Death of a Chief

Drawing parallels between this classic tale of power and betrayal, and the lives of Native people in Canada today, Death of a Chief presents an array of intimate performances and discussions that include personal stories, dance, movement, and song.

The workshop is funded through the generous support of the University of Guelph, the Macdonald Stewart Art Centre, the College of Arts, the School of English and Theatre Studies, and the Canadian Adaptations of Shakespeare Project (CASP).

Macdonald Stewart Art Centre
358 Gordon Street, Guelph, Ontario
phone: 519-837-0010 / email: info@msac.ca

Native Earth Performing Arts Inc.
www.nativeearth.ca

Shakespeare – Made in Canada Festival
www.shakespearemadeincanada.ca

Canadian Adaptations of Shakespeare (CASP)
www.canadianshakespeares.ca

Macdonald Stewart Art Centre
www.msac.ca

University of Guelph
www.uoguelph.ca

Workshops:
Wednesday, October 25, 2006
11:30 a.m.
Opening Remarks by Judith Thompson
4:00 p.m.
Opening Remarks by Kim Anderson
A story that Nolan and co-adapter/co-director Kennedy Cathy MacKinnon return to is Julius Caesar in their Shakespearean adaptation, Death of a Chief.

Death of a Chief operates on multiple levels as Nolan and MacKinnon rebuild and restructure the historic tragedy of Julius Caesar to address Aboriginal issues of politics, gender, class, race, and nation. For Nolan and MacKinnon adapting Shakespeare is about the process of understanding the complexities of community, ambition, power, betrayal, and the lives of Native people in Canada today. It is a process that reconfigures the matrix of political hierarchies to make leaders more accountable to the people.

Thrusting the audience to reconsider how we think about history and presentism, the Turtle Gals Performance Ensemble had a first run of their production in the 2005 Rhubarb festival, playing Frank in Freeman’s Wake, and again at the Harbourfront Centre festival presentation of TransCanada. The ensemble was founded by Nolan as a director and playwright, along with fellow Turtle Gals Performance Ensemble member Sara Sinclair, a playwright and director. Sinclair’s interest in theatre and dance began with the Turtle Gals, and she has since directed at the Centre for Indigenous Theatre, the Native Earth Performance Ensemble, and the Imagine Native Film Festival.

Michaela Washburn was born in Edmonton and received a Scholarship from The Second City’s Training Centre and graduated from their Conservatory Programme. She is also a member of the all-Native improvisational troupe Tonto’s Nephews. Recently Michaela made her national debut as a host for Rez Bluez TV. Washburn is a two-time winner of the Governor General’s Literary Award for Drama for The Other Side of the Dark (1989) and White Biting Dog (1984), and was twice nominated for a Genie Award for her screenplays Perfect Pie and Lost and Delirious. She also received the Floyd S. Chalmers Canadian Play Award for Lion in the Streets (1991) and I Am Yours (1987). In 2005, she was named an officer of the Order of Canada for her outstanding contributions in arts and writing. Thompson’s new play, The Palace of the End, is a process of understanding the complexities of politics, gender, class, race, and nation. For Nolan and MacKinnon adapting Shakespeare is about the process of understanding the complexities of community, ambition, power, betrayal, and the lives of Native people in Canada today. It is a process that reconfigures the matrix of political hierarchies to make leaders more accountable to the people.