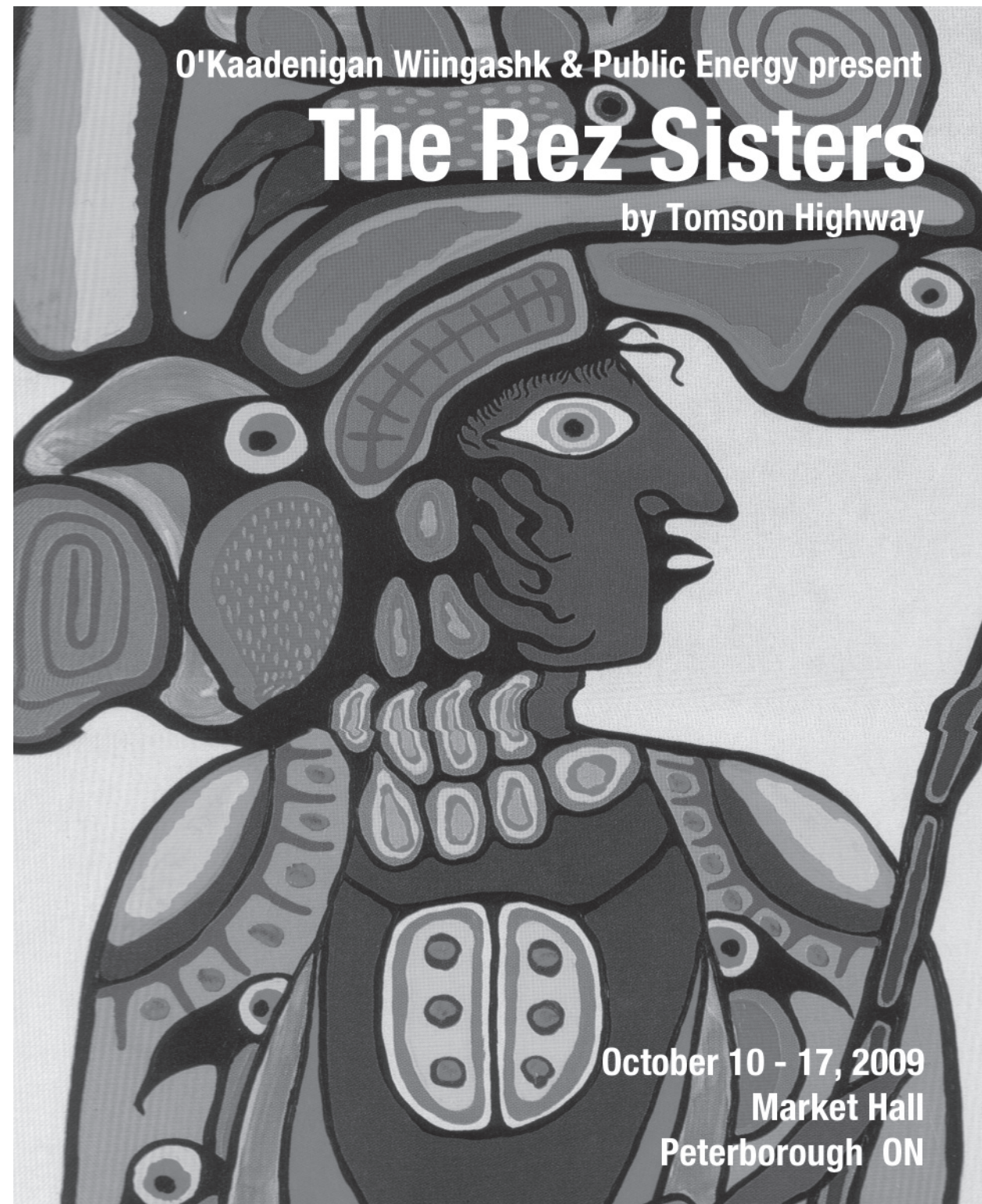
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# Welcome

Welcome to O' Kaadenigan Wiingashk (OKW) and Public Energy's (PE) co-production of *The Rez Sisters*. You will notice many traces of past *Rez Sisters* productions in this incarnation, from the most recent version mounted in Thunder Bay last winter, all the way back to the first one staged in Toronto that featured Gloria May Eshkibok as Emily Dictionary. This premiere Peterborough production was initiated by OKW member Patti Shaughnessy, who has played Marie-Adele Starblanket in two productions of the play in the past three years. She went to Public Energy with the idea of jointly mounting a production that would bring some of the wonderful actors she'd worked with around the country together with some of Peterborough's most talented theatre artists. With this in mind director Susan Spicer and PE artistic producer Bill Kimball traveled to Thunder Bay last November to see Patti in the Magnus Theatre production of *Rez Sisters*. There they saw the charming set created by Ted Roberts that Magnus had commissioned, and it was decided that it should be purchased - along with most of the props - for the production being planned in Peterborough. We hope you now enjoy it, and this special play, as much as we did the first time.



Susan & Patti in Thunder Bay, November 2008

This production of the *Rez Sisters* is dedicated to the memory  
of filmmaker, actor & Rez Sister  
**Ellen Monague**  
(1956-2009)

**PUBLIC ENERGY** is an animator of contemporary dance, theatre, performance and interdisciplinary work. Formerly known as Peterborough New Dance, since 1994 we have presented a mainstage series of dance companies and independent choreographers drawn from across Canada, commissioned new work in concert with other Canadian presenters on the CanDance Network, and supported the development of the local dance, theatre and performance community by presenting area artists and arranging specialized classes and workshops.

Public Energy is incorporated in Ontario as Peterborough New Dance and Performance, and is a registered charity. Tax deductible donations can be made to PUBLIC ENERGY or go on line at [www.canadahelps.org](http://www.canadahelps.org).

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## A Peterborough connection to the very first Rez Sisters production: Larry E. Lewis

It is not widely known that the man who directed the very first production of The Rez Sisters spent time developing his theatre skills in Peterborough. That first production in 1986 was directed by Larry E. Lewis, who graduated from Trent University in 1977. During his time in Peterborough Larry directed and acted in productions with both Theatre Trent and the Peterborough Theatre Guild. Randy Read, now artistic director of Peterborough's New Stages Theatre Co., was at Trent in those years and identifies Larry as a great influence: "At Trent, as a director he already was incredibly astute, had impeccable taste – and was a hugely disciplined taskmaster."

His brief but influential career post-Trent is outlined well on a plaque put up in his honour by the De-ba-jeh-mu-jig Theatre Company on Manitoulin Island, where he directed numerous plays and where he was buried after his death at age 41 in 1995: "Deciding to pursue a career as a theatre director, he completed a Masters Degree at York University. With great energy and conviction, he played a major role in bringing Tomson Highway plays *The Rez Sisters* and *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing* to great heights, and giving Native theatre a strong presence in Canadian Theatre. Many artists today will acknowledge Larry as being a most significant mentor in their lives, including Drew Hayden Taylor, Herbie Barnes, and Joe Osawabine...Larry E. Lewis lives on in our hearts, in our characters, in our performances, and in our sacred space - the actor's studio. Miigwetch Larry."



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## Cast

(Listed in order of appearance)

<b>Pamela Matthews</b>	Pelajia Patchnose ( <i>sister of Philomena</i> )
<b>Gloria May Eshkibok</b>	Philomena Moosetail
<b>Cherish Violet Blood</b>	Annie Cook ( <i>sister of Marie-Adele and half sister of Pelajia and Philomena</i> )
<b>James Whetung</b>	Nanabush as the Seagull, Nighthawk, and the Bingo Master
<b>Patti Shaughnessy</b>	Marie-Adele Starblanket ( <i>half-sister of Pelajia and Philomena</i> )
<b>Susan Newman</b>	Veronique St. Pierre ( <i>sister in law of all of the women except Zhaboonigan</i> )
<b>Renelitta Arluk</b>	Zhaboonigan Peterson ( <i>adopted daughter of Veronique</i> )
<b>Nicole Joy-Fraser</b>	Emily Dictionary ( <i>sister of Annie, Marie-Adele and half-sister of Pelajia and Philomena</i> )

## Creative Team

<b>Director</b>	Susan Spicer
<b>Set &amp; Lighting Design</b>	Ted Roberts
<b>Costume Design</b>	Erika A. Iserhoff
<b>Music</b>	Curtis Driedger
<b>Choreography</b>	Bill James
<b>Stage Manager</b>	Patricia Levert-Thorne
<b>Production Manager</b>	Esther Vincent
<b>Assistant Stage Manager &amp; Props Coordinator</b>	Nicole Gibeault
<b>Technician</b>	Don White
<b>Special FX Make-up</b>	Irene Rudigier
<b>Carpenters</b>	Greg Carveth, Blair Watson
<b>Wardrobe</b>	Nuala Paluck
<b>Publicist</b>	Miriam Stucky
<b>Runners</b>	Sarah DeCarlo, Em Glasspool, Hartley Stevenson

*The Rez Sisters premiere production was produced by Native Earth Performing Arts Inc. and Act IV.*

**There will be a fifteen minute intermission**

## A Note on Nanabush

The dream world of North American Indian mythology is inhabited by the most fantastic creatures, beings, and events. Foremost among these beings is the “Trickster,” as pivotal and important a figure in the Native world as Christ is in the realm of Christian mythology. “Weesageechak” in Cree, “Nanabush” in Ojibway, “Raven” in others, “Coyote” in still others, this Trickster goes by many names and many guises. In fact, he can assume any guise he chooses. Essentially a comic, clownish sort of character, he teaches us about the nature and the meaning of existence on the planet Earth; he straddles the consciousness of man and that of God, the Great Spirit. Some say that “Nanabush” left this continent when the whitemen came. We believe he is still here among us - albeit a little worse for wear and tear - having assumed many other guises. Without him - and without the spiritual health of this figure - the core of Indian culture would be gone forever.

~ Tomson Highway

## Tomson Highway

*Playwright*

Tomson Highway is the son of legendary caribou hunter and world championship dogsled racer, Joe Highway. Born in a tent pitched in a snow bank – in December!—in northwestern Manitoba where it meets Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, and Saskatchewan. He is a novelist, playwright, and musician. Of the many works he has written to date, his best known are the plays, *The Rez Sisters*, *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing*, *Rose*, *Ernestine Shuswap Gets Her Trout*, and the best-selling novel *Kiss of the Fur Queen*. He has, as well, several children’s books to his credit, all written bilingually in Cree (his mother tongue) and English. He divides his year between a cottage in Northern Ontario (near Sudbury) and an apartment in the south of France. He is currently hard at work on his second novel.

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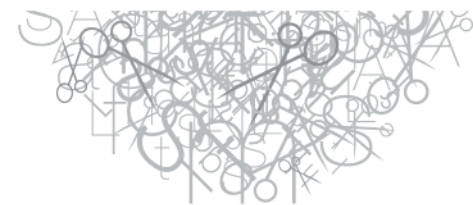
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## Performers

### Renelitta Arluk *Zhaboonigan*

Renelitta is a BFA-Acting graduate from the University of Alberta and an alumnus of the Centre for Indigenous Theatre. Recent acting credits include: *Aklavik Journal* - Stuck in a Snowbank Theatre in Yellowknife, Toronto Fringe Festival in *Artifacts* -Frontal Lobe Theatre, touring Northern Ontario in *Square Eyes* -Magnus Theatre, *The Rez Sisters* -Magnus Theatre, touring northern Greece in *Utopian Floes* -Caravan Stage Tall Ship Theatre, *The Rez Sisters* -Theatre Northwest and *Copper Thunderbird* - National Arts Centre. This is her third reprisal of *Zhaboonigan* Peterson and dedicates her performance to Ellen Monague. Hope you enjoy and Mahsil!

### Cherish Violet Blood

*Annie Cook*

Cherish Violet Blood is a renaissance woman from the Blood reserve in southern Alberta. Her career in performance started at a young age doing stand-up comedy, and plays written by her mother. Cherish is a graduate of the Centre for Indigenous Theatre full time program in Toronto. She would like to thank all the sisters for their kindness and support through out this process. She would also like to thank Lisa Marie Cher for her love and support. Favorite theatre credits include: *Emily Dictionary* in *The Rez Sisters*, *Recollet* in *Gegwa*, *Annabelle* in *A Series of Savage Events* "Mokaa'kit likakiimaat"

### Gloria May Eshkibok

*Philomena Moosetail*

Gloria, is from Manitoulin Island, an Odawa, non-treaty, unceded band member of Wikwemikong of the 3 Fires Confederacy, and of the Crane Clan of the Wakegijig Family. Gloria has enjoyed many performances on mainstages across Europe and Canada and in First Nations communities. She has been active in Television, Radio and Film since 1986, with: *Older Than America*, *Dream Keepers*, *Dance Me Outside*. TV: *Promise The Moon*, *Win Again*, *Dangerous Offender*, *He Who Looks Upside Down*. Theatre: *The Rez Sisters*, *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing*, *Aria* and *A Ridiculous Spectacle* - all by Tomson Highway, *The Art Show*, *Gegwa* and *The Manitoulin Incident* by Alanis King; *Fireweed* by Billy Merasty; *Coyote City* by Daniel D. Moses; *Bootlegger Blues* by Drew Hayden Taylor; *The Unnatural and Accidental Women* by Marie Clements; *Medusa Rising* by Audrey Butler; *Hairy Ape* by Eugene O'Neil, and *Crow* by Louis Nowia. Gloria would like to say: "Peterborough, nice to meet you" and "Thanks Patti for treating me like a Queen." She is proud of this production *The Rez Sisters* 2009 at the Market Hall Theatre "Well done all!" & "Hey Dano, I Love You..and Katie McComber and Dorothy Wassegijig."

### Nicole Joy-Fraser

*Emily Dictionary*

Nicole was raised in Mississauga and is of mixed Cree and European descent. Upon graduating from the Randolph Academy, she went straight into the original North American company of MAMMA MIA! and after touring the U.S. booked a visit to London, England,

where she met her husband. UK credits include *Jerry Springer-The Opera* -West End and Disney's *Beauty And The Beast* -UK Tour. With over 20 years experience in musical theatre and in concert work as a singer, Nicole is now happily emerging as an actress. Since returning to Toronto a year ago, she has performed for Native Earth Performing Arts, Red Sky Performance and New Harlem Productions. Many thanks to OKW, Public Energy, Marg and Wimpy Borland, the production team and cast for making this such a rewarding experience.

### **Pamela Matthews**

*Pelajia Patchnose*

Pamela Matthews (Cree), from the Sachigo Lake First Nation, is a filmmaker, director, editor and actor with 20 + years experience in the industry. Her award-winning films, *A Shot in the Dark* (a documentary on the death of Dudley George), and *Only the Devil Speaks Cree* have played at film festivals worldwide. Pam has been teaching filmmaking to Native youth for the American Indian Film Institute (San Francisco) since 2003 and currently teaches in Ryerson University's Film Studies department. Her many film and television credits include *Indian Summer: the Oka Crisis*, *One Dead Indian*, *The Border*, *RenegadePress.com*, *The Rez*, *Destiny Ridge*, *Street Legal* and *North of 60*, for which she was nominated for a Gemini Award for her role of Suzie Muskrat. Pam has appeared in theatres across the country, including *The Rez Sisters* (this is her fourth production). In 2007, Pam worked for the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford-Upon-Avon, England where she appeared in Margaret Atwood's new play

*The Penelopiad*.

Pam graduated from Ryerson Theatre School in 1989 and studied directing at the Lincoln Center Theatre (New York City) and at the Royal National Theatre of Great Britain. In 2003, she received the Gold Medal for Outstanding Academic Achievement from Ryerson University's Department of Film and went on to complete her Masters Degree in Film Production (York University) in 2006.

### **Susan Newman**

*Veronique St. Pierre*

During the past year Susan Newman has played the role of Sarah Bright in *You Don't Know the Half of It*, music directed for *Hungry: A Musical Hansel & Gretel* (for which she composed the music) and taught musical theatre at the Ontario Music Centre. Other recent credits include *Beautiful Lady*, *Tell Me* -4th Line Theatre, *The Enchanted Forest* -Patria Music Theatre, *Nine Days Wonder*, *The Cure for Sexual Jealousy* - The Cure Collective and *Skirting the Edge* -Mysterious Entity. In December she will be directing the Convivio Chorus and performing with the acoustic band Carried Away at the annual In From the Cold concert. She also sits on the board of Mysterious Entity Theatre.

### **Patti Shaughnessy**

*Marie-Adele Starblanket*

Patti Shaughnessy is a proud member of Curve Lake F.N. and the Peterborough arts community. She studied at the Centre for Indigenous Theatre in Toronto and at the Banff Centre for the Arts in the Aboriginal dance program. Patti has toured across Canada with Red Sky Performance in Drew

## THANK YOU

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## O'Kaadenigan Wiingashk

(OKW) is a multi-disciplinary arts collective formed in 2004 with a focus to boost the profile of Aboriginal arts in the Kawartha region, to provide professional mentorship and to enrich and guide our artistic community. Named by teacher, mentor, Anishnaabe language speaker Taaji Cameron, O'Kaadenigan Wiingashk embodies the spirit of our collective vision through our name, which translates as "weaving sweetgrass in toward the heart of the braid." Sweetgrass grows in abundance in this region and has been used for generations as medicine in our First Nation communities. OKW believes that expression through the arts is also great medicine. Through many partnerships we are weaving together arts communities, community groups and organizations to celebrate excellence within Aboriginal arts practices. Our home of Peterborough, sits on traditional territory of the Anishnaabeg and is originally named and known as Nogojiwanong (place at the end of the rapids). For thousands of years this region was known as a gathering spot where tribes, families and leaders would converge to exchange ideas and knowledge. In keeping with this legacy, we strive to honour this tradition of our ancestors. O'Kaadenigan Wiingashk members are: Warren Arcan, Taaji Cameron, Sarah DeCarlo, William Kingfisher, Wanda Nanibush, Patti Shaughnessy, and James Whetung.

## Notes on the Set

The set design for *The Rez Sisters* was influenced by the art of Marc Chagall, Tom Thomson, and the Canadian Woodland Art movement. Woodland art came into being following the launch of Norval Morrisseau's career in Toronto in 1962 and the success of Daphne Odjig, Jackson Beardy and Alex Janvier's show, *Treaty Numbers 22, 187, 1171* a decade later in Winnipeg. Morrisseau, a self-taught artist, developed his own techniques and artistic vocabulary which captured ancient legends and images that came to him in visions or dreams. Some of the paintings that influenced this design include Morrisseau's *Fruits of Life* and *Astral World*, Odjig's *Thunderbird Man*, Goice Kakegamic's *Eagle Spirit*, and Roy Thomas's *Preparing for Migration* and *Following into Next Year*, and Christian Morrisseau's *The Shaman Wife Harriet*.

## Silent Auction of Set Pieces

Elements of tonight's *Rez Sisters* set, designed by Ted Roberts, are up for grabs in a Silent Auction. Auction sheets are in the lobby - sign up at intermission or after the show. Bids close at the end of intermission of the final performance on Sat. October 17. Are you bidding early in the run and would like to add to your bid at a later date? At any time in the run you can make a bid or add to your bid.

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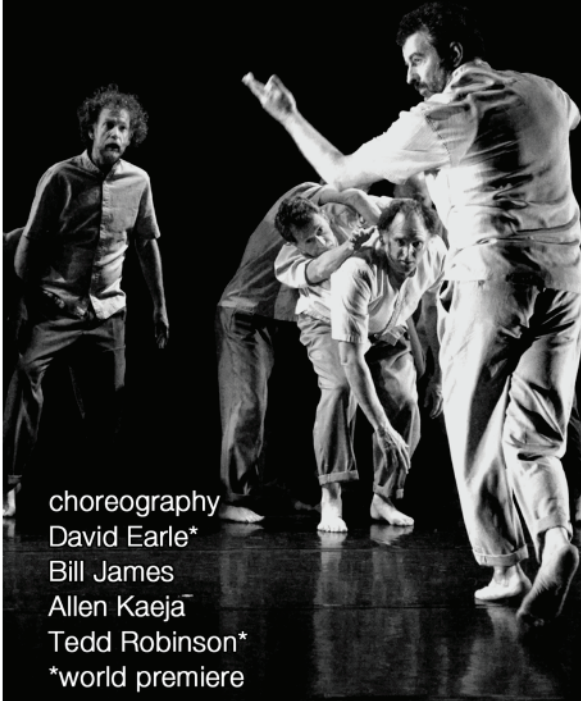
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Hayden Taylor's, *Raven Stole the Sun* and made her debut in 2007 at Theatre NorthWest (Prince George, BC) in Tomson Highway's *The Rez Sisters* and at Magnus Theatre's (Thunder Bay) *Rez Sisters* production in 2008. Patti has worked locally with Indigenous Performance Initiatives at Trent University, Mysterious Entity and 4th Line Theatre.

Patti is a founding member of the OKW Collective, a co-producer of this production and the annual Ode'min Giizis Festival. Long live the Market Hall!

### James Pinesii Whetung

#### *Nanabush*

James is from the otter clan born on the north shore of Curve Lake First Nation. James is a sugar bush hero and wild ricer. His artistic career spans over thirty years, with his first theatre debut in 1977, in George Kinney's *October Stranger*, directed by Denis LeCroix through the Association of Native Development in the Performing and Visual Arts headed by the late James Buller. Through the years, James has appeared in several television series including *Riel*, *Mac and Jenny*, and *Sidestreet*. In 1996 James published his first children's book "Vision Seeker". In 2002 James co-wrote a play called *Narrows* with Trent University's Cultural Studies Department head, Ian McLachlin. In 2004, James participated in a Tomson Highway playwriting workshop which led to enrollment in the Centre for Indigenous Theatre's summer program led by Muriel Miguel. In 2006, he co-wrote and performed with Daystar Rosalie Jones' *Between Earth and Moon: Voices of the Great Circle*, in Columbus, Ohio.

Independent film credits include: Shelley Niro's *Flying Head* and Sarah DeCarlo's music video, *Land of the Silver Birch*. James is a member of O'Kaadenigan Wiingashk Collective, a multi-disciplinary Aboriginal arts collective that conceived Peterborough's annual Ode'min Giizis Festival.

James is thrilled to be interpreting the role of Nanabush in this production of Tomson Highway's *The Rez Sisters*.

## Creative Team

### Curtis Driedger

#### *Music*

Curtis Driedger is well into his 45th year as a guitar player and is starting to wonder why he's not improving. Someone has suggested practicing, but this is a problem as he is too busy teaching. Also he is too busy arranging for the Mandolin Society of Peterborough and playing in various bands, too numerous to remember. This is not to mention all the alter egos he has to maintain, and all the other instruments he has to try. Too busy, that's the problem, and spread too thin.

### Nicole Gibeault

#### *Assistant Stage Manager, Props Coordinator*

Nicole Gibeault is from Wasauksing First Nation and is a graduate of Trent University's Indigenous Studies/Cultural Studies program. She has worked behind the scenes in various capacities for *Windmill Baby*, *The Threshing Floor*, *Gegwah*, and other performances held at Nozhem: First Peoples Performance Space. She has participated in writing and performance workshops presented through OKW/Public Energy with both Tomson Highway and Kerr Wells.

**Erika A. Iserhoff***Costume Design*

Erika is a Cree artist from Constance Lake First Nation, situated in Northern Ontario and has been living and working in Toronto for the past nine years. She has created costumes for *The Scrubbing Project* and *The Only Good Indian* by The Turtle Gals Performance. She has worked for the Centre For Indigenous Theatre on productions such as *Stolen*, *Wiora*, *From Darkness the Light is Heard*, *All My Relations*, and *Dead White Writer on the Floor*. She also worked with Earth In Motion World Indigenous Dance Company on their production *Agua*. She recently won a Dora Mavor Moore award for Best Costume Design for the play *Agokwe* written by Waawaate Fobister and produced by Buddies in Bad Times Theatre. Erika is currently completing a degree in Fiber Arts at the Ontario College of Art & Design. Currently she is a part of The Chocolate Woman Collective and the 'Omushkego Artists Collective as a costume and set designer.

**Bill James***Choreography*

Bill James is best known for his vision of dance in unconventional spaces, with an aim toward a new perceptive relationship between the audience and the art. He creates performances that bridge disciplines and include collaboration in various art practices, sciences and technologies. Bill has worked with many composers, visual artists and filmmakers in performance, installation, film and media art projects throughout his 35-year career, in North America, Europe and Asia. Following a 12-year career as a dancer, notably with

Le Groupe de la Place Royale, he was Artistic Director of Dancemakers, Singapore Fringe Festival and Atlas Moves Watching Dance Projects. Recent works include *Domestic Science* 2008, *Weather Project* 2007, *Progress Avenue* 2005, *Return to Earth* 2003, and *Panopticon* 2002. In Fall 2005 he created "Dancing in the Streets" a Peterborough, Ontario community event featuring 400 dancers, aged 2 to 82. Since 2006, Bill has been working with Old Men Dancing, a Peterborough group of men who love to dance.

**Patricia Levert-Thorne***Stage Manager*

Last year, Patricia stage managed the world premier of *Hungry* for Public Energy at Market Hall. She attended Humber College's Theatre Technical Program where she studied set, costume, lighting and sound designs, props building, and theatrical painting. Patricia has been fortunate to work at The Shaw Festival, Le Théâtre Français de Toronto, Soupepper Theatre Company, RBC Festival of Classics, Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People, Factory Theatre and Necessary Angel... just to name a few. She enjoys giving back to the theatre community by mentoring and teaching SM seminars in her spare time. She has been involved as an adjudicator for the Sears Festival in Northern Ontario Region in 2006 and 2009. Patricia has also been involved as Head Representative for the Toronto International Film Festival since 2003. Recently: Patricia was the Artistic Administrator and Company Production Manager for 4th Line Theatre for the past 3 years.

**Ted Roberts***Set & Lighting*

Ted Roberts is the resident designer for the Vancouver Arts Club Theatre since 1983, and has designed for set and/or lighting for 200+ productions, 30+ premieres, 40+ provincial and/or National tours. His work for theatres across Canada include: Neptune Theatre-Halifax, Centaur Theatre-Montreal, Canadian Stage Co.-Toronto, Magnus Theatre-Thunder Bay, Persephone Theatre-Saskatoon, Citadel Theatre-Edmonton, Western Canada Theatre Co.-Kamloops, Firehall Arts Centre, Bard on the Beach-Vancouver, Belfry Theatre-Victoria. He is the recipient of six Vancouver Jessie Awards for Outstanding Design. Some recent design highlights include *Mesa*-Western Canada Theatre, *The Rez Sisters*-Magnus Theatre, *It's A Wonderful Life*- Arts Club Granville Island Stage, *The Producers*-Arts Club Stanley Theatre and *Urinetown*-Firehall Arts Centre.

**Susan Spicer***Director*

Susan Spicer is a director, actor and dramaturge with over 25 years of experience. Most recently she directed Adele Finney's new play, *You Don't Know the Half of It* and the hit musical *Hungry* (Story, Fortin, Newman) with Public Energy. Other credits

include co-director (with Robert Desrosiers) for Patria Music of R. Murray Schafer's wilderness opera, *The Enchanted Forest* at the Haliburton Forest. For the 4th Line Theatre she directed *Crow Hill: The Telephone Play* (premiere), *Seton*, *The Devil and Joseph Scriven* and *The Stone Angel*. Susan has extensive experience in new play development, contributing as dramaturge, writer and performer on many projects. She was co-creator for *Nine Days' Wonder* and *The Cure for Sexual Jealousy*, both of which were performed at the Market Hall, and acted for Mysterious Entity in *Skirting the Edge*.

**Esther Vincent***Production Manager*

Esther Vincent has over 20 years experience making things happen. She has put together and managed theatre and dance shows, trade shows, festivals, readings series, special events, benefits and all sorts of other things where people get together and do stuff. She has overseen countless theatre performances from two-handers in 40 seat theatres to medium sized productions with large casts. She has toured shows to small towns and large cities locally, nationally and in the US. She is also an avid photographer. You can see her work at [evmustang.ca](http://evmustang.ca).

