

About *Tales of an Urban Indian*

Talk Is Free Theatre's production of **Tales of an Urban Indian** is written by CBC's Darrell Dennis and starring Craig Lauzon of the Royal Canadian Air Farce.

Tales of an Urban Indian is a dark comedy about the life of Simon Douglas, a contemporary First Nations man facing life on reserve and on the streets of Vancouver, and the people who shape his journey. The play explores themes of survival and forgiveness, and examines issues of race and identity. This striking and poignant tale is presented in the intimate setting of a moving city bus by the very talented Craig Lauzon, who is himself of Indigenous descent.

Arkady Spivak, the Artistic Producer of Talk Is Free Theatre, heard of the incredible script from Mario Crudo, former Artistic Director of Magnus Theatre in Thunder Bay. "At that time the play had only been presented in a conventional theatre setting. It was only when we lost our venue, due to the construction, that the idea of staging it on a bus moving through the community was born. The rest, as they say, is history," says Arkady.

While fully scripted, every performance will be played in a different environment. It gets dark at different times and traffic volumes are different so no two experiences will be entirely the same! For example, during a previous performance of **Tales of an Urban Indian** the bus got stuck in the mud after a bad rainstorm. The actor incorporated it into the storyline and audience members, immersed in the tale unfolding, came together and helped to free the bus!

Arkady says, "Although the central character is going through one extreme situation after another, we have all been in that place from which we didn't think we would recover...This is a play about a journey and encounters...that stranger sitting next to us on the bus that might have a story to share."

Recent work elsewhere in the world - Press release

**Talk Is Free Theatre Announces Most Ambitious
Immersive Three-Day Intercontinental Theatrical Adventure:
- *The Curious Voyage* -**

***Veiled in Secrecy, Massive and Unprecedented Project will Surprise Audiences
with Artistic Encounters on Journey from Barrie, Canada to London, England***

Barrie, CN & London, UK – Talk Is Free Theatre (TIFT) announces the ultimate, international theatrical adventure with [*The Curious Voyage*](#), running **Oct. 23 to Nov. 10, 2018** in Barrie, Canada and London, England. Taking place over three days to groups of no more than 36 participants, the immersive adventure will provide a unique, personal experience for every audience member, surprising them with curious artistic encounters as they inhabit new worlds in Barrie, Canada and London, England. The experience culminates in a site-specific mystery musical (a well-known Tony Award-winning work), whose dramatic themes will have been woven throughout the previous three-days. **Tickets for *The Curious Voyage* are extremely limited and only available from May 8 to June 27, 2018.**

"In 2016, we broke new ground by staging *The Music Man* as a roving, site-specific work around the streets of Barrie. With *The Curious Voyage*, however, we're embarking on TIFT's most ambitious production ever!" explains Arkady Spivak, TIFT Artistic Producer and originator of the production concept. "I continue to be immensely proud to contribute to Barrie as a progressive and burgeoning cultural centre and honoured by the unwavering support from Barrie's open-minded and open-hearted community. My vision for this project is supported by none other than some of Canada's most daring and lauded artists, including two renowned directors: **Daniele Bartolini**, who will oversee the three days of experiential, audience-specific adventure, and **Mitchell Cushman**, who will direct the climactic secret musical."

The audience's 'curious voyage' commences in Barrie, Canada, where audiences will explore sites following a narrative trail of breadcrumbs crafted specifically for them by Bartolini. Run-ins with roving strangers, mysterious assignments, and even participant's hotel rooms will all play a role in the unraveling tale. The Barrie leg of the voyage will also feature a youth outreach component, which will see 60 local teens engaging in the creation process under the guidance and mentorship of professional artists.

"I describe my practice as 'Audience Specific Theatre' – a highly interactive form that shifts the role of the audience from viewer to actor, making them a co-creator of the experience," offers Bartolini. "It is a form we have shared around the globe – from Canada to Europe to India. However, we have never had the audience travel in this international capacity or be immersed on this grand a scale. These factors, coupled with the culminating musical and other planned elements of surprise, offer new worlds of opportunities and an important platform for human connection - in terms of what we will craft for our voyagers."

On day two, audiences will shuttle to Pearson Airport, Toronto and fly to Heathrow on a day flight, before settling into the boutique charm of the [Morton Hotel](#). Day three sees audiences continue to pursue their story through off-the-beaten-path London locales, before ultimately arriving at a secret location for a site-specific staging of a renowned musical. *The Curious Voyage* concludes with a finale ritual and reception with the cast and production team, following which participants will return home.

“In many ways, this experience is a continuation and evolution of the groundbreaking conduct with *The Music Man*,” explains Cushman. “The opportunity to craft a site-specific staging of this Tony-award winning musical would be exciting enough – but to collaborate with Daniele and extend its themes into this grand adventure is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Not only for us as creators – but for the venturesome audiences who come out to experience it.”

The musical’s cast will feature a mix of luminary Canadian and England-based talents, including Talk Is Free Theatre audience-favourites David Coomber, Izad Etemadi, Craig Lauzon, Mike Nadajewski, Glynis Ranney, and Michael Torontow, among others.

“Part of what I love about musical theatre is the sheer size of emotion and expression,” says Executive Producer Sara Schwartz Geller. “With this wildly ambitious, utterly unprecedented project, we wanted to create an experience that could match the heights of this art form. For three days, we invite audiences to live in a world so magical and so full of possibility that it feels like they are living life as a work of art.”

Daniele Bartolini is an award-winning director, playwright, producer, installation artist and performer born in Florence, Italy and based in Toronto, Canada. He is the Artistic Director of internationally acclaimed DopoLavoro Teatrale (DLT) and a 2015 recipient of the RBC Newcomer Art Access Prize.

Mitchell Cushman is a director, playwright, producer, educator and founding Artistic Director of Outside the March. Mitchell is the Co-Creator of *BRANTWOOD* (with Julie Tepperman), Canada’s largest immersive musical theatre experience, which received the 2015 Audience Choice Award at the Dora Awards.

The Curious Voyage creative team also includes director of design Joe Pagnan and installation designer Anahita Dehbonehie.

Tickets for *The Curious Voyage* are extremely limited and only available for a sales window from May 8 to June 27, 2018.

Tickets for the experience are: \$1,950 single / \$3,600 double plus flights & meals.

About Talk Is Free Theatre (tift.ca)

Talk Is Free Theatre (TIFT) was founded in 2003 in Barrie, Ontario and has since produced 84 works. The company is Central Ontario’s only professional Equity company with a full winter season. TIFT produces a wide range of work from the periphery of mainstream, concentrating on new writing, forgotten classics and drastic re-examinations of established repertoire. TIFT is particularly dedicated to esoteric works of musical theatre and in forging new types of site-specific, immersive creation, among others. Most recently, TIFT staged the roving, site-specific production of *The Music Man* and toured the highly successful *Tales of an Urban Indian* staged on a moving city bus.

Notable productions of musicals also include the highly acclaimed Canadian premiere of *Anyone Can Whistle (In Concert)*, a cross gendered production of *Guys and Dolls*, the world premiere of the American musical *Dani Girl* by Michael Kooman and Christopher Dimond, and three sold out runs of the Dora Award winning production of *Assassins*, also on tour to the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre. Other work includes *The Prince of Homburg* by Heinrich von Kleist, *The Libertine* by Thomas Shadwell and *Possible Worlds* by John Mighton, which later toured to Munich, Germany.

This season, TIFT has two productions on tour to Canada's Capital - *The Wedding Party* in co-production with Crow's Theatre at the National Arts Centre, while *Tales of an Urban Indian*, staged on a moving bus, will make a brief appearance in February 2019.

For more information, please contact Richard Varty, Director of Outreach
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