

Alberta Aboriginal Performing Arts and Punctuate! Theatre, as part of the Rubaboo Festival, present  
**BEARS**  
by Matthew MacKenzie

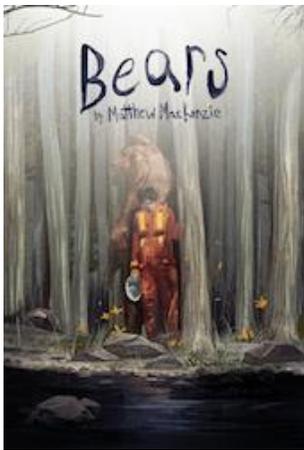
Feb 1-3, 2018 • Backstage Theatre (10330 – 84 Ave) @ 8pm • Tickets: \$22/adults, \$17/students & seniors •  
Tix @ tickets.fringetheatre.ca/or 780 409 1910

*"I'd never seen a play that speaks to issues facing Canada's Indigenous peoples as effectively and beautifully as Bears does."*

-Jerry Saddleback, Cree Elder and Dean of Cultural Studies at Maskwacis College

*"...a highly entertaining evening at the theatre thanks to MacKenzie's clever direction and Monica Dottor's ingenious choreography."*

- Kelly Nestruck, Globe and Mail



***Comically Dark. Unapologetically political. A play about pipelines.***

*The prime suspect in a workplace accident, Floyd has to get out of town fast. Pursued by the RCMP, he heads through the Rockies for Burnaby, B.C, along the route of the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain Pipeline. By the time he reaches the Pacific, Floyd has experienced changes - his gait widening, his muscles bulging, his sense of smell heightening...*

**Edmonton, AB– A multi-disciplinary dark comedy about the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain Pipeline, Alberta Aboriginal Performing Arts and Punctuate! Theatre from Edmonton, as part of the Rubaboo Festival, present *BEARS*, February 1-3, 2018.**

Written and directed by Matthew MacKenzie (SIA, The Particulars, The Other) and starring award-winning (and former tar sands worker) Métis theatre artist Sheldon Elter (Métis Mutt), *BEARS* asks “What the hell is going on in Wild Rose Country?”

Unapologetically political, *BEARS* gives voice to the voiceless animals, and vulnerable landscapes, desecrated by the insatiable human desire for industrial expansion, while striving to increase dialogue about the devastating effects on Canada's First Nations peoples. Originally developed in Edmonton, the sold-out workshop run also garnered five Elizabeth Sterling Haynes Award nominations, and two wins for Outstanding Score and Outstanding Choreography. Liz Nicholls of the Edmonton Journal reported, “*BEARS* is an Ode to Nature... It's rare enough to find original theatre that is so definably of this place. Theatre that harnesses the divergent resources of multi-disciplinary artists so creatively to mount an argument is rarer still. You can't really afford to miss *BEARS*.”

An Indigenous-led new Canadian play told through dramatic storytelling and choreography, an eight-person chorus, enchanting projections, and an evocative electronic soundscape, *BEARS* is an emotional, empathetic performance experience.

Cast/Crew

**Starring** Sheldon Elter (creator and performer *Métis Mutt*) • **Featuring** Skye Demas, Lara Ebata, Christine Sokaymoh Frederick, Zoe Glassman, Alida Kendell, Aimee Rushton, Rebecca Sadowski, Kendra Shorter, Holly Treddenick and Gianna Vacirca. • **Written and Directed** by Matthew MacKenzie • **Associate Direction** by Patrick Lundeen • **Stage Management** by Erin Voaklander • **Choreography** by Monica Dottor • **Original Score** by Noor Dean Musani • **Environmental Design** by T. Erin Gruber • **Costume Design** by Brianna Kolybaba and Monica Dottor  
**About the Playwright:**

**For interview inquiries and high-resolution photos, please contact:**

Lianna Makuch: outreach@punctuatetheatre.com ; 780-993-0595

albertaaboriginalarts.ca ; punctuatetheatre.com

In 1841, Matt's Chapan (Cree for Great Grandmother) Kisiskaciwan (Cree for Saskatchewan) passed through the Edmonton region. For three days, as her party stocked up on supplies, she sat by the North Saskatchewan—her namesake, and cried. An Englishman recorded in his account of the journey that Kisiskaciwan had “the same veneration for the North Saskatchewan as those of the Hindu faith do for the Ganges.” It is this historical account that led Matt's Grandfather, Alberta author Vern Wishart, to embark on a journey of discovery about their family's Cree, Ojibwe and Métis heritage that had been hidden by his father due to the endemic racism of the time, a journey of discovery Matt's mother, film maker Beth Wishart MacKenzie, and he, are continuing.

Matt is deeply grateful to the guidance, support and teaching Christine Sokaymoh Frederick and Cree Elders Jerry Saddleback and Jo-Ann Saddleback have generously offered him as he has endeavored to learn about and engage with his Indigenous heritage.

#### **About the National Tour:**

Alberta Aboriginal Performing Arts and Punctuate! Theatre are two award-winning Alberta theatre companies' with a national scope. We are proud to be embarking on a tour across the country, presenting two brand new, Indigenous-led, Canadian plays: *Minosis Gathers Hope* by Christine Sokaymoh Frederick and *Bears* by Matthew MacKenzie.

TORONTO, ON @ The Theatre Centre - January 15 to 27, 2018

EDMONTON, AB @ The Rubaboo Festival at The Backstage Theatre - February 1 to 4, 2018

CANMORE, AB @ artsPlace - March 21 to 24, 2018

SADDLE LAKE FIRST NATION, AB - March 2018 (Performance dates TBD)

MASKWACIIS, AB - March 2018 (Performance dates TBD)

CALGARY, AB @ The Arts Commons - April 4 to April 7, 2018

VANCOUVER, BC @ The Cultch - May 9 to 12, 2018

While in Edmonton, the company is also presenting MINOSIS GATHERS HOPE, a play for young audiences by urban Aboriginal Cree-Métis playwright Christine Sokaymoh Frederick. A young Métis girl, Minosis (Cree for kitten) must deal with feelings of abandonment, self-doubt and racism to come to terms with the dilemma of her inner life: an understanding that is vital for all Canadians whose cultures touch, evolve and interweave. Click [here](#) for more information.

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