

The Autry Museum of the American West presents



*Young Native Playwrights Festival*

**AUTRY MUSEUM**

Saturday, June 8, 2 p.m.

Sunday, June 9, 2 p.m.

**LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE**

Sunday, June 16, 2 p.m.

**NATIVE  
VOICES**



**After 15 years, Native Voices is excited to bring back our Young Native Playwrights Program.** Many Native stories recount how their tribe received the First Fire. While the stories differ from Nation to Nation and region to region, what remains the same is that there have always been people who have carried the embers of the First Fire with them as they traveled, or were forcibly removed, to different areas. These embers were then used to light future fires, ensuring the First Fire would always be with us. We believe our youth are the embers that will light fires for future generations. The stories they create will be carried forth and will continue to spark many more stories for years to come.

## FEATURING

### ***Last Star Before the Rain***

by **Elisabeth Burbank**

A young woman is confronted with the burden of recreating humanity. But can she trust the voice that is trying to help?

### ***Sga:d***

by **Gia Fisher**

A writer is charged with the task of creating a Native Superhero, but soon discovers that the pen is indeed mightier than the sword.

### ***Blood Memory***

by **Zacchary Fontaine**

In a retro-futuristic universe where the sky is filled with steam, a young man dreams of blue skies and green fields. But what if it's not just a dream?

### ***The Dawn of the Forsaken***

by **Cecilia Haponski**

A wizard and his protege plot to overthrow a kingdom, but will the Princess foil their plan?

### ***Found***

by **Juju Osuna Moreno**

When a young woman seeks refuge in the woods, a stranger offers more than safety and words of wisdom.

### ***A POINT OF LIFE***

by **Mariah Peters-Mosquera**

If all you know is abuse, can you recognize the cycle when you're in it?

### ***Some Good Days***

by **Skye Ochoa**

A child is a parent's greatest gift and biggest worry. But what can a parent do when that child is heading down the wrong path?

### ***Memento Mori***

by **Jasper Wolf**

Two strangers on a boat. Both have blood on their clothes, but no wounds. How did they get here? Most importantly, how do they get out?

### ***It's In My Nature***

by **Orenda Wurth**

It's the day after high school graduation, and two best friends contemplate their futures. Does growing up mean growing apart?

# About the PLAYWRIGHTS



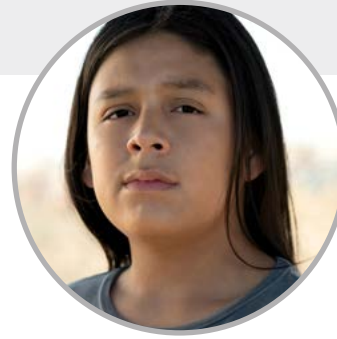
## ELISABETH BURBANK

is a 12-year-old Navajo 7th grader who lives in New Mexico where she is currently enrolled in an online school. Her talents include writing, acting, and drawing. She was interested in this playwriting course because she possesses these talents and thought she could put them to good use. She has read many compelling stories and found herself inspired by them. This play is her first splash into the world of performance art.



## GIA FISHER

is a Northern Cheyenne/Seneca actor, model, and artist. On Broadway, she appeared as the lead singer of a punk rock band in Larissa Fast Horse's *Thanksgiving Play*. Her credits also include; Jaqueline in *Nancy* by Rhianna Yazzie at TheatreSquared New Play Festival, Peace Johns in *The Longhouse Pageant* by Ty Defoe with American Indian Community House, and Multnomah Girl in *First Cow* from director Kelly Reichardt (A24 Films). She was also featured in the Bomb Pop commercial campaign, Not One Thing. Gia is the recipient of the Yale Indigenous Performing Arts Program inaugural Misty Upham Award and has attended both the Stella Adler Studio of Acting and the Lee Strasberg Theater and Film Institute.



## ZACCHARY FONTAINE

is an Ojibway performer and voice actor from the Sagkeeng and Obishikokaang Nations in Canada. He has appeared in the television series *Little Bird* (Bell), *Acting Good* (CTV Comedy), and has a principal role in the children's television animated series *CHUMS* (APTN). He is also set to appear in *Many Wounds*, a feature film based on the 1994 New Zealand classic *Once Were Warriors*.



## CECILIA HAPONSKI

is Tlingit of the Chookaneidi (Eagle) clan from the Xóots Saagi Hí (Brown Bear) house and is 13 from Ketchikan, AK. She has been writing stories and plays since she was in the 3rd grade and loves acting and drama. She has been seen in many productions and plans to write and do theater in the future. Cecilia is also active in cheerleading, softball, her church, and enjoys basket weaving, drawing, beading, and painting.

# About the PLAYWRIGHTS



## JUJU MORENO

is Genízaro from the New Mexico/Colorado area and has been deeply involved in theater since the 6th grade. Recently, she was the student director of her school's spring musical. She started playwriting in the 10th grade and hopes her skill and creativity are seen in her work.



## MARIAH PETERS-MOSQUERA

is an enrolled member of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe of Mashpee and lives in Sterling, MA with her family. When she is not in school, she enjoys doing gymnastics, acting, creating art, and dancing. Mariah was cast as Young Gladys Tantaquidgeon in the upcoming short film, *Flying Bird's Diary*. She has also portrayed Puss in Boots in *Shrek The Musical JR.*, a Harem Girl in *Aladdin*, the musical, and Whitney in *Legally Blonde: The Musical*.



## SKYE OCHOA

is a 15-year-old Seneca high school student from Whittier, CA. She has a love for acting, writing, and reading and enjoys being in plays, as well as writing them. She is beyond grateful to have this amazing opportunity to bring the story she wrote to life and is excited to see her work played by these talented actors. She would like to thank everyone who is involved in organizing this event for giving her and the other writers this opportunity. She cannot wait for everyone to watch her play and all the other talented writers' work that they wrote over the last eight weeks.



## JASPER WOLF

is Mohawk of the Bay of Quinte and currently attends a high school visual communications and photography program in New York, where he is learning digital photography, graphic design, and videography. Outside of the studio, Jasper enjoys reading Gothic literature, writing fiction, and watching classic sci-fi. He aspires to study art, film, and creative writing in college and hopes to one day work in filmmaking and production.

# About the PLAYWRIGHTS



***“I don’t know... whether to rejoice or feel sorry for myself. Happily swallowing this pain will only mold me into a sadder person... but what good will unleashing it do? I don’t even know what I’m capable of, or what I even am anymore...”***

- Stella from *Last Star Before the Rain*

**ORENDA WURCH** is Tlingit and is proud to be making her playwriting debut with Native Voices and the other Embers Young Native Playwrights. Orenda’s love for theater started when she was 4 years old playing a munchkin in *The Wizard of Oz*. Other stage credits include *The Lion King*, *Aladdin*, and *The Sound of Music*. Orenda participated in the Yale Indigenous Performing Arts Program and is a member of an award-winning show choir, Upbeat, & Colburn Choir. She also loves ballet and jazz. Her dream is to have a voice representing her Tlingit Tribe with the arts. Orenda would like to thank her mother, father, Moonie, DeLanna, Jennifer, and all of the Native Voices team for their guidance.

***“The incident left me kinda empty, like apart of me is still out there waiting to be found.”***

- Rayla from *Found*



# About the COMPANY



## DARRELL DENNIS

is an award-winning Secwepemc First Nations actor, writer, director, and comedian. Darrell has had leading roles in the TV series: *Northwood*, *The Rez*, *Blackstone*, and *Open Heart*. His one-man show *Tales of an Urban Indian* was nominated for two Dora Awards and toured the world. He was the first-ever Native comedian to be hired as a cast member at the world-famous *Second City*. Darrell recently wrote and directed two feature films *The Great Salish Heist* and *Sweet Summer Pow Wow* both out in theaters this year. He also had a recurring role on the hit Netflix series *The Lincoln Lawyer*.



## RAINBOW DICKERSON

is Thai/Rappahannock. Broadway: *August: Osage County*. Off-Broadway: *Manhatta* (The Public). Regional: Oregon Shakespeare Festival, American Repertory Theatre, Yale Repertory Theatre, American Players Theatre, Mixed Blood Theatre, San Francisco Playhouse, Florida Studio Theatre, and many others. Selected Film: *Beans*, *The River*, *This Is Their Land*. Selected Television: *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, *Gone*, *Chicago Fire*, *Banshee*. Awards: Toronto International Film Festival Rising Star, Vancouver Film Critics Best Supporting Actress, ABC Disney Discovers Alumna. Represented by Liberman Zerman Management.



## HONOKEE DUNN

is a member of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians and an actor, writer, artist, and activist based in Oklahoma City. The Two-Spirit artist has been in productions such as *Round Dance* by Arigon Starr, *Chat Rats* by Mary Sue Price, and *Sovereignty* by Mary Kathryn Nagle. They are currently pursuing writing and art, focusing on Indigenous stories, history, and modern-day struggles. They will be moving to Los Angeles by the end of this year.



## NIKCOMA LEE MAHKEWA

is Hopi-Tewa/Mohave/Chemehuevi. Recent credits include *Lord of the Flies*, *Between Two Knees*, and the Discovery+ series *Book of Queer*.

# About the COMPANY

**“ I am still very angry at you for bringing me here for no apparent reason, and second —fear is one of the best qualities for taking over the world. ”**

- Aamon from *The Dawn Of The Forsaken*



#### **KHOLAN STUDI**

is an enrolled member of the Cherokee Nation. Credits include Eddy in *They Don't Talk Back* and Anthony in *Where The Summit Meets The Stars* by Frank Kaash Katasse, Edward in *Bingo Hall* by Dillon Chitto (Native Voices); Elias Boudinot in *Sovereignty* by Mary Kathryn Nagle (Marine Theater Company); taking the stage as an understudy in *Between Two Knees* by The 1491's as Pale Face/William (Yale Repertory Theatre), Isaiah/Eddie (Seattle Rep), and Ensemble (Perelman Performing Arts Center). Catch him as Milo in Blake Picken's short film *Ricky Killed a Guy*.



#### **JEHNEAN WASHINGTON**

is descendant from the Yuchi, Seminole and Shoshone nations. A graduate of the American Musical and Dramatic Academy NYC. Jehnean has worked professionally for over 30 years, as an actress, in voice overs, singer/songwriter and musician. A member of SAG-AFTRA; her original arrangement can be heard on the Grammy nominated albums, *Song of America* and *Sweetland* and she is a featured singer on the NAMMY award winning album SIIB. She performs with the world-famous Los Angeles based opera company, The Industry.



#### **ALLISON HUDSON HICKS**

is an enrolled member of the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation and is also of Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma descent. She can be seen in the TV series *Rutherford Falls* (NBC/Peacock) and *High Desert* (Apple+TV). Her theater credits include *Devilfish* by Vera Starbard, Mary Kathryn Nagle's *Return to Niobrara*, and *Bingo Hall* by Dillon Chitto. Other credits include Long Wharf Theatre, Yale Indigenous Performing Arts Program Play Festival, and the Kennedy Center TYA Festival.



All actors are appearing through a special agreement between Native Voices and Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

## Class Instructors



**Jennifer Bobiwash** is also the **Artistic Associate** for Native Voices. She is an Ojibway actor, playwright, and agent of chaos from the Mississauga First Nation. Her acting theatre credits include world premieres at Perseverance Theatre, Native Voices, and La Jolla Playhouse, as well as productions at Yale Rep and on tour in Northern Alaska. More recently she was honored to step into the role of Older

Irma/Ensemble in *Between Two Knees* by the 1491s at Seattle Rep and McCarter Theater. TV credits include *Magnum P.I.* and *Rutherford Falls*. As a director, Bobiwash was invited to take part in the inaugural class of the National Institute for Directing and Ensemble Creation at Pangea World Theatre. As a playwright, she was a Season 21 Volt lab writer with Boston's Company One Theatre and a past Artist in Residence at Thurgood Marshall College at the University of California, San Diego. She has participated in new play development programs with Blossoming at The Vagrancy Theater and MadLab at Moving Arts in Los Angeles.



**DeLanna Studi** is also the **Artistic Director** for Native Voices. She is an enrolled member of the Cherokee Nation and has more than 25 years of experience as a performer, storyteller, educator, facilitator, advocate, and activist. Her theatre credits include the first national Broadway tour of the Tony Award- and Pulitzer Prize-winning play *August: Osage County*; off-Broadway's *Gloria: A Life*

(Daryl Roth Theatre); *Informed Consent* (the Duke on 42nd Street); and regional theatres (Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Portland Center Stage, Cornerstone, and Indiana Repertory Theatre). Studi originated roles in more than 18 world premieres, including 14 Native productions. A pivotal moment in her career was writing and performing *And So We Walked: An Artist's Journey Along the Trail of Tears*, based on retracing her family's footsteps along the Trail of Tears with her father. *And So We Walked* has been produced throughout the country and was the first American play chosen for the Journées Théâtrales de Carthage in Tunisia, Africa. Last year, it made its Off-Broadway debut at Minetta Lane where it was recorded for Audible. In film and television, Studi stars in the Peabody Award-winning *Edge of America*; *Hallmark's Dreamkeeper*; *Goliath*; *Shameless*; and *General Hospital*. She is a 2022 USA Fellow, a recipient of the Butcher Scholar Award, a MAP Fund Grant, Cherokee Preservation Grant, and the Doris Duke Performing Artist Fund. Since 2007 she has served as chair of the SAG-AFTRA National Native Americans Committee.

## Managing Director



**Elisa Blandford** has been producing for Native Voices at the Autry since 2014, from world premieres and touring productions to Short Play Festivals, Playwrights Retreats, and Festivals of New Plays. She co-founded Vanguard Repertory Company and the Windmill Arts Center, a black box theatre and dance studio dedicated to fostering performance and visual arts. She has a BA in Theatre from Florida State University and MBA from the University of Redlands.

## Production Coordinator



**Sati Thyme** has been involved in theatre her entire life in many different aspects, from performing to tech to management and more. She received her Bachelor's degree in Stage Management from CSU Fullerton and has worked as a stage manager all over the LA/OC area for the last eight years. This past year she spent touring around the United States until she came back to Los Angeles to manage another year of the interactive horror production, *Delusion*.

## Literary Assistant



**Sierra Rosetta** is an emerging Lac Courte Oreilles Chippewa theatre artist, actor, dramaturg, director, and playwright. She is currently a Theatre and Drama PhD student at Northwestern University studying Ojibwe performance. Recent credits include *The Clean House* and *Frida Libre* at the Wirtz Center, *The Matriarchs* at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, and an Expand the Canon reader/dramaturg at Hedgepig Theatre Ensemble and The Playwrights Realm.



## NATIVE VOICES

For the past 30 years, Native Voices has remained the sole Actors' Equity theatre in the country committed to developing and producing new works for the stage by Native American, First Nations, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian playwrights. Devoted to training Indigenous artists and championing their work nationally through production and professional development opportunities, Native Voices provides a supportive setting for new play development. When founders Randy Reinholz (Choctaw) and Jean Bruce Scott entrusted their legacy to DeLanna Studi (Cherokee) and Elisa Blandford in 2020, the company's goals remained the same -- to foster greater understanding and respect for all and to showcase artistic voices that might otherwise not be heard. Native Voices remains steadfast in their mission of developing Native playwrights and theatre artists, to telling Native stories by and about Native people, and to providing the public access to these plays and playwrights, but now with the hope of Indigenizing theatre, both for artists and audiences, and to create pathways of learning for the next generations of storytellers and audience members.



embers



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 600,000 pieces of art and cultural objects includes one of the largest and most significant of Native American materials in the United States. For more information, please visit [TheAutry.org](https://TheAutry.org).



La Jolla Playhouse is where artists and audiences come together to create what's new and next in American Theatre. From Tony Award-winning plays and musicals, to imaginative programs for young audiences, to interactive experiences outside our theatre walls, the Playhouse brings people together to inspire discussion and open pathways to new ways of thinking. A visit to the Playhouse is an invitation to harness the transformative power of theatre to explore the here and now—and together, expand our world's compassion, understanding and hope.

# Save the DATE



### 30th Festival of New Plays

AUGUST 9, 2024 | Autry

Help us celebrate 30 years of Native Voices! A cornerstone of the American theatre, Native Voices continues to cultivate opportunities for Native playwrights. As part of a 10-day residency, Jennifer Bobiwash and Madeline Easley will be partnered with an artistic team and company of actors to explore their scripts. The Playwrights' Retreat retreat culminates with staged readings of both plays and a 30th Anniversary Celebration!



### World Premiere of Beth Piatote's *Antikoni*

NOVEMBER 8-24 | Southwest Campus

In this timely retelling of a Greek classic, a Native family spars over the fate of ancestral remains held in a museum. Antikoni defends eternal truths and Kreon rides the waves of changing politics, while a Chorus of Aunties deliver raucous and wise traditional stories to guide them. Set in the near future and staged with immersive effects at the Autry's Southwest Campus, this world premiere draws on two ancient traditions with powerful stories that sustain a vision of justice and call for an ethic of care.

# IN GRATITUDE

Your support is vital to the success of **Native Voices**, allowing us to create, develop, and produce Native theatre for a national audience. We would like to acknowledge our generous supporters:

## NATIVE VOICES SUPPORT COMMITTEE:

TONANTZÍN CARMELO • ELENA FINNEY ENDLICH • CAROLE GOLDBERG AND DUANE CHAMPAGNE • KIMBERLY GUERRERO • SHELBY JIGGETTS-TIVONY • DIANE LEVINE • HEIDI LEVINE-GONZALEZ • DARYL ROTH • GLORIA STEINEM

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