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Your donation helps us keep ticket prices accessible and our programming electrifying. It's easy to do online: Monthly tax-deductible donations can be made at canadahelps.org.

CONTACT

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ANXIETY

November 24-27, 2022
December 1-3, 2022
The Theatre on King
Peterborough, Ontario

PublicEnergy.ca
PERFORMING ARTS

ANXIETY

World Premiere

Writer & Performer: Kate Story

Director & Dramaturge: Ryan Kerr

Stage Management: Nikki Weatherdon

Choreographic & Dramaturgical Collaborator: Marie-Josée Chartier

Set Design: A collaboration between Paul Oldham, Kate Story, and Ryan Kerr

Set Construction: Paul Oldham, Brad Brackenridge, Kate Story, and Ryan Kerr

Original Music: karol orzechowski/garbageface

Original Instrumental Arrangement: Benj Rowland (“Sigurðskvædet: The Song of Sigurd”)

Other Music: Gustav Holst’s *The Planets*: “Mars, the Bringer of War” (Op.32) and Mark O’Connor’s *Appalachia Waltz*, featuring electronic treatments by garbageface

Acknowledgements and thanks:

First of all, thank you to Ryan, who has steered this ship into port with intelligence, creativity, insight, and a patience I don’t often deserve. My heart and soul belongs to you.

Marie-Josée Chartier is an extraordinary artist who in any other country would be famous and lauded and ffs will someone please give this woman a medal and a pile of prize money! It has been a great honour to work with her.

Thank you to The Theatre on King for being The Theatre on King. So much performance work wouldn’t exist without this magical space, and Anxiety is certainly one of those works.

karol orzechowski has delivered on the music front in every way, influencing the feel of the piece tremendously. Many thanks too to Benj Rowland for his thoughtful instrumental rendition of Sigurðskvædet (The Song of Sigurd).

This performance of Anxiety is presented by Public Energy Performing Arts, with funding from Theatre Trent; EC3 and the Program of Grants for Individual Artists with funding from the City of Peterborough. The previous (and essential!) workshop of Anxiety was supported by Theatre Trent again, during an artistic residency granted by Public Energy (thank you!), and two Theatre Recommender grants, one from 4th Line Theatre, and the other from Theatre Gargantua. THANK YOU ALL.

NEXT FROM PUBLIC ENERGY PERFORMING ARTS:



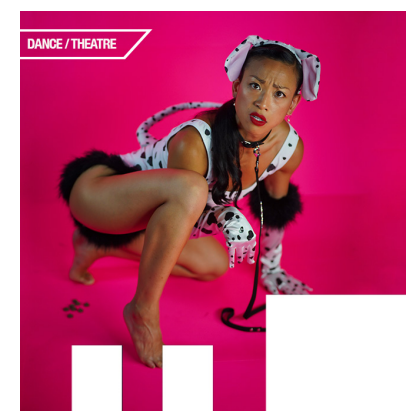
OMAAGOMAAN

Waawaate Fobister (Anishinaabe, Grassy Narrows First Nation)

Market Hall

February 2nd, 2023 @ 7:30 PM

The Anishinaabe of Grassy Narrows are resilient. They are stitching their fractured landscapes back together from the impact of mercury poisoning. Using dance, movement, sounds, and storytelling, the Dora-award winning Waawaate Fobister embodies Omaagomaan, a two-spirit being, and a manifestation of the earth and man-made poisons that have seeped into the earth’s crust. A fierce shape-shifter inspired by Anishinaabe worldview and cosmologies, *Omaagomaan* forces us to reckon with the ways the maanaadizi (ugly) and the onishishin (beautiful) collide.



SEX DALMATION

Rock Bottom Movement (Tkaronto/Toronto)

Market Hall

February 17th, 2023 @ 7:30 PM

Sex Dalmation is an evening-length dance theatre glam drama. It follows a fiercely careerist anthropomorphic talking dog named Sex Dalmation. Created by the award winning, critically acclaimed Toronto-based absurdist dance company Rock Bottom Movement, the show places heavy feelings into bizarre containers, shining a humorous light on some of the darker corners of the collective consciousness.



PADDLE SONG

Cheri Maracle (Six Nations of the Grand River First Nation)

Co presented by Nozhem: First Peoples Performance

Space & Public Energy

Nozhem: First Peoples Performance Space

March 24th & 25th, 2023 @ 7:00 PM

Pauline Johnston (Tekahionwake) was a trailblazing heroine, proud Mohawk poet and performer during the late 1800s. The daughter of a respected Six Nations Mohawk Chief and an English mother, Pauline embraced her heritage and fiercely challenged the stereotypes of women and First Nations Peoples. Her powerful story is brought to life in *Paddle Song*, a one-woman musical theatre performance by Cheri Maracle, that captures the heart and journey of young Pauline.

UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE THEATRE ON KING



DECEMBER 9TH & 10TH 11AM - 5PM

Make this a local, handmade holiday! The beloved Focus Fair returns with a wide variety of treasures, handcrafted by local artists, artisans, craftspeople and community members. Support Local Artists. Enjoy Holiday Cheer. Shop Downtown Peterborough.



DECEMBER 16TH @ 8PM

A one-time live collaboration between Bad Mayor & garbageface, taking a journey through the history of The Internet from the 1950s until present day. The show uses Ray Kurzweil’s idea of “the singularity” — a now near future time when AI will surpass human intelligence and when our bodies will fully integrate with machines — as a recurring theme, as BM & GF romp through live beats, found footage, reactive visuals, and improvised moments.

For more events and ticketing info visit www.ttok.ca

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That workshop involved Patti Shaughnessy as an outside eye, whose penetrating comments about the work did much to shape it. Thanks too goes out to everyone who came to see the workshop and made such penetrating observations about the piece. I hope you see your influence on the final production and are happy.

Thank you to Annie Jaeger for her insightful deep dive into the piece (go to troutinplaid.com to read it!);

Paul Oldham and Brad Brackenridge for hard labour on the set; Victoria Ward for her wonderful quotation about the piece; and Nikki Weatherdon for skillful and graceful stage management and moral support.

And last, but not least, deep gratitude to Elisha Rubacha and bird, buried press for the beautiful book that accompanies this production. -- Kate

ABOUT PUBLIC ENERGY PERFORMING ARTS:

Public Energy Performing Arts is Peterborough’s animator of dance, theatre, performance and interdisciplinary work. Since 1994 we have presented a mainstage series of artists 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 community workshops, and nurtured an audience that is knowledgeable and passionate about performance.

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DIRECTOR'S NOTE:

This process has been phenomenal. Working with Kate is a wonderful experience. With hard work, we have taken this production from it's inception in 2021, through the workshop process in April 2022, to the full production we have now. Our collaborators have also done some fantastic work: Benj Rowland and Karol Orzechowski with their music prowess, Marie-Josée Chartier with her dramaturgy and subtle choreographic mentorship, Paul Oldham with his magical set, and Nikki Weatherdon with her stage management skills have managed to take this show to another level. Kate is one of the bravest, dedicated and original performers I have worked with and I am excited to have audiences finally see this enchanting performance. Please enjoy -- Ryan

ARTIST BIOS:



Kate Story is a genderqueer writer and theatre artist originally from Newfoundland, now living and working as an uninvited guest in Nogojiwanong/Peterborough, Ontario. Kate works in multiple genres including devised theatre and dance, and literary and speculative fiction. Kate is artistic director of the Precarious Festivals, and director of Public Energy's Alternating Currents program, an incubation program for new works by regional artists. Winner of the K.M. Hunter Artist Award for theatre, she has also published 6 novels, including her young adult novel *Urchin*, a 2022 Governor General's Literary Awards finalist. Her short fiction has made the CBC Literary Awards shortlist, appeared in *World Fantasy* and *Aurora* Award-winning collections, and been adapted for international radio drama and virtual reality theatre performances.



Ryan Kerr is the artistic director of The Theatre on King. Since moving to Peterborough from Scarborough in the early '90s, he has been a performer, dancer, lighting designer, technical director, playwright, dramaturge, and director in over 400 productions with many different arts organizations. In 2019 he won the Electric City Culture Council (EC3) Arts Catalyst Award.



Nikki Weatherdon is a founding member of Planet 12 Productions. She has been a part of many productions, both on and off-stage, from Stratford to Peterborough, and was a best actress nominee for the EODL One Act festival in 2016.



garbageface (karol orzechowski) is a Peterborough / Nogojiwanong-based musician. In addition to his body of work making noisy, bombastic "doom rap / industrial soul," he also creates ambient compositions, sound installations, and occasionally dabbles in composing and editing music for live theatre.



Born and raised in the Peterborough, ON area, Benj Rowland is the singer-songwriter and instrumentalist behind the acclaimed Canadian folk duo Mayhemingways. Having toured across Canada many times as part of a band, *Community Garden* is Benj's first solo album released under his own name, an album he has been touring now since 2022



Marie-Josée Chartier is a choreographer, performer, director, vocalist and educator crossing boundaries in dance, theatre, opera and multi-media. Her work has been presented at major festivals and by dance companies across Canada, Europe and Latin America. Since 2003, Marie-Josée directs/stages contemporary opera and multi-media productions for: Gryphon Trio, Queen of Puddings Music Theatre, Tapestry Opera, Theaturtle, l'Ensemble Contemporain de Montréal (ECM+) and the Glenn Gould School. Awards include: Jacqueline Lemieux Prize; K.M. Hunter Artist Award; Dora recipient for fifty- one pieces of silver and two Doras with the collective URGE for *And by the way Miss* (2005). www.mariejoseechartier.com

PROGRAM NOTE FROM KATE

Suspicion of expertise seems to be a hallmark of contemporary society. Oftentimes we think of it as fringe behaviour – Q-Anon being a prominent example – yet one can see this suspicion at almost every level of civic life. Part of this can be laid on the doorstep of the elite knowledge-keepers. English professors, for example, haven’t expended much energy proving Shakespeare wrote the works of Shakespeare, so, as far as the internet is concerned, he didn’t. Whether Shakespeare wrote/co-wrote “Titus Andronicus” isn’t generally a matter of life and death. However, there are real and deadly consequences in a society that lacks basic tools for perceiving the difference between truth and untruth. Access to knowledge is a basic human right, one that is increasingly denied us.

You don’t get a lot of conspiracy theories about the Old English poem Beowulf. As I mention in the performance piece Anxiety, you can steer onto the rocks of white supremacy pretty easily while researching Norse and Anglo-Saxon history, but the internet trolls haven’t really seized on Beowulf as a text. I suspect this is because most of us look at Old English and, far from discovering some exciting origin-story text, draw a complete blank. Indeed, on first glance one rather imagines one is having a stroke.

The story doesn’t even take place in England. It deals with two south Scandinavian tribes, the Danes and the Geats (now disappeared). Its historical period is generally agreed to be somewhere in the 500 ADs: the one datable fact of history mentioned in the poem is a raid on the Franks by Hygelac, king of the Geats. This raid occurred in 520 A.D. when our fictional hero Beowulf was a young man. The poem is preserved in a single manuscript – damaged by time and fire – dating from around 1000AD.

It is generally agreed that the poet who took various materials – folk tales, oral narratives, historical facts – and put them into the poetic form we call Beowulf was a Christian living in what was then called West Mercia, on the island we now call England.

Why read the thing? Or, for this matter, watch this show?

Beowulf is the oldest surviving literature of Old English. It is an essential key, showing us how the English language has evolved – and how it has changed! It also captures ancient histories and cultures, the very histories and cultures underlying and informing a present where the English language (and people) have colonized a substantial portion of the globe, with vast and often terrible consequences for other peoples.

As an English-speaking person, I know almost nothing of my language or culture. Reading Beowulf during lockdown was the beginning of an education of sorts. I was startled to discover that (by various estimations) French makes up 30-40% of English vocabulary, and Latin makes up another 20%. That leaves – at a generous estimate – perhaps 40% of English that is... well, Anglo Saxon/English – whatever that means.

The Anglo Saxons themselves were influential traders and then invaders of England, conquerors and settlers who overran the Celtic languages spoken before them. And those had almost definitely already been influenced by the Roman invasion of Britain... Philologists will be all over me at this point, and rightfully so; I am not an academic and I am trying to keep things fairly straightforward, thus riding roughshod over many subtleties. However, this is what I have come to understand on a visceral level: We English invaders speak the tongues of our own invaders.

Once I started trying to read and understand Beowulf, I realized I also needed to understand how this language reflected the people speaking it. Perhaps part of why the English and their descendants are such ferocious colonizers is linked to this fundamental fact: every day, as soon as we open our mouths, we are speaking the tongues of the peoples who overran us. And most of us don’t even know it. Not knowing something doesn’t mean we don’t sense it on some atavistic level. The warped logic of “replacement theory” may express an underlying anxiety. There are real consequences for peoples seen as “other” when English culture and the people who are living expressions of it don’t know our own history. I feel compelled to find out if knowing more about my deep cultural roots will help, well, anything. I also believe in the power of language. It is more than sounds, or even communication: it frames how we think and how we see, and move through, the world.

The personal in the piece came hard. Delving into my childhood isn’t something I shy away from – but once I started digging into my relationship to language and words, and the deep effect (personal and political) of unrealized shame, I knew I had to take the bit between my teeth and run with it. I do so in the hopeful belief that this exploration will be useful – not only to myself, but to others. It has been fascinating and frustrating to observe myself at every turn, still trying to “wriggle, wrecking the weakness,” but I feel that in this case, facing shame is my job.

And unpicking Old English is fun! I feel a deep and probably specious connection to those old words and sounds. I have met some wonderful minds doing it: Seamus Heaney, Maria Dahvana Headley, Chickering, JRR Tolkien (ok, I’d “met” him before), Thorpe, Paul Gilroy, Toni Morrison, Jorge Luis Borges, to name a few. I also got to delve further into outstanding academic work by my father, Dr. G.M. Story: so learned, yet humourous; such a wide-ranging intellect, yet never far from home.

And Beowulf is a damn fine story. Monsters, glory, parties, acts of courage and cruelty, and a deep, deep sadness and preoccupation with disappearance and death: all these imbue the work. I love the people in it, and at the same time, their proclivities make me want to shake them. In other words, they feel like family.

Thank you for coming. May your wyrd be gentle, yet glorious!

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