

Algonquin Highway

By Wyatt Lamoureux

When cars and relationships break down,
sometimes it takes an Algonquin Highway to set the fix.

2 childhood friends reunited after 5 years, a transgender twist, a trunk full of resentment, and one flat tire - whatever will they talk about? *Algonquin Highway* is a comic-drama about the power and purpose of friendship...and a good left hook.

Peterborough playwright Wyatt Lamoureux sees this play - premiering at the 2017 Toronto Fringe Festival - as a conversation-starter about society's obsessive and harmful need to label and codify gender and ethnicity. Lamoureux spent 17 years working with marginalized youth at emergency shelters in Peterborough and BC, and is concerned that transgender youth comprise the fastest growing segment of the homeless youth community.

Throughout the script development process, he sought feedback and involvement from LGBTQ2S and indigenous communities. He speaks honestly and articulately about his own part in the discussion: he is an older white-heterosexual-anglo-male who experienced the ease of changing his identity with a simple name change. For transgender and visible minorities, he knows, change is not that easy, nor life as privileged, but feels acceptance shouldn't be so hard to come by.

"These days our media is filled with argument over cultural appropriation, diversity, and who should tell what stories. I was determined to make *Algonquin Highway* as authentic as possible. In the play, Alex is an indigenous lesbian, Nic is a transgender male – and we found this in our actors, Haley Vincent and Smith Purdy (who also identifies as Metis) who have both contributed positively to the work."

It's an awkward position in which Lamoureux finds himself, wanting to promote this play's cultural and gender issues while positing that the point of the play is that neither of those things *should* matter between us. And while the story raises questions about gender, sexuality, and being an indigenous person in today's society, it is ultimately about finding the bonds that connect us no matter how strained they've become.

"I want to contribute to a positive awareness of the infinity of gender, and hope our audience will consider that this unreasonable fear of 'the other' is a learned response," says Lamoureux. "Being transgender or indigenous is as natural as breathing".

To arrange an interview:

Contact Media Rep Patricia Maitland

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pmaitland@sympatico.ca

To arrange an interview with director Wyatt Lamoureux and/or actors Haley Vincent and Smith Purdy.

See below for cast and venue information, ticket prices, and performance dates...

17 Syllables Theatre Company in association with **The Toronto Fringe Festival** presents

Algonquin Highway

Written & Directed by Wyatt Lamoureux

Starring Smith Purdy & Haley Vincent

Set design by Ian Burns

Stage Managed by Eryn Lidster

Opens **Wednesday, July 5, 2017** and runs evenings and matinee performances through to **Sunday, July 16, 2017** at the Al Green Theatre in the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, 750 Spadina Ave, Toronto, ON M5S 2J2.

Performances:

Wednesday, July 5, 6:30pm

Friday, July 7, 8:15pm

Saturday, July 8, 1:45pm

Monday, July 10, 10:15pm

Wednesday, July 12, 5:15pm

Friday, July 14, 12:30pm

Sunday, July 16, 1:45pm

Please note that there is absolutely no latecomer seating.

Tickets: \$12 Tickets go on sale June 8, 2017 and can be purchased online, by phone or in person, details below.

Purchase online: fringetoronto.com

By Phone: 416-966-1062

In Person: During the festival at our main box office at the Fringe Club at Scadding Court (707 Dundas Street West).

Venue: The Al Green Theatre in the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre,
750 Spadina Ave, Toronto, ON M5S 2J2. mnjcc.org

Please do not contact the venue.

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17 Syllables Theatre Company

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