

VISUAL STORY

The Chemical Valley Project

Broadleaf Theatre

Created by Kevin Matthew Wong & Julia Howman

Dramaturgy & advisement by Vanessa Gray & Beze Gray



Market Hall Performing Arts Centre

Friday March 6, 2020

12:30pm & 7:30pm

Both performances are Relaxed Performances with ASL interpretation

Presented by Public Energy Performing Arts

Accessibility Sponsor

The Lloyd Carr-Harris Foundation

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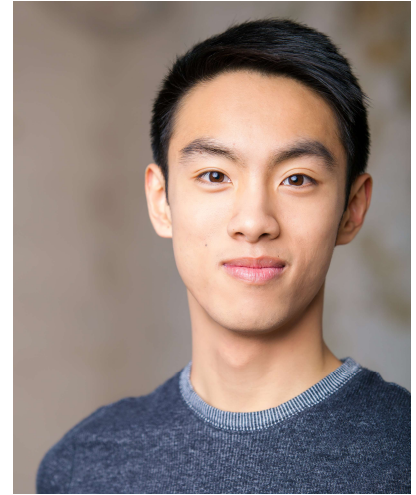
About the show

Performance Time

The performance will start at 12:30pm or 7:30pm and is approximately 70 minutes in length, plus a 15 minute Q&A with the artists; the show will finish around 2:00pm (for the 12:30pm performance) or 9:00pm (for the 7:30pm performance).

Pre-Show Talk

The main role played by **Kevin Matthew Wong**, the show's Playwright and Performer. He will tell you a little bit about the show before it starts and let you know about any parts of the play we think you might want to know in advance.



Kevin Matthew Wong

Changes to the Show

For all performances, there will be some changes to the lighting and sound to create a less intense environment.

The lights over the audience will remain on low throughout the performance so you can leave the theatre if you need to.

Calm Space

If you leave the theatre at any time there is a calm space in the lobby you can visit. You can go there to relax if you need a break before going back into the theatre.

If you ask an usher they will show you to this area.

Questions? Contact Eva Fisher at 705-745-1788 or email eva@publicenergy.ca

ABOUT THE STORY

Located in Sarnia, Ontario, the Aamjiwnaang First Nations reserve and its 900 residents are smothered by one of Canada's largest petrochemical corridors: the Chemical Valley. Siblings Vanessa Gray and Beze Gray have dedicated their lives to fighting the pollution that threatens their community's health, safety, and future. In The Chemical Valley Project, theatre makers and friends Julia Howman and Kevin Matthew Wong document Vanessa and Beze's vital activism and journeys as land defenders and water protectors.

Through a blend of projection, object puppetry, and solo-performance, Kevin Matthew Wong and Julia Howman seek to spark conversations on Canadian environmental policy, treaty rights, and Indigenous relations, as well as the current nature of Canadian identity and values in The Chemical Valley Project.

From the beginning of the show Kevin talks directly to the audience as himself. He also shows us video clips of Water Protectors Beze Gray and Vanessa Gray as well as clips of himself interviewing the siblings in person.

Kevin also interviews Abtin Parnia an epidemiologist (Epidemiologists are scientists who study diseases within groups of people. They are public health professionals look at what causes disease outbreaks so they can treat diseases and prevent future outbreaks.) and while he shows us clips of that interview he also gives us facts about the health of the people who live on the Aamjiwnaang First Nations reserve.

Kevin tells the audience about the chemicals that are produced in the many factories around the reserve and some of these chemical's effects on the health of humans. Kevin talks about his first time visiting the Aamjiwnaang First Nations reserve and going on Beze and Vanessa's "Toxic Tour" he talks about colonization and climate change. He then describes Vanessa Gray and her two friend's protest of the Line 9 pipeline by getting into the Enbridge Energy Plant and shutting off the valve and bike locking themselves to the line. Kevin then explains why Vanessa was protesting Line 9 and where the route of line 9 goes so that the audience can understand why it is important and relevant.

Kevin then talks about Water and the role of Water protectors and why water is so important to the people who live on the land and drink and eat from the water. Kevin talks about Colonization and teaches us some words in Anishinaabemowin. Then he talks more to the siblings about growing up in the chemical valley- types of spills and leaks that they have seen and toxic contaminants.

Another teaching is introduced about the two row wampum, which Kevin will explain; a picture of a wampum belt is in the background section of this document. We then hear about the courts decision to drop the charges against Vanessa for her protest of line 9, and we learn that the fight is not over.

The next part of the play is about how we move forward and what can we do as individuals to learn more about colonization and our environment.

Things to look out for:

There is a mildly intense sequence in the middle of the show when Beze tells the audience about the Windego, a mythical man-eating creature. The scene contains fog, dark lighting, and rumbling sounds. The Windego is used as a metaphor for audiences to decide whether they play a positive or negative role in reconciliation.

There is also a story you will hear twice about a brave hummingbird, whose forest is burning from a forest fire. The hummingbird bravely does the best it can to protect its home, and represents environmentalists doing the best they can to protect the planet.

There will occasionally be clips of landscape from inside of a car.



There are a couple sections with louder sounds:

- 1) a siren sound at the top of the show and
 - 2) a sequence 2/3 into the show with some more deep, booming sounds,
- you are always welcome to bring and put on your own ear protection, or you can grab some earplugs at the ticket table in the lobby.

Background:



The Aamjiwnaang First Nation (or also known as Chippewas of Sarnia First Nation) is an Ojibwe First Nation band government in southwestern Ontario, Canada. They reside on the Sarnia 45 Indian Reserve, located on the shores of the St. Clair River directly south of Sarnia across from the United States border from Port Huron, Michigan.[2]

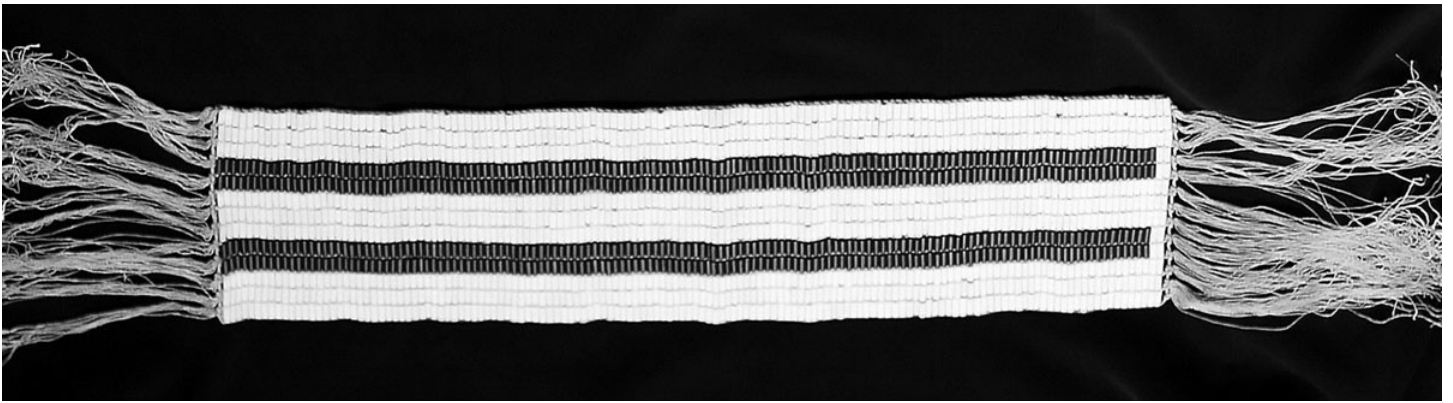
The Aamjiwnaang community has expressed concern regarding its proximity to petrochemical, polymer, and chemical plants in the area, as birth rates of their people have been documented by the American journal Environmental Health Perspectives as deviating from the normal ratio of close to 50% boys, 50% girls.[3] The ratio as found between 1999 and 2003 by the journal was roughly 33% boys, and 67% girls.[4] The First Nation is concerned that this abnormal trend is due to adverse effects of maternal and fetal exposure to the effluent and emissions of the nearby chemical plants. This is the first community in the world to have a birth rate of two girls to every boy. Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aamjiwnaang_First_Nation

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“We host these walks through Chemical Valley (for people) to experience the front line,” says Vanessa Gray, a 22-year-old grassroots organizer and Trent University indigenous environmental studies student. “Let’s show you what our reality is like, let’s lie our tobacco down for the water and for the land together and let’s pray in ceremony and let’s set up a sacred fire and let’s talk about solutions.”

A number of studies have found that about 40 per cent of Aamjiwnaang’s residents use inhalers, 17 per cent of adults and 22 per cent of children have asthma and about 35 per cent of births between 1999-2003 were male compared to about 65 per cent female in the Upper Canada Treaties Area 2 community...

<http://anishinabeknews.ca/2015/01/07/sisters-host-toxic-tours-of-their-home-in-canadas-chemical-valley/>



Two Row Wampum

THE END OF THE PLAY



Some people might like the play, and some might not like it. It is all right to feel happy or sad after the theatre performance.

At the end of the play, people will clap. It’s your opportunity to show your appreciation of the play.

This is the actor in the show:



Kevin Matthew Wong

You might see these people in the lighting booth or around the theatre:



Heather Bellingham is the STAGE MANAGER



Patricia Thorne is the TECHNICAL OPERATOR



Julia Howman is the Creator + Production Designer + Associate Lighting Designer + Projections Operator

You might see these people in the lobby or in the theatre. They work for Public Energy Performing Arts. If you have any questions or if you need assistance during the show, they will be happy to help:



Eva Fisher



Bill Kimball



Eryn Lidster



Victoria Mohr-Blakeney