

Chocolate Woman Collective  
***Izzie M: The Alchemy  
of Enfreakment***



March 8-9, 2024  
**Nozhem First Peoples Performance Space**  
Nogojiwanong, Ontario



Nozhem First Peoples  
Performance Space



Chocolate Woman Collective



# ***IZZIE M: THE ALCHEMY OF ENFREAKMENT***

**Co-presented by Chocolate Woman Collective, Nozhem First Peoples  
Performance Space & Public Energy Performing Arts**

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**Word Conjurer:** Monique Mojica

**Spectaculars:** Monique Mojica and Barry Bilinsky

**Directorial Odditorium:** Carlos Rivera Martínez

**Conductor of Secrets & Head Wrangler:** Lindy Kinoshameg

**Moving Picture Splicer:** Samay Arcentales Cajas

**Purse String Holder:** Leslie McCue

**Paint Roustabout:** Samantha McCue

**Carpenter Roustie:** William Kingfisher

**Youth Roustie:** Wenu Santinoli-Pine

## **Previous Carnies:**

**Congress of Designaturgs:** Andy Moro

**Limelighter/ Sound Mechanical:** Michel Charbonneau

**Cabinet of Costume Design:** Kinoo Arcentales

**Properties Empresario:** Tim Hill

**Song Catcher:** Pura Fé

**Melodic Illusionist:** Marc Meriläinen

**Paint Roustabout:** Jay Soule

**Run Time:** 85 minutes, no intermission

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Thank you to the Tarragon Theatre Indigenous Dramaturgy Circle

# **TARRAGON** THEATRE

**CHOCOLATE WOMAN COLLECTIVE SUPPORTERS:**



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## **A NOTE FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF NOZHEM FIRST PEOPLES PERFORMANCE SPACE, JENN COLE:**

Aaniin Boozhoo Kwey!

Monique Mojica knows how to listen to Land. She has taught me that, “as long as the land is there, as long as the rivers are there, as long as we remain connected and open enough to be receptors and transmitters, the stories are there ... So, if we position ourselves properly, that knowledge hasn’t gone anywhere, nothing’s lost.” It is an honor to host this brilliant Guna/Rappahannock playwright, dramaturge, cutting edge artist, and one of our most powerful performance elders at Nozhem this weekend.

I am mixed ancestry Algonquin Anishinaabe from Kiji Sibi watershed territory. My grandparents are from settlements at Mattawa and Bissett Creek. Being able to hold space for Indigenous artistic creation in Michi Saagig Anishinaabe territory is a gift for which I feel tremendously lucky each day.

Nozhem is tucked into the length of Odenabe, the river. Leanne Simpson and Doug Williams ba have taught us that Odenabe means “bubbles like a beating heart” to refer to the rapids. The river is also overburdened with settler colonial structures like dams and locks, much like the river in my home territory. Her cold waters have kept me going many days since I moved to Nogojiwanong. I think a lot about the complex histories layered in one place. I appreciate that artists uniquely communicate where we have come from, where we are now, and where we might go together.

I learn so much from knowledge holders, artists and storytellers in this territory, who have deepened my connection to this place, and to my own teachings. How does one express thanks for such things? There are many Anishinaabeg deeply rooted in this place who exemplify what creative making can do: Anne Taylor; Olivia Whetung; Maddie Whetung; Patti Shaughnessy; Kerry Bebee; Mindy Knott; Kelli Marshall; Alice Williams; William Kingfisher and many more.

Monique Mojica and her creative team and the characters in Izzie M. bring so many additional territorial relations into this space: Metis, Cree, Lenape and Oceti Sakowin/Seven Council Fires lands, Treaty 6 territory, Guna lands, Rappahannock lands, and more. I think of the many relationships that grow artistic community and feed Indigenous performance creation such as this — Spiderwoman Theater, Chocolate Woman Collective, Indigenous Performance Initiatives, Nozhem First Peoples Performance Space, Public Energy — we even had guests from Sami territory visiting last week... so many ancestral and living connections to Lands and waters are present here, while these artists share their gifts with us, in Michi Saagig Territory. I celebrate these relationships and the living knowledges they express. And I look forward to slipping through space and time with you all! Aambe.

## ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES:

### Barry Bilinsky (Métis/Cree/Ukrainian)



Barry is an Indigenous Artist from Edmonton, Alberta. Primarily a professional theatre and film director, Barry pursues work focused on the support, proliferation, and creation of indigenous stories often linked to the cultural intersections he embodies. Working in technical as well as artistic roles, Barry believes that collaboration is vital to healthy, exciting, and fun performance art.

### Carlos Rivera Martínez (Nahua/Mexica)



Carlos is a director, choreographer, actor, and a dancer, originally from Mexico City. He graduated from the Indigenous Residency Program at National Theatre School in 2018 and recently graduated from the MFA in Directing for Theatre Program at the University of Ottawa. Carlos has worked and collaborated with several performing arts companies across Canada including Red Sky Performance (Toronto), Globe Theatre (Regina), Raven Spirit Dance (Vancouver), MT Space (Kitchener), Puente Theatre (Victoria), Qaggiavuut (Igaliut), Les Productions Ondinnok (Montreal) Lemon Tree Creations (Toronto) Micro-Scope Productions (Montreal) Vancouver Opera Company, among others. He is continuously working on numerous artistic projects in dance, film, theatre, and performance.



## Monique Mojica (Guna and Rappahannock nations)



Monique's artistic practice mines stories embedded in the body in connection to land and place. She has created land-based, embodied dramaturgies and taught Indigenous Theatre in theory, process and practice throughout Canada, the US, Latin America and Europe.

Most recent: the role of Wanda in *My Sister's Rage* at Tarragon Theatre, Aunt Shady in *The Unnatural* and *Accidental Women*, at the NAC and *Izzie M.: The Alchemy of Enfreakment* written by Monique with a diverse creative team. Monique has collaborated with Santee Smith as the dramaturg for *Kaha:wi* Dance Theatre's tryptic, *Re-Quickening /Blood Tides/SKe:NEN* and for Teneil Whiskeyjack's *Ayita* for Edmonton's *SkirtsAfire* Festival.

She is a member of the newly formed Indigenous Dramaturgy Circle at Tarragon Theatre and she was the inaugural Wurlitzer Visiting Professor at the University of Victoria's Theatre Department in 2023.

## ABOUT CHOCOLATE WOMAN COLLECTIVE

**CHOCOLATE WOMAN COLLECTIVE** is comprised of senior Indigenous artists, artist/scholars and their collaborators, and was formed in 2007 to research and create the theatrical performance, *Chocolate Woman Dreams the Milky Way*. These accomplished artists are brought together by their shared interest in research, exploration and practical application of Indigenous aesthetic principles in all areas of the dramatic arts, in theory, process and practice. Chocolate Woman Collective is inter-disciplinary, cross-cultural and inter-generational. They are pushing the parameters of their respective art forms as they devise culturally specific dramaturgies from which to build Indigenous performance.

Chocolate Woman Collective is dedicated to the rigorous application of a creative process that privileges Indigenous Knowledges, cultural aesthetics and performance principles. Their artistic practice integrates theory, practice-based research (both archival and field) and embodied studio work in the creation of new work that dislodges colonialism from the body. Their mandate is to create collaborative, inter-disciplinary, cross-cultural and inter-generational Indigenous theatrical performances and to tour them hemispherically and throughout the world. The performances created from this practice serve, for their audiences, as interventions that shift cultural paradigms and contribute to a larger project of cultural and historical reclamation.

## ABOUT NOZHEM

**NOZHEM** is the Ojibwe word, which denotes the female bear. We've chosen this animal to represent our space because she embodies the characteristics of transformation, balance and knowledge, which are essential components of Indigenous way of knowing.

**NOZHEM** is very close to the earth, and therefore she knows the plants and their medicine properties. She's the one animal that fasts all winter, thus in that way, she undergoes a transformation. She gives birth and in doing so, in bringing forth new life, she achieves a sense of balance. She's very protective of her young and in this way, very similar to the human being. Because of her knowledge of medicine plants her physical and spiritual strength and her resilience, she is respected as a healing spirit in our community.

In theatre there is transformation which takes place as actors take on specific roles, but there is another transformation which occurs within the individual actor as they find their own healing through their personal creative expression. There is also healing for the audience as they empathize greater awareness of the human condition and the situations of others in society. Thus it is fitting for our Indigenous performance space to honour that spirit of the bear with her name **NOZHEM**.

- Edna Manitowabi

JOIN US MARCH 22-24, 2024



*Beneath Ancestral Skies:*

*Indigenous Women's Symposium  
on Star Knowledge  
and Collaborative Storytelling*

*Chanie Wenjack School for Indigenous Studies  
Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario*

Everyone Welcome!

## NOZHEM SUPPORTERS:

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## NEXT FROM PUBLIC ENERGY PERFORMING ARTS:



### NOMADA

**Diana Lopez Soto (Peterborough/Nogojiwanong)**  
**Market Hall Performing Arts Centre, 140 Charlotte Street,**  
**Peterborough**  
**April 5, 2024 @ 7:30 PM**

Nomada brings together contemporary indigenous dance, aerial dance and installation art. It is a journey inspired by personal stories of displacement, rituals of water, cycles of sustainability and the connections of our bodies to land.

“NOMADA is a journey of the Creator of life through three worlds; Sky World, Underworld, and Earth. This journey helps maintain harmony of all the earthly and cosmological elements. Nomada is the physical and spiritual act of renewal, affirmation, and restoration of the fragile and continuously changing balance of the earth.” Synopsis by Alejandro Ronceria, collaborator. Nomada is supported by the CanDance Network

## ABOUT PUBLIC ENERGY PERFORMING ARTS:

**PUBLIC ENERGY PERFORMING ARTS** is Nogojiwanong/Peterborough's animator of dance, theatre, performance and interdisciplinary work. Since 1994 we have presented a mainstage series of artists drawn from across Canada and beyond, commissioned new work in concert with other Canadian presenters, supported the development of the local dance, theatre and performance community and nurtured audiences that are knowledgeable and passionate about the performing arts.

Public Energy works in Treaty 20 territory situated in the traditional territory of the Michi Saagiig and Chippewa Nations, collectively known as the Williams Treaties First Nations. We honour that we are in Nogojiwanong, the Anishinaabe word for “place at the end of the rapids”, a gathering place where stories have been shared for millennia. We acknowledge the Indigenous people for their stewardship of these lands and we recognize our responsibility to foster respectful relationships with the water, the land, and its people. Public Energy recognizes that treaties did more harm than good, criminalizing cultural practices and displacing Indigenous people from their territories. We commit to doing all we can to repair this legacy by providing a platform for the voices and artistry of Indigenous artists to be heard and respected.

## PUBLIC ENERGY PERFORMING ARTS WOULD LIKE TO THANK OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS:



Canada Council  
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### **ABOUT INDIGENOUS PERFORMANCE INITIATIVES:**

Programming in Nozhem First Peoples Performance Space is overseen by a circle collective, Indigenous Performance Initiatives. Founded in 2004, Indigenous Performance Initiatives (IPI) collective members include: Marrie Mumford (Métis Chippewa Cree); Elizabeth Osawamick (Anishinaabe); Elder Shirley Ida Williams (Anishinaabe); Paula Sherman (Ardoch/Algonquin); William Kingfisher (Anishinaabe, Rama First Nation); Kerry Bebee (Michi Saagig Anishinaabe); and Jenn Cole (mixed-ancestry Algonquin Anishinaabe).

### **NOZHEM CREATIVE TEAM:**

**Artistic Director:** Jenn Cole

**Associate Artistic Producer:** William Kingfisher

**Technical Director:** Don White

**Theatre Coordinator:** Lee Bolton

**Front of House and Cultural Mentor:** Sheri Smith

**Artistic Support and Social Media:** Shenoa Poirier and Hannah McCammon

### **PUBLIC ENERGY PERFORMING ARTS TEAM:**

**Executive Director:** Bill Kimball

**Managing Director:** Eva Fisher

**Bookkeeper:** Josh Raspberry

**Digital Content Producer:** Michael Morritt

**Administrative Support:** Shannon McKenzie LeBlanc