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DISTANT THUNDER

AT



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MARCH 23-27, 2022





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Strong arts organizations build creative and culturally vibrant communities. This is why Devon is committed to supporting Lyric Theatre. Performing arts inspire learning, individuality and creativity. The results enrich our lives and help Oklahoma flourish.

Photo by KO Rinearson

Commitment Runs Deep



Director's Welcome

Dear Friends,

Welcome to our 2022 Season and our celebratory return to our two beautiful indoor theatres – the 281-seat Plaza Theatre and the 2,477-seat Civic Center Music Hall! We have been waiting and preparing for this moment for more than two years and couldn't be more excited to welcome you back inside. We are thrilled and thankful to finally gather our artists, technicians, and creative teams for the four season shows that have been postponed since 2020 – *Distant Thunder*, *Head Over Heels*, *Matilda*, and *Kinky Boots*. To say we are ready is an understatement. We also are taking what we've learned these past two years and are carrying some of the excitement of site-specific theatre forward with two shows this season.

While *Distant Thunder* was ready to begin performances in our Plaza Theatre when COVID hit in March 2020, we felt we couldn't pass up bringing the show to where it's heart is – the new First Americans Museum. Lyric's experiences producing theatre these past two years at non-traditional venues have allowed us to forge new community partnerships and share live performance with thousands of new and returning patrons. We are proud and thankful to partner with FAM, a new home to First American performance. In addition, Lyric's *A Christmas Carol* will return outside for one more year to the charming Harn Homestead. It's going to be such a joyous homecoming season, and I hope you are able to join us all year long. For guaranteed seats at the best prices, we always encourage you to become a subscriber! For more information please contact us at: Tickets@LyricTheatreOKC.org

For those of you new to us, here are some highlights of who we are:

- Founded in 1963, Lyric Theatre is Oklahoma's flagship nonprofit theatre serving over 100,000 people statewide annually.
- Lyric Theatre's production of *Oklahoma!* was proclaimed the Official State Production in 2015.
- Acclaimed Broadway stars Kristin Chenoweth, Kelli O'Hara, Megan Mullally, Chita Rivera, Beth Leavel, Tommy Tune, Dee Hoty, Billy Porter, and many others have performed on Lyric's stage.
- Lyric Theatre won international press acclaim from *The New York Times* and *BBC News* for its re-envisioning of *A Christmas Carol* at the historic Harn Homestead.
- Lyric Theatre is the co-presenter with OKC Broadway of The Kelli O'Hara High School Musical Theatre awards.
- Lyric productions attract audiences from 305 Oklahoma cities and towns in Oklahoma, with attendees living in 3,504 zip codes across 50 states, DC, Puerto Rico and Canada.
- Lyric Theatre's Musical Interactive touring program travels to schools across the entire state performing live for more than 45,000 students per year. The program is fully funded by donors and provided to all Oklahoma schools entirely free of charge.
- Lyric's Thelma Gaylord Academy sets the standard for elementary and secondary theatre education. Working with professional artists, the Academy nurtures young artistic talent, offering classes for ages 5-18 and providing a safe, fun, and educational environment.
- Lyric Theatre's revenue is reinvested back into the state's economy through supplies and labor for sets, costumes, props, lighting, sound designs, plus sales tax on ticket sales.
- Lyric Theatre produces year-round and employs more than 350 actors, artists, carpenters, and technicians presenting 200+ individual performances. And, 95% of the employees Lyric hires live and work in Oklahoma.

And now you have a chance to help us by encouraging your Oklahoma State Senators, Representatives, and the Governor's office to vote for Senate Bill 1385 which designates Lyric Theatre as the Official State Theatre of Oklahoma! Thank you for your support and loyalty during these past few years. It hasn't been easy, but we promise to continue to provide the highest quality live performance, created right here in Oklahoma!

See you in the lobby,

Michael Baron



LYRIC THEATRE OF OKLAHOMA

Summer at the Civic Center



Roald Dahl's

Matilda

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RODGERS & HAMMERSTEIN'S

CAROUSEL

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KINKY BOOTS

July 19 - 24

Buy Tickets at: LyricTheatreOKC.org

Authors' Note

DISTANT THUNDER is a contemporary, fictional story based on an amalgam of true events that happened over the course of many years. Co-writer, Shaun Taylor-Corbett, began his quest for identity at 14. Challenged by a family who knew little of their own heritage, Shaun found a mentor in Darrell Robes Kipp, founder of the Cuts Woods School on the Blackfeet Reservation, who dedicated his life to preserving Pikunni language and culture. He encouraged Shaun to tell his story, and the seed was planted.

With writer-director and mom, Lynne Taylor-Corbett, and songwriting partner Chris Wiseman, an early draft developed in 2012, nurtured by Native Voices at the Autry. The following year Amas Musical Theatre provided the authors the opportunity to further develop the score and presented a reading, where the feedback guided further development. Kent Nicholson of Playwrights Horizons offered guidance and support. Bill Rauch, then director of Oregon Shakespeare Festival, offered a lab and concert presentation. In 2018, Amas mounted a workshop production that led to a developmental production at the Lyric Theatre of Oklahoma where Covid shut it down before it could open. In the interim, the work did not stop, in March 2022, it returns to Oklahoma to open outdoors at the celebrated First Americans Museum, produced by the Lyric and funded by several of Oklahoma's 39 tribes.

Throughout the long process, esteemed elders Robert Greygrass, Joseph Firecrow and Brent Florendo offered guidance and creativity, powwow singers Chava Florendo and Brent Florendo contributed family songs which form the basis for thematic material developed by arranger, Michael Moricz. The cast, who all have indigenous heritage, devoted themselves to learning the dances taught by the members of the acclaimed Thunderbird Dancers in New York. The Pikunni language spoken in the show has been meticulously coached by teachers of the tribe. The support of Blackfeet bundle holders has inspired us when all seemed lost.

Shaun was invited to the Blackfeet Okan ceremony this year where he received his Blackfeet name, "I'Pyooksisstiikoom." It means Distant Thunder, and the spirit of that ceremony is carried into this story, where a young man is given that name, carrying the hopes and dreams of his tribe. We have been encouraged to tell a contemporary story that deals with real life issues happening in one of the most impoverished communities in America. We have been encouraged to develop a score that fuses Native and pop music, to bring the show to the larger arena of American Musical Theatre. We are encouraged by the Native kids who reach out on Facebook and ask to sing our songs. May there come a time when they can look up on the stage of a mainstream theatre and recognize themselves in the story; then go home and write their own.

- Lynne Taylor-Corbett & Shaun Taylor-Corbett

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ASHLEY WELLS, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

PRESENT



DISTANT THUNDER

BOOK BY

LYNNE TAYLOR-CORBETT +
AND **SHAUN TAYLOR-CORBETT** *

MUSIC AND LYRICS BY

SHAUN TAYLOR-CORBETT +
AND **CHRIS WISEMAN**

ADDITIONAL MUSIC AND LYRICS BY

ROBERT LINDSEY-NASSIF AND **MICHAEL MORICZ**

SCENIC DESIGNER
SHAWN IRISH ^

COSTUME DESIGNER
E.B. BROOKS ^

LIGHTING DESIGNER
FABIAN J. GARCIA

MUSIC DIRECTION BY
MICHAEL MORRIS

SOUND DESIGNER
COREY RAY

PROPERTIES DESIGNER
COURTNEY STRONG

PRODUCTION MANAGER
MATTHEW SIPRESS

CHOREOGRAPHY
LYNNE TAYLOR-CORBETT +

STAGE MANAGER
CAROLINE MUELLER *

DIRECTED BY

LYNNE TAYLOR-CORBETT

+Member of Stage Directors and Choreographers Society (SDC)

^ Member of United Scenic Artists (USA)

*Member of Actors' Equity Association (AEA)

DISTANT THUNDER developed at Amas Musical Theatre
Donna Trinkoff, Artistic Producer

Additional development at Native Voices and Oregon Shakespeare Festival

Song List

Prologue: Powwow Flashback, Family Song of Spirit Drum

“TIME STANDS STILL”

“LOAVES AND FISHES”

“STRONG ENOUGH”

“INDIAN DAYS”

“LANGUAGE THAT LIVES”

“WATCHA GONNA DO NOW”

“HOLD ON”

“THE PRICE IS TOO HIGH”

“WOMAN’S VOCABLE LAMENT”

“PICK UP THE PIECES”

“THESE HANDS OF MINE”

“RIDE, COWBOY, RIDE”

“DISTANT THUNDER”



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DISTANT THUNDER Cast



Shaun Taylor-Corbett*
Darrell Waters



Ryan Duncan*
Hector/Sam Silver



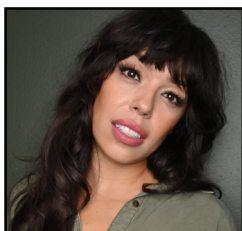
Spencer Battiest
Tonto



Xander Chauncey*
Jim Running Crow



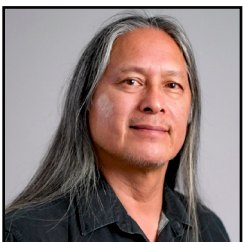
Jonathan Lynch
Smudge



Chelsea Zeno*
Shareen, Tourist



April Ortiz*
Betty Still Smoking



Brent Florendo Sitwalla-Pum
Old Man



Jeff Barehand
White Feather



Matoaka Little Eagle
Grandma Jingle Dress



Karsten Tate
Roberta



Katie McCollum
Aiyana

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DISTANT THUNDER Cast



JohnLee Lookingglass
Sheriff Running Buck



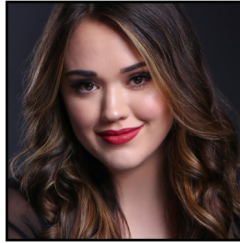
Angela Gomez*
Dorothy Dark Eyes



Chava Florendo
Featured Ensemble



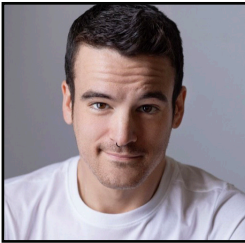
Aiden Le:ldin Rogers
Young Darrell



Sierra Sikes
*US/Swing-Aiyana/
Dorothy/Roberta*



Mariah Warren
*US/Swing/Grandma/
Betty/Shareen*



Seth Paden
*US/Swing/Tonto/Smudge/
Jim/Sheriff*



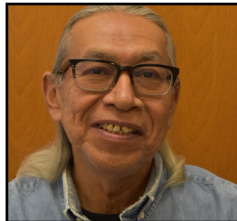
Brayson Williams
*US/Swing/Darrell Waters/
Old Man/Jim Running Crow*



Ace Greenwood
Consultant



Graham Primeaux
Dancer



Crickett Shields
Dancer



Skylar Nucosee
Dancer

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The Cast

SHAUN TAYLOR-CORBETT (*Darrell Waters*) is proud to be a mixed-race artist of Amskapi Pikunni (Blackfeet), Scandinavian, and Black heritage as well as being a member of the Kaa Nux Im mii Taaks (Blackfoot Crazy Dog Society). As writers, Shaun and Chris Wiseman have collaborated and written songs for European and American television for the last 10 years. Shaun also collaborated with Daniel Jones from Savage Garden on a concept demo in Australia while filming *Hi-5*, a hit musical show for children airing on Discovery Kids. In LA, Shaun worked closely with Native Voices at the Autry as an ensemble member – acting, directing, writing and collaborating to create new works by Indigenous artists for the stage, including *Off the Rails* and *Distant Thunder*. He was an acting company member of the Oregon Shakespeare Company from 2017-2019, where he continued the development of the stage version of *Distant Thunder*. In 2014, he was honored as an artist of distinction by the Association of American Indian Affairs for his work on *Jersey Boys* and *Distant Thunder*. Shaun was in the original production of *In the Heights* on Broadway and closed the show in the role of Sonny. He played Frankie Valli in the 2nd National Tour of *Jersey Boys*, Juan in *Altar Boyz* Off-Broadway, and Usnavi and Sonny from *In the Heights* on the First National Tour as well as in the Broadway company. He performed in Bedlam Theatre Company's acclaimed production of *The Crucible*, as well as playing the role of Slender/Duke of Burgundy/Bassanio in *Bedlam: the Series*. His original Native American musical, *Distant Thunder*, is based on Shaun's deep connection with the Blackfeet community in Browning, MT. Shaun co-narrated *There There* by Tommy Orange which was nominated for an Audie Award in 2019, and recently narrated *The Only Good Indians* by Stephen Graham Jones. TV/Film: *Hi-5*, *Supremacy*, *Gamer's Guide*, *All My Children*.


RYAN DUNCAN (*Hector/Sam Silver*) – BROADWAY: *Gettin' the Band Back Together* and *Shrek*. NATIONAL TOUR: *Man of La Mancha*. OFF-BROADWAY: *Nassim*, *Liberty*, *Altar Boyz* (Drama League nom.), *Soul Doctor*, *The Yellow Brick Road*, *The Fifth Column*, *it must be him*, and *My First Time*. REGIONAL THEATRE: *Passing Through*, *Goodspeed* (CT),

Beautiful Room/New York, Long Wharf (CT), *Shrek*, 5th Avenue (WA), *Gettin' the Band Back Together*, George Street Playhouse (NJ), *Striking 12*, Good Theatre (ME), *tick, tick... BOOM! ATF* (NY). *Side Show*, Signature (VA), *1776 & A Christmas Carol*, Ford's Theatre (D.C.), *Hair*, Studio Theatre (D.C.). FILM/TV: *In Stereo*, *Obits*, *Shrek the Musical*, *I Don't Believe in That*, *Stand By*, *Blue Bloods*, *He's with Me*, *FreakMe*, *The Bunny Hole*, and *The Annex*. Ryan is working on a holiday show he wrote called *A Gander Family Christmas*. For Métis ancestors no longer invisible. We are, right now, because of those who came before us.

SPENCER BATTIEST (*Tonto*) is making his Lyric Theatre debut. Spencer is an International singer/songwriter of Choctaw and Seminole Heritage, born and raised in Hollywood Florida. Spencer is also making his regional theatre debut. OTHER THEATRE: *Native Voices* at the Autry, Los Angeles. ADDITIONAL CREDITS: Hard Rock Records, Native American Music Awards, MTV Video Music Awards.

XANDER CHAUNCEY (*Jim Running Crow*) has Shawnee and Mapuche heritage. REGIONAL THEATRE: *The Full Monty* at Paper Mill Playhouse; *Jekyll and Hyde* and *Mamma Mia!* at Westchester B'way; *Phantom* and *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* at The Alhambra; *The Buddy Holly Story* at Fulton Opera House; *Footloose* and *Altar Boyz* at Actor's Playhouse; *Spamalot* at Arrow Rock Lyceum; *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* at Riverside; *Titanic* at Hanger Theatre (Best Actor in a Musical, BroadwayWorld). OFF-BROADWAY: *The Magdalene*; *Perfect European Man*, *Jack London: Love, Sex & Revolution*. FILM: *The Molok*; *It Is What It Is*; *Dropped Frames*; *3AM*. TELEVISION: *The Good Cop*; *The Steve Harvey Show*; *Date Plate*. OTHER THEATRE: *Tenors of Rock*; *CATS*; *Beauty and the Beast*. ADDITIONAL CREDITS: Acting and Directing Training, William Esper Studio; Founder, Matter/DarkMatter Productions.

JONATHAN LYNCH (*Smudge*) Originally from the Southwest, Jonathan attended Eastern New Mexico University where he studied Voice. From there he studied Music Theater at

A Native American man in traditional regalia is captured in a dynamic dance pose. He wears a large, colorful feathered headdress with a prominent white feather. His face is adorned with white and red paint. He is wearing a dark vest over a white shirt, heavily decorated with colorful beaded necklaces and fringes. A large, colorful, fringed object, possibly a fan or a piece of regalia, is held in his hands. The background is dark with blurred, colorful light trails, suggesting a dance performance.

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Oklahoma City University. REGIONAL THEATRE: *The Tempest* at Oklahoma Shakespeare in the Park. OTHER THEATRE: *Anything Goes* at Oklahoma City University and *Camelot* and *A Grand Night for Singing* at Eastern New Mexico University. ADDITIONAL CREDITS: MM from Oklahoma City University, BS from Eastern New Mexico University. Jonathan is a member of the Navajo Nation, a third generation Spanish American, and a descendent of the Oneida Nation.

CHELSEA ZENO (*Shareen/Tourist*) – Chelsea's ancestors are Taino! Tainos make up the Caribbean. We are part of this world. We are not extinct like many believe. Past shows include *Hunchback of Notre Dame* with Fuse Productions (Esmeralda), *In the Heights* at TUTS (Vanessa), *The Other Shore* at Sonnet Rep (Anita Berber/Helga Weiss), *Spring Awakening* at Revision Theatre (Thea), and *Priscilla Queen of the Desert* First National Tour (Cynthia/Diva U/S). She also sings nationally with the Disney coverband The Little Mermen.

APRIL ORTIZ (*Betty Still Smoking*) – TRIBAL HERITAGE: Tigua Ysleta del sur Pueblo. BROADWAY: *In the Heights*: Principal Standby Abuela - Richard Rodgers Theatre. NATIONAL TOURS: *In the Heights*-Daniela, *Cats*-Demeter, *La Cage Aux Folles*-Swing. REGIONAL: *Between Two Knees*-Irma – OSF, *In the Heights*-Daniela – PCLO & *Camila*-TUTS, *TouchTones*-Teresa – Arden Theatre, *Medea Macbeth Cinderella Stepmother*-Yale Rep, *Sunsets & Margaritas*-Luz & *Barrio Babies* - Lola – Denver Center, *Bright Ideas*-Woman 1- Laguna Playhouse. OFF-BROADWAY: *Tio Pepe/Somewhere*-Inez – Public Theatre, *The View Upstairs*-Rita – Culture Project, *Transformations*-HomeSpace, *A Woman's Work*-April – Flatiron Playhouse. TV & FILM: *Father of the Bride I&II*, *The Majestic*, *UnCoupled*, *Fosse/Verdon*, *Golden Girls*, *Instinct*, *Braindead*, *Down and Out in Beverly Hills*, *Everybody Loves Raymond*, *Law and Order CI*, *Coach*, *Empty Nest*, *Elementary* and many more.

BRENT FLORENDO SITWALLAPUM (*Old Man*) – Brent's heritage stems from the Wasco, Yakama, Warm Springs tribes. Oregon Shakespeare Festival: Grandfather and Ensemble in *Off the Rails*. HYH in *Yellow Face*, *Along the River*; Oregon Cabaret Theatre: *Bear in Full Circle*, Rogue Music Theatre: *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*, Southern Oregon

University: Ghost of Agamemnon in *Elektra*, Amigos in *Candide*), Anchorage Civic Opera: *Lucia de Lammermoor* and *La Traviata*, Alaska Light Opera Theatre: Society Max, Cubanos dancer in *Guys and Dolls*, Pier One Theatre Rapid Robert in *Ballad of Kenai*, Riff in *West Side Story*, Dance: Oregon Dance Theater: ensemble, Robin Bryant Dance Company: lead male dancer, Playwright: *Raccoon Earns His Stripes* (performed at Southern Oregon University).

JEFF BAREHAND (*White Feather*) is from Gila River and Navajo decent. His credits include *Hair*, *The Fully Monty*, *Buddy! The Buddy Holly Musical*, *The Man of La Mancha*, *Evita* and *Les Misérables*. Jeff also pursued screen acting but disillusioned by the lack of and types of roles offered Native Americans, he wanted more. He found guidance at a summer film workshop sponsored by ABC/Disney held at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, NM where he crewed four short film projects and produced and directed his own short film. He caught the bug for filmmaking and summarily studied screenwriting at Seattle's Northwest Film Forum and eventually became a Sundance Film Fellow. He founded the Olympia Film Collective (www.olyfilm.com) to provide a resource for local filmmakers to find likeminded individuals dedicated to developing the craft of filmmaking in the southwestern Washington. When he's not on stage, he owns and operates a successful production company, Sky Bear Media, traveling the states creating media for corporations, tribes, governments and organizations.

MATOAKA LITTLE EAGLE (*Grandma Jingle Dress*) – Her heritage is with the Tewa, Apache and Chickahominy tribes. Long time Native singer, dancer, storyteller, educator. ACTING: *Winnetou's Snake Oil Show* from Wigwam City with SpiderWoman Ensemble. SHORT FILM: *Indian Camp*-Brian Edgar; Documentary film: *Mystic Voices*-The Story of the Pequot Wars-Guy Perrotta. Performance venues include: Lincoln Center, Symphony Space, Juilliard School of Music, the National Museum of the American Indian plus many other prestigious venues, schools, and colleges. She has toured in the U.S., Canada, Austria, the Netherlands, and Germany. Collaborations include: John Cage, The Thunderbird American Indian Dancers, Pura Fe, Pete Seeger, David Amram, and Native jazz vocals with Gus Mancini and the Sonic Soul Band.



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Ages 12-14

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KARSTEN TATE (*Roberta*) is an actor/singer/dancer. She is Diné (Navajo) and was born and raised in Arizona. She moved to Oklahoma to attend Oklahoma City University where she obtained her BFA in Acting. Some of her favorite credits include *Hunchback of Notre Dame*, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *Exit the King*, and *A Christmas Carol*. When not acting, she performs in an aquarium, swimming alongside sharks.

KATIE McCOLLUM (*Aiyana*) Katie is making her Lyric Theatre debut. REGIONAL THEATRE: *Company* at The Hawaii Performing Arts Festival. OTHER THEATRE: *A Little Night Music*, *Little Women*, *War of the Worlds*, *Seussical*, Oklahoma City University. She is proudly descended from the indigenous peoples of Texas.

JOHNLÉE LOOKINGGLASS (*Sheriff Running Buck*) is a freelance actor and vocalist from Oklahoma. He has performed at theaters in the state such as Carpenter Square Theatre, the Jewel Box Theater, CitySpace Theatre and The Contemporary with companies and organizations including Cimarron Opera Company, Kismet Arts, Oklahoman Indigenous Theater Company, Theater Crude (an online event), El Reno Theater and more. Also, singing in events such as Norman's Festival of Spirituals and The Oklahoma Choral Artists.

ANGELA GOMEZ (*Dorothy Dark Eyes*) is proud to be a descendant of native Yamici and Coclé tribes of Colombia and modern-day Panama. Originally from San Francisco, Angela is an NYC-based actress, singer, voice educator, and acting instructor. She is making her Lyric Theatre debut. NYC WORKSHOP: *Romeo and Bernadette* (Bernadette), Amas Musical Theatre. FILM: *The Girl Who Loved Fire and Veranda*. TELEVISION: *Partner Track* (Netflix). OTHER THEATRE: *Safety Net*, *Times Square*, *Merrily We Roll Along*, *Heartlines*, *RENT*, New York University. ADDITIONAL CREDITS: B.F.A. from NYU Tisch School of the Arts, The New Studio on Broadway, Stonestreet Studios, and the International Theater Workshop.

CHAVA FLORENDO (*Featured Ensemble*) is a powwow dancer, singer/drummer, and artist living in Ashland, Or. She has performed on many stages with the family drum Dancing Spirit. Her family comes from the Wasco legacy. She currently is focusing her career on providing opportunities for Indigenous youth and artist through collaborative programs and considers herself a door holder. In addition to raising her three kids, she has taught traditional

arts for many years. Chava is extremely excited to share the stage with both her father and son.

AIDEN ŁE:IDIN ROGERS (Young Darrell) is Hupa and Wasco like his Mom Chava (above). Aiden is a fancy dancer and singer with his family drum Dancing Spirit. Aiden has performed since he could walk, including for the Oregon Shakespeare Festival Green Show, and travels to do presentation for schools and programs with the family. Aiden is excited to join his mom and grandpa on stage and dance for the people.

SIERRA SIKES (*US/Swing-Aiyana/Dorothy/Roberta*) is making her Lyric Theatre debut. Sierra is of Cherokee descent. THEATRE CREDITS: *Rock of Ages*, *Nine*, *The Most Happy Fella*, *Merrily We Roll Along*, *The Theory of Relativity*, University of Central Oklahoma; *Disaster!*, Pollard Theatre. ADDITIONAL CREDITS: B.M. in Musical Theatre from The University of Central Oklahoma.

MARIAH WARREN (*US/Swing/Grandma/Betty/Shareen*). Mariah's heritage stem from the Wongunk-Quinnipiac tribe of Connecticut. AT LYRIC: Lyric's *A Christmas Carol*. REGIONAL THEATRE: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Romeo & Juliet*, and *The Tempest* at Oklahoma Shakespeare; *Beehive* and *Heathers the Musical* at the Pollard Theatre; *A Game's Afoot*, *To Kill A Mockingbird*, and *South Pacific* at Jewel Box Theatre; and *Skeleton Crew* and *Crumbs from the Table of Joy* at Carpenter Square Theatre. OTHER THEATRE: *Spamalot*, *RENT*, and *Tarzan* at Southwestern College; and *The Nutcracker* at Ballet Wichita.

SETH PADEN (*US/Swing/Tonto/Smudge/Jim/Sheriff*) is making his Lyric Theatre debut. Seth is a member of the Cherokee tribe. REGIONAL THEATRE: Sam Wheat- *Ghost*, Chad- *Disaster: The Musical* (Pollard Theatre) Roger- *Rent*, Orin Scrivello- *Little Shop of Horrors*, Cousin Kevin- *Tommy*, DeeDee Ramone- *Four Chords and a Gun* (Tulsa Project Theatre); Brad Majors- *The Rocky Horror Show* (TADA Theatre Inc) other roles include: Mark- *Rent*; Lonny- *Rock of Ages* (UCO) Clopin- *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (Kismet); Henry- *Next to Normal*; Rooster- *Annie* (Sooner Theatre) Emmett Forrest- *Legally Blonde* (Theatre Tulsa).

BRAYSON WILLIAMS (*US/Darrell Waters/Old Man/Jim Running Crow*) AT LYRIC: *Concerto*, Lyric's *A Christmas Carol*. FILM: *Treasure Lies*. OTHER THEATRE: *Miss Bennet*; *Christmas at Pemberley*, *Cymbeline*. ADDITIONAL CREDITS: B.F.A from Oklahoma City University, MIO 2017 British American Drama Academy.



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ACE GREENWOOD (*Consultant*) – AT LYRIC: Disney's *When You Wish*. Although new to musical theatre. Ace has acted in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and has performed with multiple Native American dance theaters around the world for more than 30 years.

GRAHAM PRIMEAUX (*Dancer*) is making his Lyric Theatre debut. He is Ponca, Pawnee, Otoe, Potawatomi, Osage, and is a tribal enrolled member of the Sac & Fox Nation. He is an educator/singer/dancer that grew up surrounded by Native Knowledge. Graham has earned a M.Ed. in Curriculum & Instruction from Oklahoma City University, and a BA from the University of Oklahoma. He is currently the Indian Education Coordinator for Shawnee Public Schools, in Shawnee, OK. In addition to education, culturally Graham incorporates tribal traditions into his life through the art of drum making, dancer regalia design, dance performances, and traditional song preservation.

CRICKETT SHIELDS (*Dancer*) George "Crickett" Shields lives in Shawnee. Tribal affiliations: Pawnee/Otoe-Missouria/ and Sioux. Presently,

is Director of Putnam City schools "Native American Student Services", has worked in the field of education for 20 plus years. Teacher trainer for Native American history and culture. Traditional Native Dancer, singer. Professional dance experience: Previously worked on stage as a dancer with the "American Indian Dance Theater Company" out of NYC., and has traveled the country and the world performing Native dances and singing. Learned about Native traditional/ceremonial ways from his elders and relatives from a young age.

SKYLAR NUCOSEE (*Dancer*) Skylar Nucosee is Seminole, Chickasaw, Choctaw and Mississippi Choctaw and resides in Ada. He is a champion dancer in grass and chicken styles and has been dancing since he could walk. He was brought into the area by his parents, David and Couita Nucosee, and grandmas. He passes on his traditions to his children, making sure they know the lessons he has learned from his grandparents, Henry and Bernice Johnson. Skylar has never met a stranger and is continuously working on beadwork, many other art projects and in his professional career for the Cheyenne & Arapaho tribes.

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SHAUN TAYLOR-CORBETT (*Book, Music, Lyrics*) is proud to be a mixed-race artist of Amskapi Pikunni (Blackfeet), Scandinavian, and Black heritage as well as being a member of the Ka Nux Im mii Taaks (Blackfoot Crazy Dog Society). As writers, Shaun and Chris Wiseman have collaborated and written songs for European and American television for the last 10 years. Shaun also collaborated with Daniel Jones from Savage Garden on a concept demo in Australia while filming *Hi-5*, a hit musical show for children airing on Discovery Kids. In LA, Shaun worked closely with Native Voices at the Autry as an ensemble member – acting, directing, writing and collaborating to create new works by Indigenous artists for the stage, including *Off the Rails* and *Distant Thunder*. He was an acting company member of the Oregon Shakespeare Company from 2017-2019, where he continued the development of the stage version of *Distant Thunder*. In 2014, he was honored as an artist of distinction by the Association of American Indian Affairs for his work on *Jersey Boys* and *Distant Thunder*. Shaun was in the original production of *In the Heights* on Broadway and closed the show in the role of Sonny. He played Frankie Valli in the 2nd National Tour of *Jersey Boys*, Juan in *Altar Boyz* Off-Broadway, and Usnavi and Sonny from *In the Heights* on the First National Tour as well as in the Broadway company. He performed in Bedlam Theatre Company's acclaimed production of *The Crucible*, as well as playing the role of Slender/Duke of Burgundy/Bassanio in *Bedlam: the Series*. His original Native American musical, *Distant Thunder*, is based on Shaun's deep connection with the Blackfeet community in Browning, MT. Shaun co-narrated *There There* by Tommy Orange which was nominated for an Audie Award in 2019, and recently narrated *The Only Good Indians* by Stephen Graham Jones. TV/Film: *Hi-5*, *Supremacy*, *Gamer's Guide*, *All My Children*.

LYNNE TAYLOR-CORBETT (*Book, Director*) was nominated for two Tony Awards and Drama Desk Award for her direction and choreography of Broadway's *Swing!* Off-Broadway, she directed and choreographed *Wanda's World* for which she won the Callaway Award and was nominated for a Lucille Lortel Award. Her

production of *My Vaudeville Man* garnered a Drama Desk Award nomination. *Cougar the Musical*, for which she was director and contributing writer, ran for almost two years and is licensed worldwide. Her adaptation of *The Lion King* is in its tenth year at Disney Hong Kong. Plays include *KICK!* (Off-Broadway) and *In The Car With Blossom and Len* (Queens Theatre). She also co-wrote and directed *Out of the Shadows*, a benefit for The National Women's History Museum, starring Meryl Streep. Ms. Taylor-Corbett's film choreography can be seen in the classic *Footloose*, *My Blue Heaven* and *Bewitched* among others. She directed *Real to Reel* a film/live action event presented at the Edinburgh Festival and collaborated with special effects genius, Doug Trumbull, on a dance film commissioned by Sumitomo in Japan. Ms. Taylor-Corbett has choreographed for numerous dance companies including American Ballet Theatre, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre and New York City Ballet, most notably *Seven Deadly Sins* starring Patti LuPone. Her work has been filmed for Live From Lincoln Center and Great Performances. In keeping with her diverse artistic life, she wrote and directed *Hibari* based on the great Japanese icon, Hibari Misora, in 2015 and directed *Part of the Plan*, a musical with score by American icon Dan Fogelberg, in Nashville in 2016. Her greatest joy, however, has been writing *Distant Thunder* with Shaun Taylor-Corbett. Having grown up among tribes in Denver, Colorado, it has been a lifelong dream to tell the story of contemporary life on the reservation and to portray characters that really exist. Ms. Taylor-Corbett serves on the Council of Advisors for the Association on American Indian Affairs.

CHRIS WISEMAN (*Music, Lyrics*) Approaching the score of *Distant Thunder*, Chris has been guided by Shaun Taylor-Corbett into a treasure-trove of Native American music both contemporary and traditional. Chris and Shaun's sensibilities are pop but they have been influenced by great musical theater song writers such as Lin-Manuel Miranda and Tom Kitt, as well as contemporary Native American artists such as Robbie Robertson. Chris's goal as a musician is to honor and integrate Native



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tradition into the musical stylings from his pop background. Chris has written numerous songs with Shaun dating back to their college days at the University of Delaware. Since then, he has worked with such artists as Michael McCary from Boyz II Men and Barry Carl of Rockapella. Chris currently writes for and performs in a pop/R&B vocal group called "Lights Out," which has performed with Artists such as Martina McBride and Trisha Yearwood.

ASHLEY WELLS (*Executive Producer*) celebrates 19 years with Lyric Theatre of Oklahoma and recently was honored as recipient of the Arts in Education Governor's Arts Award. AT LYRIC: *Nunsense*, *Disney's Newsies* (Director), *Hello, Dolly!* (Director), *Junie B. Jones* (Director), *Rock of Ages* (Director), *The Wizard of Oz* (Director), *The Fantasticks* (Director/Choreographer), *Bernice Bobs Her Hair* (Choreographer), *Billy Elliot* (Director), *Pageant* (Director), Monty Python's *Spamalot* (Director), *Les Misérables* (Choreographer), *Triangle: A New Musical* (Associate Director), *The Odd Couple* (Director), *Big River* (Choreographer), *Tarzan* (Choreographer), *Some Enchanted Evening* (Director), *Sweet Charity* (Director) with Tony Award-winner Billy Porter, *Spring Awakening* (Choreographer), Lyric's *A Christmas Carol* (Choreographer), *Oliver!* (Choreographer), *The Rocky Horror Show* (Choreographer), *Urinetown: The Musical* (Co-choreographer), *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Choreographer), *Oklahoma!* (Co-Choreographer), *Hello, Dolly!* (Co-choreographer), *Cabaret* (Choreographer/Ensemble), *Chicago* (Choreographer/Merry Murderess). BROADWAY AND NATIONAL TOUR: *Hello, Dolly!* with Carol Channing. REGIONAL: *Phantom of the Opera*, North Shore Music Theatre; *Evita*, *Brigadoon*, *The Music Man*, Music Theatre of Wichita; *La Cage Aux Folles*, Casa Mañana.

MICHAEL MORICZ (*Orchestrator*) was Music Director for *Mister Rogers Neighborhood* on PBS and has been the arranger and Music Director of The Broadway League's annual Jimmy Awards for the past 12 years. He has written original music for the theatre, television, dance and classical worlds, arrangements for Tommy Tune, Renee Fleming, Linda Lavin, John Lithgow, Zoë Keating, Marvin Hamlisch, the Nederlander Organization and many others. His longtime musical associations include the Joffrey Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, Juilliard, Mark Morris

Dance Group, Pittsburgh Public Theatre, Houston Ballet, the Pittsburgh and Fort Worth Symphonies and this season the orchestra of the Lyric Opera of Chicago. Michael has known and worked extensively with Lynne Taylor-Corbett for well over two decades and is proud to have been a part of the *Distant Thunder* creative team since nearly the beginning.

ROBERT LINDSEY NASSIF (*Orchestrator*) is a composer/lyricist/librettist who has worked on Broadway, off-Broadway and regionally with Hal Prince, Stephen Sondheim, Arthur Miller, Lynne Taylor-Corbett, Carol Burnett, Joss Whedon and Disney Feature Animation. He is the recipient of the Richard Rodgers Award, the AT&T Award, and the Gilman Gonzalez-Falla Award given at Lincoln Center.

COURTNEY STRONG (*Props Designer*) 15 years with Lyric Theatre of Oklahoma. AT LYRIC: *Rock of Ages*, *Disney's When You Wish*, *Million Dollar Quartet*, *Billy Elliot*, *Big Fish*, *Mary Poppins*, *Oklahoma!*, *A Little Night Music*, *Monty Python's Spamalot*, *Disney's The Little Mermaid*, *Les Misérables*, *Tarzan*, *Big River*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Call Me Madam*, *Sweet Charity*, *Ragtime*, *Oliver!*, *Steel Magnolias*, *The Rocky Horror Show*, *Urinetown: The Musical*. LOCAL: *The Christmas Show*, OKC Philharmonic; *The Secret Garden*, Myriad Botanical Gardens.

E.B. BROOKS (*Costume Designer*) The Industry: *Sweetland* (Grammy Award Nominated) *Invisible Cities*. Oregon Shakespeare Festival: *Manhatta*, *Off The Rails*. Geffen Playhouse: *The Legend of Georgia McBride* (2018 Ovation Award Large Theater, Drama Critic Circle Award, and NAACP Nomination), *Mysterious Circumstances*, *Bad Jews*, *Wait Until Dark*, and *Good People*. Marin Theater Company: *Sovereignty*. Perseverance Theatre: *Winter Bear Project* (2020 and 2019 Tour), *Franklin, Will Inc.* and *They Don't Talk Back*. Los Angeles Theater: *Hit The Wall* (L.A. LGBT Center 2016 Best Costume Design Nominee). Native Voices at The Autry: *Lying with Badgers*, *Pure Native*, *Bingo Hall*, *Stand Off at Highway #37*, *Birdhouse*, *Playwrights Retreat 2013-2020* as design respondent for over 24 new original works by Native American, Alaska Native, and First Nations Playwrights. In addition to Stage, E.B. also designs for film, television, commercial, music video, and events. E.B. has

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taught/ lectured at USC, CalTech, Willamette University, and Caldera Arts. Member of United Scenic Artists 829 and Costume Designers Guild 892. M.F.A. California Institute of the Arts.

SHAWN D. IRISH (*Scenic Designer*) returns to Lyric after designing the set and lighting for *Bright Star*. REGIONAL: *The Mountaintop*, *Marie and Rosetta*, *Shakespeare in Love*, *Once*, *Fun Home*, *Hamlet* (TheatreSquared); *The Lion in Winter* (freeFall Theatre Company); *Oil and Nickel and Dined* (Swine Palace); *1776*, *Meet Me in St. Louis* and *Gypsy* (Ocean State Theatre); *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *House and Garden*, and *I Love You Because* (Playhouse Theatre); *The Man Who Came To Dinner* and *The Music Man* (Arrowrock Lyceum); and Arthur Miller's *The Price* (Northern Stage). His design for *Kin* was featured in World Stage Design (2017). His Lighting Design for Charles Mee's *Big Love* was featured at the Prague Quadrennial and in American Theatre magazine. Head of Design & Technology, University of Arkansas. Member USA 829.

BRIAN LAWTON (*Associate Director*) is a dancer, instructor, choreographer, and director. He has an eclectic background in ballet, jazz, and modern as well as Latin and Ballroom dances with a specialty in the vernacular jazz dances of the 1920's-1940's. Brian most recently performed in *Swing Out* at the Joyce Theatre. He has also performed on *Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*, *Shakespeare in the Park's Comedy of Errors*, with the Red Hot Chili Peppers at Madison Square Garden and in their recent music video "Go Robot", and *Swing!* at Gateway Playhouse. He has traveled around the world teaching vernacular jazz, Charleston, and Lindy Hop. He was the Choreographer and Resident Director of the *A Charlie Brown Christmas* National Tour and is a Resident Choreographer for Norwegian Cruise Line. He was also the Assistant Director/Choreographer of the new musical *Part of the Plan* (TPAC).

CAROLINE MUELLER (*Production Stage Manager*) – AT LYRIC: *Grease*, *Lyric's A Christmas Carol*, *Lyric's Moonlight Cabaret*, *Titanic*, *Newsies*, *Singin' In the Rain*, *When We're Gone*. *Fun Home*. OKC BALLET: *Firebird*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *Dracula*. OKC CIVIC CENTER FOUNDATION: 2021 Kelli O'Hara Awards Coordinator. ADDITIONAL CREDITS: B.F.A. in Design and Production from Oklahoma City University.

FABIAN J. GARCIA (*Resident Lighting Designer*) – Three years with Lyric Theatre of Oklahoma. AT LYRIC: *Master Class*, *Grease*, *Nonsense*, *Denise Lee: Pressure Makes Diamonds*, *Lyric Kids' Clubhouse*, *Lyric's Moonlight Cabaret*, *Lyric's A Christmas Carol*, *Having Our Say*, *The Cat in the Hat*, *The Rocky Horror Show*, *Frost/Nixon*, *Curious George: The Golden Meatball*. THELMA GAYLORD ACADEMY: *Tuck Everlasting*, *Lion King, Jr.*, *Mary Poppins*, *Marvel One Acts*, *Honk Jr.*, *Urinetown: The Musical*, *The Music Man*, *The Realm*, *Rokademy Experiment*, *Seussical Jr.*, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. LOCAL: *Ragtime & All That Jazz*, *A Classic Christmas*, *The Magic of John Williams*, *Megan Hilty Live!*, *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial in Concert*, *The Sound of Simon and Garfunkel*, *The Hot Sardines*, *Revolution: The Beatles Symphonic Experience*, *Melinda Doolittle*, *The Music of Billy Joel*, OKC Philharmonic; *Small Mouth Sounds*, Southern Plains Productions; *She Loves Me*, Oklahoma State University; *Notes on Survival*, Oklahoma Contemporary Museum.

COREY RAY (*Resident Sound Designer/Audio Engineer*) has been with Lyric Theatre for 1 year. AT LYRIC: *Master Class*, *Grease*, *Nonsense*, *Denise Lee: Pressure Makes Diamonds*, *Lyric Kids' Clubhouse Cabaret*, *Lyric's Moonlight Cabaret*, *Lyric's A Christmas Carol*. Corey graduated from ACM@UCO in 2014 with a B.A.T. in Music Production and has worked as an audio engineer in the live concert industry for 13 years.

MIKE MORRIS (*Music Director*) is a New York-based music director, arranger, orchestrator, and composer. He graduated at age 18 from Boston's Berklee College of Music, then lived in Nashville where he orchestrated recording projects by the London Symphony and London Philharmonic Orchestras and worked with artists including Liza Minelli, Bruce Hornsby, Dennis DeYoung, and José Feliciano before relocating to NY. Recent credits include co-orchestrator for the Apple TV+ musical series *Schmigadoon!* and *Central Park*, orchestrator for the podcast musical *Little Did I Know*, and orchestrator/MD for new musicals at several major regional theatres, and for shows at theme parks and cruise ship lines around the country.

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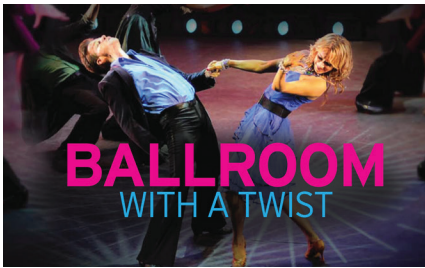
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grant panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Alliance for Musical Theatre. Training: B.A. in Theatre Arts, Wake Forest University; M.F.A. in Directing, Trinity Repertory Conservatory. Michael served as the Associate Director of Signature Theatre in Arlington, Virginia-winner of the 2009 Regional Theatre Tony Award. Michael received the 2012 Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Direction of a Resident Musical in Washington, D.C. for Adventure Theatre's production of *A Year with Frog and Toad*, the 2016 Oklahoma Governor's Arts Award, and a special award from Oklahoma City Mayor's Committee on Disabilities Concerns. He is a board member for the National Alliance for Musical Theatre.

JIM REYNOLDS (*Managing Director*) joined Lyric Theatre as Managing Director in 2017. He has an accomplished background in arts management, marketing, public relations, project management, strategic planning and customer service. He comes to Lyric from ZACH Theatre in Austin, TX where he held the marketing and public relations director position for 25 years. During his tenure, Jim was an integral part of the theatre's success as it grew from an annual operating budget of \$550,000 to \$8,000,000 during which time the organization opened two new theatre facilities. Prior to that, he was the sales director at Dallas Theater Center, under the artistic leadership of Adrian Hall who is often hailed as a founding father of the American regional theatre movement. Fresh from the University of South Carolina, he served as house manager and ultimately the production business manager at the Alliance Theatre/Atlanta Children's Theatre, the Southeast's leading regional theatre. Jim currently volunteers as Board Chair of the Plaza Business Alliance, which promotes business success in the historic Plaza District.



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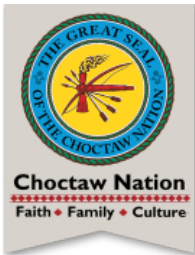
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Q&A With DISTANT THUNDER Co-Creator

Shaun Taylor-Corbett, co-creator of DISTANT THUNDER, shares insight into bringing the new Native American musical to Lyric's stage...

What sparked you to tell the story of *Distant Thunder* as a musical? What motivated you to start writing it?

Originally, I had envisioned the *Distant Thunder* as a film, but in the very early stages I realized how much music has meant to my life and how much it has been my primary mode of self expression. I also realized how much music connects us as people and can transport a story to a heightened level not just of understanding, but of feeling. Because the story is a modern reflection of Indigenous life, bringing traditions from the past to find a way forward in the present, I wanted to blend a traditional Indigenous sound with our pop-rock sensibilities. I grew up in a family of artists, especially musical people. That led me to a career that started in musical theater. I was able to see first hand from being in the Original Broadway cast of *In the Heights* what a large musical can do to bring pride, power, and awareness to underrepresented voices to the theater community. I wanted an Indigenous musical to be a part of the American musical theater canon, that would create roles for Indigenous artists as well as reflect who we are as people today, and inspire the next generations to tell their stories.

What does having a full production of *Distant Thunder* mean to you/for you?

Having a full production of *Distant Thunder* is a dream come true. After meeting my mentor in the Blackfeet Nation, Darrell Robes Kipp, at the age of 15, and learning



Shaun Taylor-Corbett

about the importance of preserving and learning one's indigenous language in strengthening identity, I knew I had to tell this story. It's taken a long time working on this with my mother, Lynne, who brought me to Montana at that early age to get to this production. So many have given of their hearts, spirits and time to this and it truly feels like we are making our ancestors proud. And to have it at First Americans Museum makes it all the more special.

What has the process of creating *Distant Thunder* been like and how has working with Lyric Theatre helped that process for you?

The process of creating the show has been just as magical as when we get to perform it. When we come together as



DISTANT THUNDER

a cast and a company, it is a real family. Everyone comes from unique tribal communities with different perspectives and cultural backgrounds, experiences and understandings, and everyone contributes to the ever-evolving nuances of the show. The themes of the show reflect lived experiences and we could never capture that without the tremendous generosity of sharing that happens in our company. Lyric and Michael Baron have given us the safest and most supported space to create our work, and have been leaders in helping to break this Indigenous musical into the mainstream artistic community. We were able to have somewhat of a workshop in 2020 with them right before the pandemic, and now we have the most beautiful showcase of the show at First Americans Museum, thanks to their outreach and commitment to Distant Thunder Indigenous theater.

What impact do you hope (or already know!) *Distant Thunder* will have on the lives of those who see (and/or perform in) this production?

The impact has already given back so much to all of us and I believe this show and the people in it have the potential to create an impact globally unlike any other show. The Indigenous power that the artists bring to this story has so much heart and it is so uplifting and inspiring to all who see it or are involved in the show. So much of the dream is sharing the beauty, kindness, richness and magic that comes from the

Blackfeet community in Browning, MT. They have given me so much in my life journey, and have empowered me in ways that will last my whole life. I want this show to give back to them as well as all Indigenous artists who will see themselves represented in a big musical and go on to perform in productions produced in schools, communities, regional theaters and one day on Broadway. We want the show to break down doors for more Indigenous productions and stories. Many young Native students have gotten in touch with us, asking if they can perform our songs in their showcases because there are few musicals that represent who they are in the mainstream musical canon. It brings us so much joy that they can express a Native story through contemporary, pop-rock music. There is also a desire to share values and messages to a wider audience that will help guide us as a world community. We are all on Indigenous land and we need to acknowledge and reflect that in how we live and how we are led by Indigenous people and teachings.

If you're already starting to see the impact, can you describe a specific moment when you were able to feel it first-hand?

Definitely, a college student in Minnesota reaching out to ask to sing one of our songs in her college showcase. I also feel such a sense of pride from my Blackfeet friends and community in Browning to have a story that takes place within that community shared with a large audience and be seen. There are friends coming from the Blackfeet Nation to see the show at FAM. In many ways, it is because of the work of our Native elders that we are even here today to be able to celebrate this monumental artistic achievement. Their resiliency, and that of our ancestors, has kept our languages, cultures, and our joy alive. That is expressed in our show as well.

How has creating and developing *Distant Thunder* impacted your own life?

The show in many ways is my life. It continues to evolve and teach me lessons through the themes, the people that come into connection with it and me, and the way it magically always connects me to my Blackfeet community and higher purpose in life. I was able to attend Okan ceremony last Summer with my Blackfeet community. I've never felt more connected with them than in that moment. Darrell Robes Kipp and Redman Littleplume brought me into that community when I was 15 and inspired this story. This story keeps bringing back to my home there, and last summer I was given my name, l'pyooktsitsikoom. It means "Distant Thunder."

What do you hope for the future of *Distant Thunder* and new musicals like it? What do you think we in Oklahoma can do to support the continuation of that work?

I had the privilege to perform in a play called *Off the Rails* by Randy Reinholz at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. That play sparked a wave of Indigenous theater productions across the nation! I want *Distant Thunder* to do the same, focusing on Indigenous musicals. I want to help create pathways for Indigenous artists to thrive in our theater communities and also kick down that Broadway door. I believe it

is so important, especially in Oklahoma, home to 39 tribes, to invest in and produce Native stories. It is critical to our recognition of the first peoples of these lands.



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Lyric's New Works Initiative

In addition to producing some of the most artistically diverse and demanding seasons the organization has ever undertaken, Lyric Theatre has established itself as an incubator for new theatrical works. Lyric's New Works Initiative began in 2014, and *Distant Thunder* represents the sixth production in this series.

With plenty of available preparation space and the opportunity to work on stage early in the rehearsal process, Lyric's Plaza Theatre has proved an ideal location for the initiative. Lyric is now regularly sought-out by writers interested in developing their works in Oklahoma, in our spaces, and for our audiences.

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