

GWAANDAK THEATRE SOCIETY  
THE GUILD HALL &  
QUEER YUKON  
PRESENT

INDIGENOUS SUMMER  
PLAY READINGS  
2022



WHITEHORSE JUNE 16-18    TOMBSTONE JUNE 24  
DAWSON JUNE 21-23    TESLIN JUNE 26-27

***THE YOUNG ONES***

By Yvette Nolan and  
the Sum Theatre Ensemble  
Directed by Colin Wolf

***MY SISTER'S RAGE***

By Yolanda Bonnell  
Directed by Kelly Vittrekwa

*A NOTE FROM EXECUTIVE  
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR COLIN WOLF*  
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Tansii (Hello)

Welcome to Gwaandak Theatre's annual Indigenous Summer Play Readings (ISPR), our community theater style offering to you, our witnesses. Presented with support from our colleagues at Queer Yukon and The Guild Hall. These readings exist to offer chances to try out acting, directing, and other opportunities at Gwaandak. It's also a great way for us to meet new people, reaffirm our connections to colleagues and friends in the communities, and connect with our audiences. This year ISPR is heading physically to Teslin, Dawson, the Tombstone Interpretive Center, and will be shared regionally on CFYT 106.9FM.

We have 2 seemingly different scripts for you today. The Young Ones is a theatre for young audiences piece that explores climate change through the eyes of young people written by Yvette Nolan and the Sum Theatre Ensemble. My Sisters Rage by Yolanda Bonnell, which recently won the Playwrights Guild of Canada Drama Award, is a play about an Indigenous family as they reconvene over their matriarch's potential passing. However, the theme that ties these 2 plays together for me is hope.

I recently read a quote - and I can't remember where or who, and I looked and couldn't find it - but it was like this: "you don't choose to hold on when there is hope; you hold on, and so there is hope". That comes to mind for me in both these unique pieces as they explore how we keep going in the face of... well... everything. I know many people whose mothers, grandmothers, and dear friends, have moved beyond in their due time, and I know many mothers who have sent their young ones out into a world of unknowns. I remember when my grandmother passed a few short years ago, and how my mother said grandma was so happy to see all the cousins, aunties, and kin dancing together at my wedding. I wonder if when my mother sent me into the world as a young one, if she knew that amongst all the chaos of the world, I would bring that moment to my family. When I see the young voices, and familiar faces in this cast, laughing, and trying - I see them all holding on to the idea that this work in theatre, this planet we live on, these Indigenous stories we tell - our stories - that they matter.

You hold on, and so there is hope.

Please enjoy these 2 readings, from this dynamic cast of strong, Indigenous, people. If you are Indigenous and want to get involved in our future projects please reach out - we are always opening the circle wider.

# THE YOUNG ONES



By Yvette Nolan and  
the Sum Theatre Ensemble

Directed by Colin Wolf

## **About the Play:**

*The Young Ones* is a play about young people leading the way. This Theatre for Young Audiences piece explores hope in the face of climate change from the perspective of the young ones.

## **About the Playwright:**

Yvette Nolan (Algonquin) is a playwright, director and dramaturg. Her works include the plays *Annie Mae's Movement* and *The Unplugging*, the dance-opera *Bearing*, the libretto *Shawnadithit*, the short play-for-film *Katharsis*. She was one of the ten writers on Gabriel Dumont's *Wild West Show*. She co-created, with Joel Bernbaum and Lancelot Knight, the verbatim play *Reasonable Doubt*, about relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities in Saskatchewan. Her work with Sum Theatre includes *Thicker Than Water*, *Little Badger* and the *Fire Spirit*, *Queen Seraphina* and the *Land of Vertebrat*, *The Young Ones* and *Last Sunday*. From 2003–2011, she served as Artistic Director of Native Earth

Performing Arts. Her book, *Medicine Shows*, about Indigenous performance in Canada was published by Playwrights Canada Press in 2015.

She is the Company Dramaturg for Sum Theatre in Saskatoon, and currently pursuing her Masters in Public Policy at Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy.

### **About Sum Theatre:**

Sum Theatre was born when Saskatoon theatre artists Joel Bernbaum and Kayvon Khoshkam were invited to present a staged reading of their play *My Rabbi* at the Belfry Theatre's SPARK Festival in 2011. They were told they needed a company name, so they thought of one. The Sum is greater than its parts. Joel brought the name home to Saskatchewan and incorporated Sum Theatre in 2012. Recognizing that there was not a lot of professional theatre being made for people who did not already go to the theatre, Joel applied for a SK Arts (formerly Saskatchewan Arts Board) Independent Artists Grant to create what would become the first Theatre in the Park. When the application was successful, Joel realised he needed a collaborator and invited Heather Morrison to be Sum's founding Artistic Producer.

Heather and Joel led the company together from 2013 - 2019. From 2016 to 2018, thanks to the support of a Creative Saskatchewan Business Capacity Grant, Charlie Peters joined

the leadership team as Sum's first Artistic Associate. In 2019, Heather lead the company for a year with the assistance of Associate Artistic Director Judy Wensel and Mentor Yvette Nolan, while Joel took an educational leave. In 2020, Heather left Sum to pursue other opportunities.

In 2020, thanks to the support of another Creative Saskatchewan Business Capacity Grant, the leadership structure of Sum Theatre began to change. Three Artistic Associates - Mackenzie Dawson, Krystle Pederson and Judith Schulz - one Company Dramaturge - Yvette Nolan - and a Producer - Laura Negraeff - joined the team. They began working in circle with a collective leadership and decision making process. It is the hope that this new structure will share power, promote diversity and insure succession planning. Joel has given notice he will be transitioning away from the company by 2024.

## About Joel Bernbaum

Joel Bernbaum is an actor, director, playwright, journalist and the founding artistic director of Sum Theatre. Born and raised in Saskatoon, Joel is the only child of a Buddhist Mother and Jewish Father. He is a graduate of the Canadian College of Performing Arts and Carleton University, where he did his Master's Thesis on Verbatim Theatre's Relationship to Journalism. With Sum Theatre Joel created Saskatchewan's first free professional live Theatre in the Park. To date, over 50,000 people have participated in Sum Theatre's work. Joel's produced plays include Operation Big Rock, My Rabbi (with Kayvon Khoshkam), Home Is a Beautiful Word and Reasonable Doubt (with Yvette Nolan and Lancelot Knight) and Being Here: The Refugee Project. Joel is currently an interdisciplinary PhD student at the University of Saskatchewan, investigating the potential of theatre to strengthen cities. He is grateful to be the first Urjo Kareda Resident from Saskatchewan and the first Trudeau Foundation Scholar from the U of S. Joel lives in Saskatoon with his 6-year old son, Judah.

# *MY SISTER'S RAGE*



By Yolanda Bonnell

Directed by Kelly Vittrekwa

## About the Play:

When their Matriarch ends up in a coma, a ma'iingan-wolf clan family gathers together to work through their collective grief and begin to heal from an incident in the past. While the Aunties camp out in the hospital room, the younger cousins spend their time at the Grandmother's house by the backyard firepit; all while being circled by a cackling crow jokester.

As the veil between the ancestral plane and the earthly realm gets thinner, tensions and emotions are high and vulnerabilities are exposed, revealing the true strength and resilience of the ma'iingan kwe.

Yolanda Bonnell's *My Sister's Rage* is a story about the nuances of holding trauma and joy at the same time and how laughter is medicine.



### **Note from the Playwright:**

I wrote this piece almost as a love letter to the complex and hilarious and wonderful kwe in my family. And for their kids - some of whom I don't know well. I wanted to show a snapshot of existence - Indigenous existence. In its beautiful simplicity but with those intricate layers underneath - much like the land. I want my communities to find themselves in this story and feel heard and seen. I keep saying that representation is harm reduction - or it can be. My hope is, if someone sees their story in mine, maybe they'll feel less alone. The more we see ourselves and our stories reflected - especially community specific stories, the more we can see our place in the world. That there is always a place for us. And for anyone who has dealt with grief - I hope there is healing in this for you.

Miigwetch

### **Content Transparency** **(My Sisters Rage):**

Swears, Language, Dirty Old Auntie Jokes  
Underage Cannabis Consumption  
Description of suicide  
MMIWG2S Themes  
Mention of Cancer  
Mention of Child Services  
Mention of sterilization of Indigenous people

### **About the Playwright:**

Yolanda Bonnell (*She/They*) is a Bi/Queer 2 Spirit Anishinaabe-Ojibwe, South Asian mixed storyteller and multidisciplinary creator/educator. Originally from Fort William First Nation in Thunder Bay, Ontario (Superior Robinson Treaty territory), her arts practice is now based in Tkarón:to. She is Co-artistic leader of *manidoons collective*, that she runs with Michif (Métis) artist, Cole Alvis. In February 2020, Yolanda's four-time Dora nominated solo show *bug* was remounted at Theatre Passe Muraille while the published book was shortlisted for a Governor General Literary Award. Yolanda was the Indigenous artist recipient of the Jayu Arts for Human Rights Award for her work and won the PGC Tom Hendry Drama Award for her play, *My Sister's Rage*. Yolanda has taught at schools like York University and Sheridan College and proudly bases her practice in land-based creation, drawing on energy and inspiration from the earth and her ancestors.

# CAST & TEAM



## **Tyra Ashauntie – Actor**

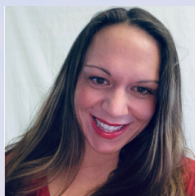
Tyra is a Indigenous performer, artist, and activist from Selkirk First Nation, Pelly Crossing. She was born and raised in the Yukon and grew up in Pelly, she attended the Music, Art, and Drama Program in Whitehorse for two semesters in her high school career. She's starred in the programs musical, "As you Wish", written by the teachers of the program, and many more shows. Growing up, Tyra has always been drawn to the arts, whether it was watching, learning, performing or creating. Tyra wishes to further her career and passion for Theatre and acting, whether it includes being part of a small theatre group, studying it professionally, or even for her own enjoyment. A few things that she enjoys are reading, painting, performing, and being in nature. Her ideal future includes travelling the world in a van, eventually living at a small cabin off grid with a lot of animals, and painting/reading out in nature everyday.

## **Rosalind Crump – Actor**

Rosalind (she/her) is a settler Canadian, educator, and lover of theatre. Born in Whitehorse, she is grateful to be back living in Kwanlin Dün and Ta'an Kwächän territory, and is very happy to be joining Gwaandak Theatre for the Indigenous Summer Play Reading series – the first step back on the stage in (gulp) a decade! Rosalind studied Geography and Drama at Mount Allison University, and toured with



Tintamarre, a bilingual and devised theatre company (Bouffe, Album, Bus 36) across the Maritimes, as well as with Salamander Theatre's Shakespeare in the Park (Romeo and Juliet) in Ottawa and across northern Ontario. Rosalind dreams of being many things when she grows up – and is still trying to figure out just what (and when) that may be.



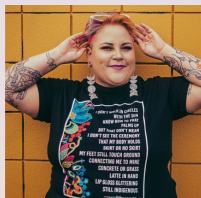
## **Roreigh Eftoda – Actor**

Roreigh She/Her Cree from Northern Alberta mixed with Irish and Ukrainian. I moved from Edmonton, Alberta to the Whitehorse, Yukon at the age of eight. After high school I went to college and joined local theater group in Nanaimo, B.C. During my time with the Nanaimo Theatre Group I had done props for plays then performed on stage in a comedy. Returning to the Yukon in 2008 where I began taking dance lessons at Leaping Feats and Northern Light including Hip Hop, Salsa, Jazz, modern and burlesque. I also got involved with the Guild Hall at that time doing props. Wanting to pursue acting I turned to auditioning for film. I landed a background actor role in an episode of “Northern Town” mini TV series produced by Tagish Lake Films Inc./CBC. Recently I had a featured role in the movie “Polaris” produced by Little Dipper Films incorporated. 2021 and 2022 I participated in Quick n’ Dirty Residency & Digital Cabaret thru Gwaandak Theater. Learning the art of burlesque bring my love of dance and theater together. In March of 2022 I performed burlesque live in “Gender Riot” show produced by Queer Yukon. Fun fact, my favorite pastime is diving. I was one of the first recreational divers to dive the A.J. Goddard, a steamship that sunk in 1901 in Lake Laberge.

## **Isabelle James-Walker - Actor**



Born in raised in Whitehorse, Yukon. (She/her) Isabelle found her passion for Film making when she was younger, she would make short films with her brother and his friends. Then she found the Music Arts and Drama Program and completely fell in love with acting and the Arts. Being really shy and closed off as a kid, She found that acting for her was a way to come out of that shell. She found her confidence while pursuing her passion. A few productions shes been in: Music Art and Drama Program - 3 years; Newsies 2019 - Theatre for Young people; Dreary and Izzy 2021- The Guild; Women of the Fur Trade 2021 - Gwaandak Theatre



## **Kayleigh Lafontaine - Actor**

Kayleigh is a visitor on this territory, joining us from the wide open prairies. Always calling themselves a northern girl that feels a bit null and void when you're 3000 miles north of their hometown of The Pas, Manitoba. Kayleigh first performed with Gwaandak Theatre virtually in 2020 in the Indigiqueer Cabaret as her alter ego Gladys Stardust. Although it is her first time here, Kayleigh is excited to perform and adventure here in the Yukon as it is where her mother was born and raised.

## **Kelly Vittrekwa - Actor & Director**



Kelly was born in Inuvik, NT and raised in Dawson City, YT. Kelly is a Gwich'in/Tr'ondek Hwëch'in Actor. She began her acting career with Palace Grand Theater on stage in the 2019 production of "Cabin of Curiosities". When Covid started, Kelly felt depressed as there wasn't much call for auditions. Performing is huge part of Kelly's life. Until Gwaandak Theater called out for a digital Burlesque performance and ISPR over zoom. Then Palace Grand Theater put on a summer radio play and fell in love with voice acting. Kelly is building her acting and burlesque career in Dawson City. Her stage name, Deels Villainess. Her last acting gig was in Woman of the Fur Trade. This is Kelly's first time directing and also first time acting and reading along with her child, Trinity Vittrekwa.



## **Trinity Vittrekwa - Actor**

Trinity (they/them) Raised on the traditional land of Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in territory in Dawson City, Trinity is Gwitch'in/Norwegian and is studying to be an actor, artist & director. They have performed in school plays but this would be Trinity's first time acting. They have wanted to be actor after watching their mother, Kelly Vittrekwa, performing on stage and in front of the camera for the past few years. Their goals is to go to Vancouver and New York to learn to be a film maker and tell their own stories. When not acting, they like to draw, swim and play Nintendo.

## **Miki Wolf – Actor**



Miki is a multi-disciplinary performing artist based on the traditional, unceded lands of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Peoples. Miki is Indigenous, belonging to the Champagne and Aishihik Nation, and has Japanese diasporic and mixed-white settler ancestry. Miki has a BFA from the Theatre Performance Program at Simon Fraser University, and continues to train in Grotowski and other psycho-physical theatre techniques beyond their degree program. In addition to theatre, Miki also engages with contemporary dance forms, specifically Contact Improvisation—Miki was a recipient of the 2019 scholarship program at EDAM Contemporary Dance Company in Vancouver. Recently, Miki completed a 100-hour intensive theatre course with master teacher David MacMurray Smith in December 2021, and was selected as an artist-in-residency at the Banff Centre for their Indigenous Playwright's Nest in April 2022. Miki is an avid writer, and has written and devised two solo works since completing their degree studies in 2018. Miki's work aims to blend experimental physical theatre forms with emergent contemporary dance techniques through their lifelong curiosity for composition, while exploring the body and its potential for limitless creative source. Miki is particularly passionate about creating composition in relation to nature, devising experimental containers for improvised choreographic work, and finding ways to inject playfulness into acts of artistic decolonization.

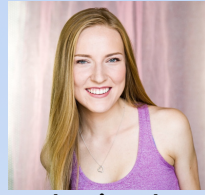


## Colin Wolf – Director

Colin is a Métis performer, theatre maker, and activist who was born and raised in the North-East of Moh'kins'tsis (Calgary), AB on Treaty 7 Territory. He is slowly reconnecting to his family's language, Cree, and is able to speak French. He graduated with a BFA in Performance from the University of Lethbridge in 2014. His theatre work has focused on the development of new, Indigenous, and politically relevant theatre. After graduating, Colin co-founded Thumbs Up Good Work Theatre with his sister. Their most recent project, *The Born Again Crow*, explored themes of racism, capitalism, and violence. As an activist, Colin works towards subsistence, art, and most importantly: safety for all marginalised folk. He recognizes that there is no quick way to address colonial power structures, but as a colonially trained artist he has spent the last half decade working with Indigenous artists to decolonize his practice. Colin is eager to start his journey in Whitehorse, Yukon Territory of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council as the new Artistic Director at Gwaandak Theatre. If Colin isn't Theatre-Making, he is arms deep in the garden, or hard at work making breads and baking. He endeavours to always have a few loaves of bread on hand to feed those around him.



**Simone Kitchen**  
– **Stage Manager**



Simone is a theatre artist of Polish/British settler descent and is fortunate enough to have been born and raised on the beautiful traditional territory of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and Ta’an Kwäch’än Council. She has worn a number of different hats in the theatre world including actor, director, writer, producer and now stage manager! She is excited to be working with Gwaandak Theatre on the Indigenous Summer Play Readings and to hear these scripts being read by such a talented team of performers.

***SPECIAL THANKS TO***  
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Claire Ness      Matthew Sarty  
James Croken      Asha Bittenbender  
Anna Lund  
& The Gwaandak Theatre Staff

# ***WANT TO GET INVOLVED WITH GWAANDAK THEATRE?***



There are many ways to participate with our programming throughout the year!

## **BECOME A MEMBER!**

Join our seasonal membership for just \$5! Be the first to know about our shows and receive invitations to our members-only events throughout the year!

## **JOIN OUR TEAM!**

As a professional theatre, Gwaandak strives to pay everyone who works with us. We have many paid opportunities throughout the year so check our job postings frequently!

Currently we are seeking:

### **Opportunities for Youth:**

Youth Council Coordinator  
Youth Council Members

### **Opportunities for Playwrights:**

Seeking Queer and Trans Playwrights to participate in a national playwriting unit  
Seeking scripts from Indigenous playwrights to include in our seasonal programming

### Opportunities for Production Crew

We produce many events over the course of the season, and we are always looking for people with production, coordination, and technical theatre skills!

### Opportunities for Actors

We hold general auditions in the fall & spring. You can also reach out any time of year to schedule an audition with our staff.

### Opportunities for Artists

Every spring we host the Awaken Festival where we offer various workshops, panels, lectures, and residencies-- all of which are free to participate.

This is a great opportunity to learn new skills, build on existing ones, or try something completely new!

### SIGN UP FOR OUR NEWSLETTER

Be the first to receive Gwaandak Theatre news-- get updates on ongoing projects, be notified of ticket releases & special events, and so much more!

To learn more about Gwaandak Theatre, please visit <https://www.gwaandaktheatre.ca/>

# THANK-YOU TO OUR SPONSORS



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All of Gwaandak Theatre's programming is FREE;  
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year:

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media!

For more information:

<https://www.gwaandaktheatre.ca>



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