Native Voices at the Autry Presents the 5th Annual Short Play Festival: *We Are Family*
Featuring Seven Short Plays by Native American Playwrights
Sunday, November 8, 2015, 1:30 p.m.

Los Angeles, CA (November 4, 2015) — Continuing its role as the only Equity theatre company dedicated exclusively to developing new work by Native American artists, Native Voices at the Autry presents its fifth annual Short Play Festival: *We Are Family*. Held during the Autry Museum of the American West’s American Indian Arts Marketplace on November 8, 2015, the event features new short plays by Native American playwrights exploring family in every sense of the word.

“I’m thrilled to say that we received an exceptionally diverse group of plays for this year’s theme, *We Are Family,*” says Jean Bruce Scott, Native Voices Producing Executive Director. “Within the stories, we witness how memory is not only fleeting but sometimes also flawed, how a young girl in Indian Territory in the late 1800's created her family when her parents died, how a young man goes ‘home’ to the people and place of his birth—a place he never had a chance to know—and other powerful experiences. We encouraged playwrights to be as liberal and creative with the theme as possible, and I can’t wait to share their stories with our audiences.”

*We Are Family* brings together seven short-form plays by Native American playwrights. Sibling rivalries, loss and reconciliation, unreliable memories, and history passed from generation to generation are among the themes explored during this annual festival. The plays, which were selected by a national panel, will be workshopped and read by the Native Voices Artists Ensemble.

Occurring annually during the Autry’s Marketplace, the Short Play Festival presents professional staged readings of short plays related to a particular theme. Plays selected for the festival are considered for the Von Marie Atchley Excellence in Playwriting Award, a $1,000 cash prize based on the creative use of the competition theme, originality, theatricality, execution, and audience response.

The Short Play Festival is included with admission to the Marketplace (free for Autry members; $12 adults; $8 students and seniors; $4 children ages 3–12). Seating for *We Are Family* is limited, and early arrival is suggested.
About the Featured Readings and Authors

Red Pine by Ty Defoe (Oneida, Ojibwe)
Two siblings confront each other and their shared past in Red Pine. Defoe is a multidisciplinary artist who received a GRAMMY Award for his work on Come to Me Great Mystery: Native American Healing Songs. He holds degrees from CalArts, Goddard College, and New York University’s Graduate Musical Theatre Writing Program at Tisch School of the Arts and is a TCG’s Leading the Charge: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Fellow. He created compositions/soundscapes for Miss Lead at 59e59 and Manahatta at the Public Theater. Defoe is a member of ASCAP, East Coast Two-Spirit Society, and Dramatist Guild.

Families Matter by Duane Minard (Yurok, Piaute)
In Families Matter, three adult brothers remember the past very differently. Minard was born and raised on the Piaute Reservation alongside the town of Bishop, California, at the base of the Eastern Sierra Mountains. He grew up on his grandmother’s farm. From his grandma, Margret Crowl, he learned traditional Native storytelling. She taught him the Piaute language, history, songs, and dance. She also imparted the desire to share culture, which Minard has continued to do through acting, writing, singing, and dancing.

Siblings by Lori Favela (Yankton Sioux)
A brother and sister are dealt a humorous surprise after their mother’s death in Siblings. Favela has always loved stories. She was drawn to literature while attending Haskell Indian Nations University and received a bachelor’s degree in English literature from the University of Kansas. Favela was selected for Native Voices at the Autry’s 2013 Playwrights Retreat and Festival of New Plays, where her play The Healer’s Remains was performed as a staged reading at the Autry and La Jolla Playhouse. In May 2014, The Healer’s Remains received another staged reading, courtesy of the Oklahoma City Theatre Company.

Little Brother Deer by Sam Mitchell (Yaqui)
In Little Brother Deer, a young man searches for his brother and childhood home. Mitchell received his BFA in Dance from the University of California, Santa Barbara and MFA in Dance Theatre from the University of California, San Diego. This fall, he will begin the joint doctoral program in Theatre at UC Irvine/San Diego. Mitchell recently garnered a University of California Institute for Research in the Arts grant for his project The Dance Theatre Residency at Rincon, which introduces contemporary dance and theater practices to Native American students while celebrating the tribes’ own creation myths and traditions. Mitchell also serves on the planning committee for the California Native American Day Celebration at University of California, San Diego.

Warrior’s Blood by Joseph Valdez (Navajo)
A man fights his inner demons when confronted with his grandfather’s death and his daughter’s coming of age. Valdez was awarded a Presidential Scholarship to study theatre at the University of Southern California. Since graduating Magna Cum Laude, he has written three full-length plays, Little Big Joe the Bug Squasher, Swimming to China in My Birthday Suit, and Timestop, and one short play, Totem Boy.
Valdez is also an actor and has appeared in some 25 theatrical productions. Most recently, he starred in California’s Official Outdoor Play, Ramona, as Alessandro.

*Cricket* by Vicki Lynn Mooney (Cherokee)

In *Cricket*, things get exciting when two little boys meet a mysterious stranger in 1866 Indian Territory. Mooney has been working in New York theatre for over 36 years. Recently she wrote Broken Heart Land Trilogy, which follows three generations of a mixed-blood Cherokee family as they navigate the Dawes Act land allotment process from 1900 to 1921.

*Reeling* by Frank Henry Kaash Katasse (Tlingit)

Two cousins undertake a dangerous canoe trip to fulfill their uncle’s dying wish in Reeling. Katasse is an Alaska Native from the Tsaagweidi clan. He is an actor, director, producer, and playwright. Since receiving his bachelor’s degree in theatre from the University of Hawaii, Manoa, Katasse has lived and worked in Juneau, Alaska. He has acted for Perseverance Theatre, Theatre in the Rough, and short films. He has also contributed as a script developer for independent playwrights. Katasse is currently the President of Juneau Douglas Little Theatre and is passionate about developing new Alaskan plays for the stage. He has a wife and two beautiful children.

**Sponsors**


**About Native Voices at the Autry**

Native Voices at the Autry is the only Equity theatre company devoted exclusively to developing and producing new works for the stage by Native American, Alaska Native, and First Nations playwrights. Founded in 1994 by Producing Artistic Director Randy Reinholz (Choctaw) and Producing Executive Director Jean Bruce Scott, Native Voices became the resident theatre company at the Autry Museum of the American West in 1999. The company provides a supportive, collaborative setting for Native theatre artists from across North America. In 2014, the company established the Native Voices Artists Ensemble to more fully take advantage of the extraordinary talents of its Native actors, writers, musicians, and directors. The Ensemble is devoted to developing new work in a collaborative process as well as supporting Native Voices’ ongoing focus on the work of individual playwrights. Native Voices at the Autry is a member of Actors’ Equity Association, LA Stage Alliance, and the Dramatists Guild, and is a Constituent Theatre of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for the American theatre. Visit [TheAutry.org/NativeVoices](http://TheAutry.org/NativeVoices) for more information.

**About the Autry Museum of the American West**

The Autry is a museum dedicated to exploring and sharing the stories, experiences, and perceptions of the diverse peoples of the American West, connecting the past to the present to inspire our shared future. The museum presents a wide range of exhibitions and public programs—including lectures, film, theatre, festivals, family events, and music—and performs scholarship, research, and educational
outreach. The Autry’s collection of more than 500,000 pieces of art and artifacts includes the Southwest Museum of the American Indian Collection, one of the largest and most significant of Native American materials in the United States.

**Hours**

**Museum and Autry Store:**
- **Tuesday–Friday,** 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.
- **Saturday and Sunday,** 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

**Crossroads West Cafe:**
- **Tuesday–Friday,** 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.
- **Saturday and Sunday,** 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

The museum, store, and cafe are closed on Mondays. Visit [TheAutry.org](http://TheAutry.org) for more information.

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