



Welcome to *Gordon Winter*– the second production of the 2020-21 Greystone Theatre season!

Gordon Winter, the second offering of our 75th Anniversary season, marks the third time that the Greystone Theatre has featured the work of a major prairie playwright exploring the complex, fractured and often unsatisfactory contemporary relationships between the settler and Indigenous communities sharing the land in the place we now call Saskatchewan.

In 1959, W.O. Mitchell, of *Who Has Seen the Wind* fame, was commissioned by Emrys Jones to write a play honouring the 50th Jubilee year of the province. The result, *Royalty is Royalty*, mounted on June 1-3 and July 7-11, 1959 constituted the world premiere of Mitchell's first drama. Mitchell's wry, ironic comedy returns to the familiar town of Crocus, popularized in his iconic *Jake and the Kid* series, - but as seen through the knowing, sardonic eyes of play's protagonist Moses Lefthand, it is a version of Crocus that is revealed as seriously wanting -in its own petty, proper, polite way - in its treatment and attitudes towards those beyond its white, Anglo-Saxon core. Only the generosity, shrewdness and community spirit of Lefthand himself – as portrayed by noted Indigenous actor and director Tom Jackson in the 1987 professional production at the Manitoba Theatre Centre – saves the day and Crocus from itself by making the town's much-desired whistle-stop royal visit by the Queen possible.

The second offering, was the world premiere of Gwen Pharis Ringwood's *Mirage* in May, 1979 as commissioned for the Congress of the Social Sciences and Humanities and directed by then-department Head, Tom Kerr. Ringwood, most famous for her Depression prairie tragedy, *Still Stands the House* (1939) expands the earlier canvas to explore the fortunes of the neighboring White Calf and Ryland families over three generations on the land in the Saskatchewan, and after a long, difficult, uneven journey for both over the 20th-century, the new hope of 1970s activism levelling the ground and revitalizing their relationship again moving forward.

Again, in the spirit of honouring our past, while celebrating the present and looking forward to the future, it is with great pride in 2021 that we present our third offering, *Gordon Winter*, by Saskatchewan Cree playwright, Kenneth T. Williams as directed by incoming *wîcêhtowin* Theatre Program co-ordinator, Deneh'Cho Thompson. We also invite audiences to continue to explore the larger world of Indigenous theatre, language and culture, and issues of decolonization and Indigenization raised in the play by attending the free Indigenous Theatre conference being hosted in conjunction with the play between March 31 and April 8th and featuring Maria Campbell as keynote speaker on March 31st. (Please note that while free, you need to register for events in advance.). Registration for the conference is here - <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/an-indigenous-theatre-conference-tickets-144534339099>

Williams brings much of Mitchell's sharp perceptive wit and social satire, and Ringwood's epic sense of history to his own examination of justice possibly miscarried, delayed or denied in the real-life David Ahenakew case. However, he brings a trenchant anger, searching, ironic intelligence, and open-ended questioning all his own to his examination of *Gordon Winter*, a RCMP hero, a life-long champion of First Nations rights, and an inspiration to the next generation of chiefs to stand up to the federal



UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

College of
Arts and Science

DEPARTMENT OF DRAMA
ARTSANDSCIENCE.USASK.CA

John Mitchell Building, 118 Science Place
Saskatoon SK S7N 5E2 Canada
Telephone: 306-966-2323
Fax: 306-966-8193
Email: drama.department@usask.ca
Web: artsandscience.usask.ca/drama

government - who abruptly finds himself relegated to the trash-bin of history and popular opinion, when he spews a Nazi-inspired racist and homophobic rant to a member of the press in a moment of frustration. Ten years after its 2010 premiere at Persephone Theatre, featuring iconic Indigenous actor, Gordon Tootoosis in what was sadly to be his final stage role, *Gordon Winter* remains as relevant as it was in 2010 in its examination of the ramifications of cancel culture, the ambiguous role of social media in reducing complex people to news “bites” and then making or breaking them, and the difficulties of an official culture that condemns all racism and bigotry in principle, but is considerably more selective and uneven in its actual practice. In our second production of the season, Williams’ message is both consciously reinforced by - and made more widely accessible - through the digital form of the production as realized through the hard work, resilience, flexibility and innovation of the department’s design and acting students under the direction of Deneh’Cho Thompson and design professor, Carla Orosz.

For those of you accustomed to taking in our usual 10-day run, please note that *Gordon Winter* will only be running for four days via livestream, March 31st – April 3rd. We have decided to lower ticket prices to \$5 per live stream or whatever you can afford, but there is also an option to donate as making virtual theatre still has costs associated with it. After your ticket purchase you will be added to the list of attendees that a private link will be sent out a few hours before the performance. The viewing will take place on YouTube where you can also engage with the chat function that will be moderated. If you have further questions regarding ticket purchase please contact Jessica at our box office at jessica.klein@usask.ca. To purchase tickets for *Gordon Winter*, please visit our [website](#).

In presenting Greystone Theatre’s second virtual theatre production, we again both loop back to honour the past and move forward to embrace the future. Welcome to *Gordon Winter* – and to the remaining play of our 75th anniversary Greystone season, *Unity (1918)* (Kevin Kerr) in June. We also hope you will join us later this spring for our 75th anniversary celebration, honouring seventy-five years of “us” at the U of S.