

LA MAMA
EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE CLUB
PRESENTS



**As part of Reflections of Native
Voices Native Theater Festival**

Safe Harbors Indigenous Collective Project's

**DON'T FEED THE INDIANS
- A DIVINE COMEDY PAGEANT!**



**The Downstairs
66 East 4th Street, NYC, 10003
January 11, 2020**

DON'T FEED THE INDIANS - A DIVINE COMEDY PAGEANT!

Conceived, Written and Directed by Murielle Borst-Tarrant

Cast (in order of appearance)

John Scott Richardson	Tom Tom Pork Chop
Henu Josephine Tarrant	Moon Night Child, Josephine
Nic Billey	Red Dirt, Nic
Danielle Soames	Bird Woman, Danielle
Murielle Borst- Tarrant	Bea
Kevin Tarrant	Virg, Tom Tom 2
Travis Richardson	Singer
George Stonefish	Singer
Steve "Peace" Smith	Singer

Artistic and Production Team

Musical Director	Kevin Tarrant
Dramaturg	Morgan Jenness
Set Designer	Ann Mirjam Vaikla
Lighting Designer	Cecilia Durbin
Costume Designer	Sheldon Raymore
Composers	Dawn Avery
	Kevin Tarrant
Project Management	Two Spirit Productions
Stage Manager	Pamela McCaddin
Video Editor	Dan Silver
Assistant Stage Manager	Travis Richardson
Assistant to Costume Designer	Melissa Oakes
Specialty Beadwork	Nadonis Tarrant
Voiceovers	Muriel Miguel
	Louis Mofsie

Original "Tipi Backdrop" Design by Louis Mofsie.

Original Score and Background Piano by Chee Chee Thunderbird

"Creation" video co-producers and creative collaborators - Aanmitaagzi with the family and community of Penny Couchie and Sid Bobb at Nipissing First Nation, Ontario, Canada. Featured Dancer Animikiikwe Couchie-Waukey.

Family photos, courtesy The Miguel & Tarrant families

Additional jewelry items were crafted in the Josephine Mofsie Tarrant Sewing Project. This project was created in the memory of three generations of seamstresses - mother-in-law, grandmother and mother of Josephine Mofsie Tarrant.

Playwright and Director's Notes

Tonya Gonnella Frichner (Onondaga Nation/Snipe Clan) September 19, 1947-February 14, 2015. She was a woman of great integrity and vision. Her vision at times took me to a different level of my work that I never thought possible. We did many projects together on how to bridge the gap from the political world to our communities. And we always discussed, what the best way was to bring this important international work for outreach. After many late night discussions, we decided that theater and the arts was the way to bridge that gap.

The first pages of the piece were done in her bedroom on tiny pieces of paper. I did all of the parts for her and sang all of the songs and danced all of the dances until her husband kicked me out of the house and told me to go home! But I would go back the next day and I would have more of the script and read her more of the ideas and sing different songs and I would have more jokes and I would test it on her once again. If she didn't get a joke she would take a beat and then would say "Oh I get it now" and I would tell her that if I have to explain the joke then it ain't funny. But the other important thing was that we would sit together and just discuss on what each word meant in the Doctrine of Discovery and the Declaration and I would tear it apart and approach it like Shakespeare. And she would sit with me as we discussed for hours on end what one word meant and how to exchange it for another and how that could change the entire sentence and meaning. She would approach it as a lawyer and I would approach it as a playwright. But we both approached it as political activists.

We understood each other's work and we felt that one was just as important as the other. We admired each other's gifts, supported each other and found strength in each other's passions. Tonya was a rarity in this world and I don't think there will be a time in my life that I will not miss her. We were true partners and true collaborators and that is a very hard thing to find in this world.

Dedication

This was originally written as a valentine for my Aunt Elizabeth but I also dedicate this piece to Tonya and thank her the only way I really know how and that is through my work in theater.

Music Credits

Pass that Peace Pipe

By Hugh Martin and Ralph Blaine

I'm An Indian, Too from Annie Get Your Gun

Music and Lyrics by Irving Berlin

You Are For Lovin' from Best Foot Forward

Music by Ralph Martin and Hugh Blane

Bali Ha'i from South Pacific

Music by Richard Rodgers and Lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein

Watch Over Me

Music and Lyrics by Henu Josephine Tarrant

Weave It Up and Weave It Down

Written and Performed by Lisa Mayo

Courtesy Spiderwoman Theater

Garryowen

An Irish Fighting song used by the 7th Cavalry during Indian massacres, last heard at the Battle of the Little Big Horn

Safe Harbors Indigenous Collective

Safe Harbors is creating a new paradigm in regard to the presentation of Native American Arts and Culture within the broader American Theater world to combat stereotypes and support vibrant Native American communities. Safe Harbors is a new effort to develop ongoing dialogue with policymakers about how these cultural and socioeconomic issues can be approached through theatrical performances, panel conversations, and cultural events, and seeks to build an understanding of Native American methodologies and cosmologies that in turn will support the development of legal constructs for Arts building and production. It functions on a grassroots level within local NYC Native American/Indigenous Arts communities as well as nationally and internationally through presentation and education.

Development

Early workshop development of *Don't Feed the Indians – A Divine Comedy Pageant!* was made possible with the support of Pangea World Theatre in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Don't Feed the Indians – A Divine Comedy Pageant! was originally funded in part by the New England Foundation for the Arts' national Theater Project with lead funding from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, The Densford Fund of the Riverside Church of New York, Tides Foundation, NoVo Foundation and H.B. Henson Fund.

This production of *Don't Feed the Indians – A Divine Comedy Pageant!* Is part Reflections of Native Voices Native Theater Festival with generous support by the NoVo Foundation, H.B. Henson Fund, Native Arts and Culture Foundation, American Indian Law Alliance, NYAC CONAM, Western Arts Alliance and Amerinda Inc. Special Thanks to our partners LaMama ETC, New York Theatre Workshop, Theater for the New City and Henson Carriage House Annex.

Creative and Production Team Biographies

Murielle Borst-Tarrant – Director/Playwright/Bea (Kuna/Rappahannock Nations) Author, playwright, director, producer, cultural artist, educator, and human rights activist. Author of the Fantasy series *The Star Medicine* She also works on the deconstructing of methods of the arts in Native communities in urban areas across the country and in the New York City education system. She consults many urban and non- urban universities on the development on Native theater programming. Nominated for the Rockefeller grant in 2001, won a Native Heart Award and was the only Native American Women to have her work to be selected by the Olympic Games in Sydney Australia at the Sydney Opera House for her one woman show *More than Feathers and Beads*. She served as the Special Assistant and liaison to Tonya Gonnella Frichner, the North American Regional representative to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Directed her mother of Spiderwoman Theater, Muriel Miguel *"Red Mother"* nationally and internationally. Keynote Speaker for

the Indigenous Women's Symposium at Trent University. Global Indigenous Woman's Caucus Chair (North America) in 2013 to May of 2014. Selected to speak on Repetition, Tradition and Change: Native oral history and contemporary art practice in hostel post-colonial times at the International Conference at the Muthesius Academy of Art in Kiel Germany and the Norwegian Theater Academy. Named in American Theater magazine by Anne Hamilton as one of the most influential women in American Theater.

Kevin Tarrant - Musical Director/Composer/Virg (Hopi/Ho-Chunk Nations) - has been performing and on stage since he was 6 with his family. He is the founder and lead singer of the SilverCloud Singers, an intertribal Native American singing & dance troupe weaving the traditional with the contemporary of Native song & dance. SilverCloud was founded in 1991 and takes its name in tribute of Josephine Mofsie Tarrant, the mother of Kevin Tarrant. The singers of SilverCloud come from many tribes, and from many parts of the U.S and Canada. The group was started with the intention of using traditional methods of Native culture as a means to educate through song and dance. And mentoring Native youth through culture in New York City and the country. With the group he has performed at most major venues in N.Y.C. including The Theater at Madison Square Garden, Madison Square Garden, The Ritz, Roseland, LaMama Theater, Theater for New City, Lincoln Center, The National Museum of the American Indian, The Museum of Natural History, The Public Theater and The Apollo Theater and also appeared on the soundtrack Song for Native Americans with Robbie Robertson including opening for Midnight Oil and Joan Osborne at the Ritz as part of Earth Day celebrations held in Los Angeles and New York City. Also took part in PERCPAN VI, an international percussion festival in Salvador, BRASIL. Kevin has also served as Master of Ceremonies at various events, including at *Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial* in Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin a nightly Native American show from Memorial Day thru Labor Day. Solo, he has performed with Ulali, David Amaram, Savion Glover and Alessandra Belloni. He has also sung in the Off-Broadway Productions of *Winterman* and *The Rez Sisters*. He has sung at the U.N. as well as various other venues such as Trinity Church, The Beacon Theater, and the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. Also appeared on *Emeril LIVE - Native American Cooking*. He has also taught Native American Singing at the Banff Center for the Arts in Alberta, Canada and the Center for Indigenous Theatre in Toronto, Canada. Most recently appeared in *Crane: On Earth, In Sky*.

Nicholson Billey - Red Dirt/Nic - is from the Choctaw and Creek People of Oklahoma and is an enrolled member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. Nic earned an MA in Drama Therapy from New York University, is a practicing New York State Licensed Creative Arts, and is currently attending Pratt Institute's inaugural Performance + Performance Studies MFA program. Nic believes that performance can be utilized as a community-based intervention where the quotidian range of Native American and Indigenous peoples expressivity deserves optimal representation and presentation to potentially reframe the Native American, Indigenous, and non-Native/indigenous status quo.

John Scott-Richardson – Tom Tom Pork Chop/ John - his maternal lineage is (Saponi/Nansmond), paternal lineage (Tuscarora), he is an enrolled member of the Haliwa-Saponi Nation in north eastern North Carolina. John received his undergraduate BA Liberal Arts degree from Atlantic Christian College. He began performance arts directing small community plays and taking classes at North Raleigh Community Theater. Prior credits include *Comedy Central Awards*, *Banshee* (Cinemax), *Vice Principals* (HBO), *The American West* (AMC), *Jamestown* (Sky1) New Circle Theater, and *Dvorak in America* (La MaMa). Current projects include *Don't Feed The Indians* (La MaMa). He volunteers as a board member for American Indian Community House, Amerinda, and Images for Inclusion. Passions include the youth, Native culture and traditions and family. His desire is to share media film and TV with underrepresented communities in US. Mr. Richardson has a passion for art, food, travel, and fashion.

Danielle Soames- Bird Woman/Danielle (Mohawk-Kahnawake) - has been in theatre since age 12. Performed at Lincoln Center, The Public Theater, Playwrights Horizons, La MaMa, The Red Room, NYU, Intermedia Arts in Mpls, etc. She has directed numerous stage readings, full length plays as well as produced and held the position of Artistic Director of her founded company, Mixed Phoenix Theatre Group. She holds a Masters of Educational Theatre from NYU and a Bachelor of Science in Theatre from Northeastern University in Boston, and studied acting at Circle in the Square Theatre School, NYC. Danielle has done a few short films,TV, commercials, and voice-overs. She developed poetry and storytelling programs using puppetry, corn-husk doll making and Native history lessons for the Smithsonian, National Museum of the American Indian, Wave Hill, & Garvies Point Museum-Preserve. For fun, Danielle is an independent distributor of Senegence makeup and Lipsense. Follow her on IG @dlips2kiss

Henu Josephine Tarrant – Moon Night Child/Josephine/ lead vocalist (Hopi/ Hochunk/ Kuna/ Rappahannock Nations) - is a recent graduate of the American Musical and Dramatic Academy's Musical Theater integrated program. Previously to her college education she attended the Jersey City School of the Arts where she majored in Theater. She attended the Rutgers Acting conservatory and soon after was cast in *Aliens vs Cheerleaders* an off Broadway production written by *Urinetown* playwright Greg Kotis. She is an experienced Fancy Shawl Dancer, Hoop Dancer, and most recently Hochunk Applique Style. She is back-up sings for her father's southern drum group SilverCloud Singers. Pow Wow culture is a part of her and has been her inspiration in the work she does. Since earning her associates degree from AMDA she's been focusing on furthering her education at The New School where she will be finishing her Bachelor's Degree in Musical Theater. Her most recent work was a short narrative film about black market selling of sacred items, and the issues of Indigenous sovereign rights called *The Return Home* written and directed by Angelo Baca (Hopi) for the NYU Tisch Summer Film Program 2015. *Don't Feed the Indians: A Divine Comedy Pageant* has been a tremendous inspiration to her and her aspiring work.

Morgan Jenness - Dramaturg - is an educator, activist, former Associate Producer at the Public Theater, and has served in dramaturgical capacities at theaters and developmental situations all over the US American theater for over three decades. Morgan is also a recipient of an Obie for Long Term Support of Playwrights and a 2015 Doris Duke Impact Award, which has funded her ongoing work with this project.

Ann Mirjam Vaikla - Set Design - is a stage designer and performance maker from Tallinn, Estonia. She graduated from the Scenography Department at the Norwegian Theatre Academy / Østfold University College in 2015. She is interested in a coherence of daily life and artificiality in the context of performance art and architecture that she has investigated among several of her artistic projects. In New York, she has previously over the last years participated in the Watermill Center International Summer Program; interned at the Storefront for Art and Architecture gallery and worked at the Byrd Hoffman Foundation and Ryan Frank Artist Studio at the Invisible Dog Art Center. One month ago, she premiered her co-written and co-directed performance *Uncanny You* at the Kanuti Gildi SAAL that was partly created at the residency center Arts Letters and Numbers in New York.

Cecilia Durbin - Lighting Design - La MaMa: *Amy Surratt's First & Last* (Show); *Hyena* (also Edinburgh Fringe, United Solo [Best Lighting]); Recent designs: *Sense & Sensibility*, *Love Alone* (Playmakers Rep); *South Pacific* (Triad Stage); *Disgraced* (Portland Stage Co & Hangar Theatre); *The Taming of the Shrew* (Chautauqua Theatre); *Murder Ballad*, *Sex with Strangers* (Detroit Public Theatre); *All Shook Up*, *On Golden Pond* (New London Barn Playhouse); *In the Blood* (Theatre Horizon [Barrymore nomination]); *Stranger from Paradise* (Opera Omaha); *The Life Model* (On the Boards); *Circle Mirror Transformation* (Univ. Rochester); *Numb* (Goat in the Road Productions, JACK); *She Stoops to Conquer* (TACT, Co-design); *Lust* (HERE Arts Center); *Measure for Measure* (Epic Theatre Ensemble); *We are Proud to Present...* (InterAct Theatre), *A Soldier's Tale* (The Bushwick Starr/The Puppet Kitchen). MFA from NYU; member USA829. www.durbinlighting.com

Sheldon Raymore - Costume Design - from the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, is a New York City fashion, costume, and regalia designer whose work has graced the red carpet at the GRAMMYS. He has spent most of his adult life working with Italian fashion houses Roberto Cavalli and Angelo Galasso. He communicates traditional Native American stories transformed from experiences of oppression that let audiences observe contemporary life through a Native lens. Ever the consummate keeper of tradition, he continues to cultivate his artistry, with the upmost integrity, humility, and authenticity, letting the love for his culture shine through in all that he does. He would like to thank the American Indian Community House for their support.

Dawn Avery - Composer - is a composer, cellist, vocalist, educator and GRAMMY and NAMA nominated performer. She has worked with musical luminaries Luciano Pavarotti, Sting, John Cale, John Cage, R. Carlos Nakai and

Joanne Shenandoah. Dawn Avery creates a contemporary soundscape from electronica, pop and classical elements. Her sultry vocals and soaring cello lines reflect a deep spirituality rooted in her Native American heritage. Of Mohawk descent, Dawn Avery's Indian name is Ieriho:kwats and she wears the turtle clan. Her latest CD in which she sings and plays Native downtempo style music with electric guitarist and Grammy-winning producer, Larry Mitchell is *50 Shades of Red* won a Global Music Award, and *Our Fire*, won nominations in the Indian Summer Awards, New Mexico Music Awards, and Native American Music Awards. In addition, her music can be heard in award-winning Native films including: The Smithsonian's *Always Becoming* by Nora Naranjo-Morse and *Don't Get Sick After June: Indian Health Care* by Rich/Heape Films, Court Innovation's *Pallayup*, *Dos Almas* by Villegas, and *Rohati:io Raising the Word*, by Ellingson. Dr. Avery holds a PhD in Ethnomusicology with research on the application of Indigenous theory on Native Classical Composers and their music.

Dan Silver - Video Editor - is a video editor, writer and comedian living in Brooklyn. He has written satire for Political Action Committees, campaign finance reform groups, the ACLU and Funny or Die. He coaches long-form improv, writes and performs sketch comedy, and preaches science. Dan is excited to be a part of a production that engages with some of the biggest and deepest social issues from such direct and personal perspectives.

Pam McCaddin – Stage Manager - is a New York based stage manager and graduate of The University of Massachusetts Amherst. Previous works include concerts and events with The Clan Currie Society and *Crane: on Earth, in Sky* (IBEX Puppetry). Much love to the amazing team that has made this show so special. Many thanks to all the friends and family for all the constant support!

Travis Richardson – Singer/Assistant Stage Manager - is an enrolled member of the Haliwa-Saponi Tribe located in Hollister, NC. He gained his musical experience through Northern Pow Wow singing with Stoney Creek Singers (Nominated by NAMMY for Best Contemporary Pow Wow CD in 2015). He performed with Stoney Creek at The New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival (2013/2014). Since his recent move to New York City he has honed his Southern singing skills by performing with SilverCloud Singers & Dancers at numerous events & productions. Performing as a singer in Madison Square Garden for Native American Heritage Day (2015), Forces of Nature Kwanzaa Celebration at The Apollo Theater (2016), and Out of Doors Festival at Lincoln Center (2017). He is very excited to be a part of this production and honored to make his debut as an Assistant Stage Manager.

Special Thanks: Muriel Miguel, Louis Mofsie. David Harris, Sid Hill, Betty Lyons, Oren Lyons, Herb Frichner, Hester Dillion, Tim Dorsey, Heather Henson, CultureHub, Carese Gullo and family, Soni Moreno, Darcy Spence, Stephanie Pardi, Jackie Kleiner, Wilhelmina Kleiner, Steve Bonspiel, Brandon Gray, Kristen Holfeuer, Amy Surratt, Greg Laffey, Megan Lang, Kathleen Tarrant, Patricia Tarrant and Sam Tarrant.

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Ellen Stewart Theatre

AMAL

Jan 9 - 10, 2020
The Downstairs

Cezary Goes to War

Jan 16 - 19, 2020
Ellen Stewart Theatre

Ich kann nicht anders

Jan 16 - 19, 2020
The Downstairs

Nick Payne's Constellations

Jan 9 - 12, 2020
Ellen Stewart Theatre

Magic Agency Chapter 4: Bro-Tox

Jan 17 - 19, 2020
47 Great Jones Studios

COMING SOON

The Transfiguration Of Benjamin Banneker

Jan 23 - Feb 2, 2020
Ellen Stewart Theatre

You Are Under Our Space Control

Jan 23 - Feb 2, 2020
The Downstairs

Fandango For Butterflies (and Coyotes)

Feb 6 - 15, 2020
Ellen Stewart Theatre

La MaMa Kids Folktales of Asia and Africa

February 15 - 16, 2020
The Downstairs

Generator (Pestilence Part 1)

Feb 20 - March 1, 2020
The Downstairs