

The
Thanksgiving
Play

By Larissa FastHorse

CAST BIOS



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Caitlin Robson

Logan

Caitlin is honoured to be performing in her third production for Mariposa Arts Theatre with such a juicy script, strong cast and inspired production team!

Caitlin studied Theatre Arts at the University of Waterloo, and worked professionally in Toronto for ten years. Notable credits include *Equivocation* (Persephone Theatre, Saskatoon), *Caitlin and Eric are Broken Up* (FringeTO), *Frankie Drake* (CBC), and *Clarice* (CBS). For MAT: Viola in *Twelfth Night* and Elvira in *Blithe Spirit*.

Much thanks to the Orillia community, where she has made a new home, and her supportive family and friends. She still performs regularly with local improv troupe The Old Dance Hall Players— catch their spring show at the Opera House in March!



Jack Quail

Jaxton

Jack Quail is excited to back on stage after 6 years! Following his time at Bishop's University, Jack spent summers with Shakespeare by the Sea in Halifax collaboratively writing Childrens Musicals and playing a number of roles such as Brutus in *Julius Caesar* and Charles the Wrestler in *As You Like It*.

Jack is also focused on creating his own work and eagerly awaits the release of his short *Snacky Jacky*. Mariposa Arts Theatre has presented a fantastic opportunity to reconnect with his roots in theatre and Jack couldn't be more proud of what has been put together!

CAST BIOS



Peter Merkle

Caden

Peter grew up in Scarborough where he enjoyed theatre in high school. He moved to Orillia in 2015 and was encouraged by his wife to try out for MAT productions.

Since then he has been in several shows including: *Chicago*, *Lucky Stiff*, *Living Together*, *Urinetown*, *Rocky Horror Show*, *Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, *Gypsy* and MAT's 50+ Anniversary Show.



Ashley Legedza

Alicia

Ashley is thrilled to be a part of *The Thanksgiving Play* in her Mariposa Arts Theatre debut. She studied theatre at Thorneloe University and received her BFA: Theatre Performance where she focused on puppetry and physical theatre. In her free time, Ashley is usually found hanging out with her dog Maggie, working on her latest project, or reaching her high score in the newest cozy game.

Currently, Ashley can be found as the Facility Manager for the Kings Wharf Theater with Drayton Entertainment, and at Duck Soup Productions (DSP) as their Studio Manager. Ashley's notable past credits include: Miss Honey in *Matilda*, Katherine in *Newsies*, Victoria in *Cats*, Toto in *The Wizard of Oz*, Sandy in *Annie* (DSP), and Clare in *Road* (Thorneloe University). Ashley would like to thank her friends and family for their continuous support, as well as her cast and crew for their dedication and hard work. Remember... "*Simplicity*".

CAST BIOS

Youth Vignette Actors



Pictured L-R: Gabriel Van Dam, Anastasia Vermeulen, and Audrey Buchanan

Anastasia Vermeulen

Anastasia is a grade 9 student at Patrick Fogarty Catholic Secondary School in Orillia. She is passionate about acting, and excited to be performing for the first time at the Orillia Opera House. She has starred in Coldwater's Village Players' production of *Old Father Time*, and loves to sing ALL the time... in class, during supper, on the bus, or whenever anyone mentions any word that can be found in the lyrics of any song ever.

She also loves Lilo and Stitch, and Iced Capps to keep her going through rehearsals. Anastasia hopes you enjoy The Thanksgiving Play, and thanks you for coming.

CAST BIOS

Youth Vignette Actors

Audrey Buchanan

Audrey Buchanan is grade 11 student at Orillia Secondary School who is looking to pursue theatre post secondary. She is so excited to be apart of MAT's the thanksgiving play! **SELECTED CREDITS:** Rizzo in *Grease* (OSS), Ruldolfo in *Matilda* (DSP), Winnifred Banks in *Mary Poppins* (OSS), Grandpa Joe in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (DSP). Audrey has been involved in musical theatre and dance for over 14 years now and is looking forward for many more opportunities to come. Audrey would like to thank the wonderful cast she is so grateful to be apart of, and the amazing tech team that help this show come to life. Audrey hopes you enjoy the show!!

Gabriel Van Dam

Gabe enjoys connecting with the audience, in particular showing his comedic side. Gabe has played a main, and supporting, roles in a production of *Annie*, run by IPAS. In his Tav experience, he has also played one of the main characters in a youth produced action/adventure series pilot.

He is excited to continue to develop his acting career, and thoroughly enjoying being a part of The Thanksgiving Play!



Rachel Walker-Brown

Ms. Rochelle (Vignette #1)

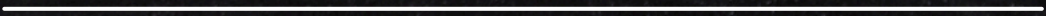
After spending most of her childhood singing, dancing and acting in youth theatre productions, Rachel rediscovered her love of theatre after moving to the area 5 years ago. After appearing as the Acrobat in the Bracebridge Rotary Musical: *Matilda*, Rachel continued practicing her craft via zoom play readings with the Dragonfly Theatre Company. Her latest adventure involved playing Marion in Dragonfly's production of *The Heiress*. Rachel is absolutely thrilled to be taking part in her first MAT production and hopes this is the first of many opportunities to perform for the Orillia community.



The Thanksgiving Play

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Samantha Cole
Co-Director

Samantha Cole is honoured and thrilled to be a part of The Thanksgiving Play team. She has twenty years of experience in various theatre roles: acting, directing, playwriting, tech, and all of those roles into one in her profession; the high school drama teacher at Fenelon Falls Secondary School. Samantha is on the Duck Soup Productions production team as Props Master and Set Coordinator and has been a member of Mariposa Arts Theatre since 2021.

Samantha wants to extend special thanks to the talented cast and production crew and her family and friends for their support. Special shout out to Alyssa; her other half in this endeavour who has been an amazing person to work and learn from, and her partner Evan for his moral support as well as marionette building skills. Finally, Samantha extends thanks to MAT's supportive audiences and for coming to see this very special and thought-provoking show.



Alyssa LaPlume
Co-Director

Alyssa LaPlume is proud to be making her directorial debut with Mariposa Arts Theatre. A 2008 Canadore Theatre Arts graduate, Alyssa has spent the last 20 years as an actor, performing all over Muskoka and the greater region. She has also gained credits in writing, acting, and producing a number of short films in North Bay and Toronto (2007-2012).

In 2022, Alyssa received her HBAs in Sociology and Psychology, and is currently completing her MA in Sociology with a special interest in racial justice and systemic oppression. Her insight into the concepts of whiteness and allyship were the focus of her Master's work; she was eager to combine her two loves, theatre and academia, together for this production of The Thanksgiving Play.

Endless gratitude to our wonderful cast, who committed themselves to the process so completely, the entire production team, who made magic overnight for us, and to Samantha, whose deep love for the performing arts is the reason we crossed the finish line.

CREW BIOS



Joan Mizzi-Fry
Producer

"All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players." I would add a few more thoughts to Shakespeare's famous quote: a great place to have fun in a shared community environment!

Since 2019, it's been my pleasure to be a part of the production teams that staged: *Educating Rita*, *The Gin Game*, *Bliethe Spirit* and now *The Thanksgiving Play*. We couldn't do what we do without you, our audience, corporate sponsors and of course, families.



Christopher Wright
Stage Manager

A recent transplant to Orillia, Chris Wright is looking to dive into the local theatre community.

Having worked as an actor in a couple of theatre productions in the past, one of which landed in Toronto's SummerWorks Festival (*Incarnate*- 2003), this will be the first time he is trying on a different hat, in that he is now working behind the scenes.

This is his first production with Mariposa Arts Theatre. He is very much enjoying the journey.

CREW BIOS



Leo ter Veen
Assistant Stage Manager

Leo is a grade 10 student at Orillia Secondary School, where he was introduced to his first experience in a drama classroom. His love for theater has truly grown, and he wants to thank his wonderful teacher, Mrs. MacMillan for sparking this interest. Over the school semester he has performed in 2 school productions, collaborating with his peers and learning along the way.

Aside from school, Leo spends a lot of his time volunteering at the Orillia Public Library, and a handful of local 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations. He finds pride in supporting and helping his community in every way he can.

Leo is honoured to be working on such a powerful production, with a strong message to the audience. In his time watching the actors, aiding in line memorization, and character choices, he would like to say he is beyond proud of every single actor, and actress on the team. Along with the directors, costume designers, and all backstage hands. This play wouldn't be possible without the whole crew.



Stephanie Lamb
Publicity

Stephanie is proud to be working Publicity for *The Thanksgiving Play!* She was the Lead Set Dresser for *Gypsy: A Musical Fable* in November and on-stage most recently last April as Countess Lily in *Anastasia* (Queensville Players). Previous MAT roles include the Usherette in *The Rocky Horror Show* ('22), Swing in *Urinetown* ('19), and as June in *Chicago* ('17).

Stephanie works as a Junior Designer with Linda Mazur Design, and as the Digital Administrator & Social Media Manager for MAT. Come say "hi" on Facebook or Instagram @mariposaartstheatre! Many thanks and congratulations to every one of the cast and crew involved in this production. A special thank you to Sam and Alyssa, whose immense passion and dedication to this story, and its resonant message, shines through every single aspect of this show.

CREW BIOS



Wayne Lennox
Set Designer/Builder

Wayne's involvement with MAT began about 34 years ago when his son was in *The Wizard of Oz*, followed by his daughter in *The King and I*. He had a hand in sets for a few more productions they were in but by the time they moved on, he had the bug and has been involved in countless productions since to this day.

Wayne enjoys the challenge of building sets that help support a play. He has served on the MAT Board for over 20 years and also sits on the Facilities Committee.



Carol Sinclair
Costume Designer

Carol has been turning her love of fibres, fabrics and garment construction into costumes for the stage for over 30 years. With each new production she looks forward to the wonderful opportunities to work with and learn from such talented and passionate people both behind the scenes and on the stage. She is a member of the 2024-2025 MAT Board of Directors.

Selected MAT Credits include: *I'll Be Back Before Midnight*, *The Play That Goes Wrong*, *MAT's 50th Anniversary Revue*, *Spamalot*, and *Lucky Stiff*.

CREW BIOS



Laurel Dewar
Props Master

Laurel has loved being part of the Mariposa Arts Theatre family since 2017 acting in several plays, helping out as crew in a few productions and a member of the MAT board for 4 years. Having made so many friends over the years in MAT, she looks forward to continuing these wonderful relationships and more years of participating in community theatre activities.

Past Credits include: Violet in *Blithe Spirit* ('23), Gingy in *Love, Loss and What I Wore* ('21), Ruth in *Living Together* ('19), Ensemble in *Lucky Stiff* ('18), and Lois Lane in 'Heroes' for *Two Plays and a Tart* ('17)

ABOUT THE ARTIST



Windigo Army

***The Thanksgiving Play* Poster Artwork**

Windigo Army is a loosely organized Indigenous street art/Activist collective started by a small group of friends from Mnjikaning Rama First Nation. They regularly travel to different cities and reservations to assist with native rights and Land Back events/movements. Windigo Army uses their art to connect with our cultural heritage and spread awareness of issues facing Indigenous people of Turtle Island, both current and historic.

Website: www.windigoarmy.com

Instagram: [@windigo_army](https://www.instagram.com/windigo_army)

LARISSA FASTHORSE

Playwright, *The Thanksgiving Play*



Larissa FastHorse (Sicangu Lakota Nation) is an award-winning writer and 2020–2025 MacArthur Fellow. Her satirical comedy *The Thanksgiving Play* made her the first known female Native American playwright on Broadway, at the Helen Hayes under the direction of Rachel Chavkin. Her new plays in 2023 are *Wicoun* (Cornerstone Theater Company), *Democracy Project* (Federal Hall), *Fake It Until You Make It* (CTG Mark Taper Forum), *For the People* (Guthrie), and the national tour of *Peter Pan* (Networks). Selected past plays include *What Would Crazy Horse Do?* (KCRep), *Landless* and *Cow Pie Bingo* (AlterTheater), *Average Family* (Children’s Theater Company of Minneapolis) and *Teaching Disco Squaredancing to Our Elders: a Class Presentation* (Native Voices at the Autry), as well as numerous productions of *The Thanksgiving Play*, making it one of the most produced plays in America.

Larissa created the nationally recognized trilogy of community engaged theatrical experiences with Cornerstone Theater Company; *Urban Rez*, *Native Nation* and *Wicoun*. She and her collaborator, Michael John Garcés, spend years on each project in an Indigenized community engagement process. “The engagement itself is the art form.” These projects have earned them national funding and an appointment to Arizona State University’s Department of English as professors of practice (literature).

Larissa’s company with Ty Defoe, Indigenous Direction, recently produced the first land acknowledgement on national television for the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade on NBC and continues to consult for them. They also consult for the largest theater organizations in the country.

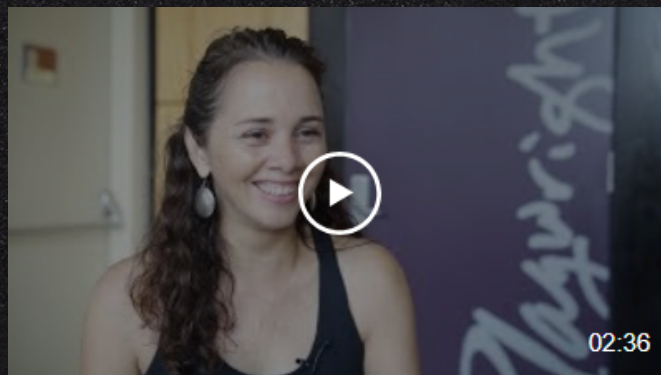
Larissa also writes in film and television, most recently as a creator for NBC, Disney Channel, Dreamworks, Muse, Netflix and others. She is based in Los Angeles with her husband, the sculptor Edd Hogan, and represented by Jonathan Mills at Paradigm NY. She is especially honored to follow in the footsteps of the last known Native American playwright on Broadway, Lynn Riggs. hoganhorsestudio.com. (Photo Credit: Conor Horgan)

LEARN MORE



The Broadway Show: THE THANKSGIVING PLAY Playwright Larissa FastHorse

Broadway.com Managing Editor Beth Stevens sits down with playwright Larissa FastHorse to discuss making her Great Bright Way debut with The Thanksgiving Play. Catch an extended version of their THE BROADWAY SHOW interview!



In Process: Larissa FastHorse on The Thanksgiving Play

Interview with Playwrights Horizons



Larissa FastHorse, Playwright | 2020 MacArthur Fellow (Extended)

Larissa FastHorse is a playwright creating space for Indigenous artists, stories, and experiences in mainstream theater and countering misrepresentation of Native American perspectives in broader society.



Speak Your Truth

Playwright Larissa FastHorse tells us about the characters of THE THANKSGIVING PLAY who tie themselves in knots trying to be politically correct.

For more, visit: www.mariposaartstheatre.com/thanksplay

PLAYLIST

Below is a list of song featured in our pre- and post-show playlists for *The Thanksgiving Play*. Click the links to listen to the songs and learn more about the artists behind them.

PRE-SHOW

- [The Ballad of Ira Hayes](#) by [Peter LaFarge](#)
- [Remember Me](#) by [Fawn Wood](#)
- [We Were All Wounded at Wounded Knee](#) by [Redbone](#)
- [Pomawsuwinuwok Wonakiyawolotuwok](#) by [Jeremy Dutcher](#)
- [In the River](#) by [Raye Zaragoza](#)
- [I Pity The Country](#) by [Willie Dunn](#)
- [Red Winter](#) by [Drezus](#)
- [Forty Wheels](#) by [Martha Redbone](#)
- [The Resistance](#) by [Snotty Nose Rez Kids](#)
- [We Were Here](#) by [Aysanabee](#)
- [Colonizer](#) by [Tanya Tagaq](#)
- [Burn Your Village to the Ground](#) by [The Halluci Nation](#)
 - *This song is Halluci Nation's (formerly A Tribe Called Red) response to their feelings on what Thanksgiving means to them. Check out [this article](#) for more detail on their thoughts in their own words.*
- [Let's Turkey Trot](#) by [Little Eva](#)

POST-SHOW

- [Return to Innocence](#) by [Enigma](#)
 - READ: ["Return to Innocence": In Search of Ethnic Identity in the Music of the Amis of Taiwan](#)
- [Hooked on a Feeling](#) by [Blue Suede](#)
 - READ: [A brief history of 'ooga chaka'](#)
- [Yeha-Noha \(Wishes of Happiness and Prosperity\)](#) by [Sacred Spirit](#)
 - READ: [Yeha Noha](#)

INDIGENOUS MUSICIANS REMIX THANKSGIVING PART TWO

Rock and Roll Globe, November 2020 | DJ crew A Tribe Called Red, Lynyrd Skynyrd guitarist Rickey Medlocke and roots singer Martha Redbone talk turkey about what Thanksgiving means to them.