

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Native Voices at the Autry Presents the 20th Anniversary Production
***Off the Rails* by Randy Reinholz**

February 27–March 15, 2015
Previews February 25–26, 2015

Wells Fargo Theater at the Autry National Center of the American West, Los Angeles

Los Angeles, CA (February 11, 2015) — Continuing its role as the only Equity theatre company dedicated to developing new work by Native American artists, [Native Voices at the Autry](http://NativeVoicesattheAutry.org) presents its most ambitious production to date, *Off the Rails* by **Randy Reinholz** (Choctaw*). A bawdy and irreverent adaptation of Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* set in Buffalo Bill's Wild West, the production is presented as part of Native Voices at the Autry's 2014–2015 season, themed "Legacy and Loss: Stories From the Indian Boarding School."

"In *Off the Rails* I've relocated Shakespeare's conflicts to the American frontier. We see love, righteousness, faith, and mercy compete for provenance in the foundation of a country. Adapting Shakespeare for a Native theatre company provides the structure and historical distance needed to explore why so much of the Native American story is missing from U.S. history," said Reinholz, Native Voices Producing Artistic Director. "A key issue in Indian country today is the contradictory legacy and cultural damage of the American Indian boarding school system, whose motto was 'Kill the Indian, Save the Man.' In a moment in time when many Americans were advocating for the physical extermination of the remaining 218,000 American Indians it might seem that cultural genocide was the more benevolent choice. Important? Yes. Heavy? Not in this production. Think *Blazing Saddles* meets Shakespeare—with Native Americans taking the reins."

Set in the nineteenth century in fictional Genoa, Nebraska, *Off the Rails* focuses on Momaday (**Shaun Taylor-Corbett**), a young boarding school student who has been sentenced to death for impregnating an Irish girl. Brothel owner Madame Overdone (**Shyla Marlin**), her working girls, and saloon patrons hatch a plot to rescue Momaday. Key to his salvation is his older sister Isabel (**Elizabeth Frances**), a graduate of a boarding school. To save her brother, Isabel must win the affections of Captain Angelo (**Michael Matthys**), the new superintendent of the school. Angelo's Victorian rules for life are threatened by his primal lust when the women in town combine forces to challenge his brief authority and save Momaday.

Off the Rails tackles the controversial and rarely discussed topic of Indian boarding schools. Typically absent from our nation's history books, schools affected generations of Native Americans in

unimaginable ways. Culture and identities were stripped, languages lost, lifelong friends were made, and unions were strengthened. *Off the Rails* dramatizes the polarizing national tensions in an audience-friendly way by combining knee-slapping comedy, vibrant music, and a set that transports theatregoers to 1886.

To put together a production this big and over the top, [Native Voices launched a crowdfunding campaign](#) to raise \$20,000 by February 19, 2015. As of February 11, Native Voices has raised more than 75% of its goal. Proceeds will help Native Voices continue its mission to develop and produce new works for the stage by Native American, Alaska Native, and First Nations playwrights. Contributors will be thanked for their donations with a variety of perks associated with each level, including behind-the-scenes tours, a chance to play a character in one performance, tickets, and more. For more information about the Indiegogo campaign, visit <http://igg.me/at/offtherails>.

TICKETS

Tickets for *Off the Rails* are \$10 for Autry Members; \$25 for nonmembers; and \$12 for students, seniors (60+), and military. Preview tickets are free for Autry Members; \$10 for nonmembers; and \$6 for students, seniors (60+), and military. The Wells Fargo Theater is located at Autry National Center of the American West, 4700 Western Heritage Way, Los Angeles, CA 90027-1462. For reservations and additional information, call 323.495.4354 visit TheAutry.org/Theater-Native-Voices.

CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

Randy Reinholz (Choctaw*) (Native Voices Producing Artistic Director), is co-founder of Native Voices at the Autry, the nation's only Equity theatre company dedicated exclusively to the development and production of new plays by Native American, First Nations, and Alaska Native playwrights. An accomplished producer, director, and actor, he has directed over 50 plays in the United States, Australia, and Canada. A tenured professor at San Diego State University, he served as Director of the School of Theatre, Television, and Film from 2007 to 2012. In 2012 he was named Director of Community Engagement and Innovative Programs for the College of Professional Studies and Fine Arts at San Diego State University.

Co-founder of Native Voices at the Autry, **Jean Bruce Scott** (Native Voices Producing Artistic Director) has spent 20 years developing new plays, including over 200 by Native American playwrights. She has produced 25 premieres, 20 New Play Festivals, 11 Playwrights Retreats, more than 190 play readings, and 19 national and international tours. She is co-creator of the Native Radio Theater Project, a collaboration between Native Voices and Native American Public Telecommunications, and developed the Alaska Native Playwrights Project. Scott is on the Leadership Board of the Theatrical Producer's League of Los Angeles, Large Theatres; on the Board of Directors for the Media Arts Center, San Diego; and is an elected member to the National Theatre Conference, New York.

Chris Anthony (Director) is Associate Artistic Director at The Shakespeare Center of Los Angeles (SCLA) where she oversees education programs. Directing credits include *Lunch Lady Courage* at Cornerstone

Theater; *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Romeo & Juliet*, and *Othello* at the St. Louis Black Rep; and *Romeo & Juliet* at SCLA. She teaches Shakespeare at L.A. County High School for the Arts and has been a guest lecturer at several local universities. She holds an MFA from CalArts.

[Shaun Taylor-Corbett's](#) (Blackfeet*) (Momaday) theatre credits include: second national tour of *Jersey Boys* as Frankie Valli; *the road weeps, the well runs dry* at Los Angeles Theatre Center; *Home of the Running Brave, NV*; *Ubu Roi*, *A Noise Within*; original Broadway cast of *In the Heights*. Off-Broadway/tours include: *Juan in Altar Boyz*; and his Ovation Award winning performance as Sonny in *In the Heights*. On screen he was a regular in the television series *Hi-5* and played Pedro in the film *Supremacy* (2014). He co-wrote *Distant Thunder*, a contemporary Native American musical that premiered at Native Voices at the Autry's 2012 Playwright's Retreat and Festival of New Plays.

In addition to appearing on-stage for Native Voices, [Elizabeth Frances](#) (Cherokee*) (Isabel) has performed at various theatres, including: Center Theater Group, The Inge Center, The Kirk Douglas Theater, La Jolla Playhouse, Los Angeles Theater Center, and Shakespeare Santa Cruz. Her film/TV credits include: *Ghost Forest, Hunting* (Cannes 2012 short film corner selection), and *Drunktown's Finest* (Sundance 2014, EP Robert Redford). In 2012, Frances was featured as one of 12 actors in the ABC Talent Showcase. She has developed and performed world premiere presentations with writers Josefina Lopez, Carolyn Dunn, and Melinda Lopez. She holds a BFA from CalArts.

*Refers to tribal affiliation.

Sponsors

Native Voices at the Autry is sponsored by San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, Department of Cultural Affairs (City of Los Angeles), Edison International, Los Angeles County Arts Commission, National Endowment for the Arts, The Nissan Foundation, Seven Post Private Investment Office, Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians, Sony Pictures, The Walt Disney Company, and Wells Fargo.

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 National Center of the American West in 1999. The 2014–2015 season celebrates the company's 15th year at the Autry and its 20th anniversary advancing Native theatre. The company provides a supportive, collaborative setting for Native theatre artists from across North America. This season 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 for more information.

About the Autry National Center 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.

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EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE: CALENDAR LISTING

WHO: Native Voices at the Autry, America's leading Native American theatre company

WHAT: Randy Reinholz's *Off The Rails*

WHEN:

PREVIEWS: Wednesday, February 25, 8:00 p.m. and Thursday, February 26, 8:00 p.m.

OPENS: Friday, February 27, 8:00 p.m.

RUNS:

Saturday, February 28, 2:00 p.m.

Saturday, February 28, 8:00 p.m.

Sunday, March 1, 2:00 p.m.

Thursday, March 5, 8:00 p.m.

Friday, March 6, 8:00 p.m.

Saturday, March 7, 2:00 p.m.

Saturday, March 7, 8:00 p.m.

Sunday, March 8, 2:00 p.m.

Thursday, March 12, 8:00 p.m.

Friday, March 13, 8:00 p.m.

Saturday, March 14, 2:00 p.m.

Saturday, March 14, 8:00 p.m.

Sunday, March 15, 2:00 p.m.

WHERE:

Wells Fargo Theater

Autry National Center of the American West

4700 Western Heritage Way

Los Angeles, CA 90027-1462

TICKET PRICES:

\$25 General Admission

\$12 Students/Seniors (60+)/Military

\$10 Autry Members

Previews:

\$10 General Admission

\$6 Students/Seniors (60+)/Military

Free for Autry Members

INFORMATION:

323.667.2000, ext. 299

TheAutry.org/NativeVoices

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IMAGES ARE AVAILABLE ON REQUEST