

February 4–March 1, 2020



*The
Ministry
of Grace*
BY Tara
Beagan

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FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

A new year. A new play. A new decade and a host of new relationships.

It is a thrill to introduce you to so many theatre artists who are new to the Belfry! With the exception of Sheldon Elter—so unforgettable in last season's *Bears*, and Becca Jorgensen—a favourite member of our stage management team, everyone involved in this production is making their Belfry debut.

I must mention how very special it is for me to have our playwright and director Tara Beagan here at the Belfry. From the moment we first met, I have felt her hand resting on my heart.

The story she has written is like a Steinbeck novel—set in 1950's California and dealing with huge events befalling ordinary people. Tara has created a collision course between Indigenous and non-Indigenous characters, between goodness and deceit, and between real spirituality and sham.

As a playwright, she poses questions, but does not always give us answers. She has woven a gorgeous web of yearnings and rejections, and a love as true and as deep as any I have ever seen on stage.

As the Belfry strives to create more meaningful relationships with the Indigenous community—the nations on whose traditional territories we live and create, as well as Indigenous theatre colleagues across the country—we are committed to holding space for Indigenous plays and events—led by Indigenous artists. *The Ministry of Grace* is a beautiful part of this.

Please welcome this new play and these talented new members of the Belfry family!

Sincerely,



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In an age of awareness about privilege, racism, reconciliation and equity, what can a theatre company contribute? A lot. Art has a duty not just to entertain but to confront and challenge and create dialogue. As the Belfry continues to fulfill its duty to produce outstanding theatre with some of our country's best talents, we also look to build more meaningful connections with those community members who have felt excluded from our stories and stage, as we also strive to honour and recognize the First Nations. Nations who are now standing proud and demanding recognition of their lands, their traditions and the resources to tell their stories. Stories that are sometimes sad, and sometimes funny, but are consistently about them and often about their difficult experiences with colonization. Those stories are not just meaningful to them but important to all of us as we build toward reconciliation.

The Belfry thanks all of our patrons for joining us on the journey of understanding through art, the perspectives, history and lives of our First Nation hosts and the many other communities whose stories are just now reaching our national stages. The Belfry thanks our patrons, our donors, and our funders for providing the financial resources to provide at least this small measure of space for those artists to take command of this stage for their stories.



Sheldon Elter and PJ Prudat



PJ Prudat



Stafford Perry



Stafford Perry and Lara Schmitz

FROM THE REHEARSAL HALL

Photography by
Peter Pokorny



Jeff Chief



Stafford Perry



Sheldon Elter, Andy Moro and Tara Beagan

THE BELFRY THEATRE PRESENTS

The Ministry of Grace

by Tara Beagan

Starring

(in order of appearance)

Stafford Perry *Brother Cain*

PJ Prudat *Mary*

Sheldon Elter *Clem*

Lara Schmitz *Lizzie Mae*

Director Tara Beagan

Set, Lighting, Props & Projection Andy Moro

Costume Designer Jeff Chief

Composer & Sound Designer Allison Lynch

Fight Director Morgan Yamada

Stage Manager Meghan Speakman

Assistant Stage Manager Becca Jorgensen

Dialect Coach Adrienne Smook

The Ministry of Grace is approximately two hours and thirty minutes long including a fifteen-minute intermission.

**PJ Prudat's participation is generously supported
by a gift from Michelle & Stephen Brown.**

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FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT/DIRECTOR

My mom Pauline told me her own late mother Mary had answered a call for labourers, to work the harvest in California, when we were looking through old photos she has treasured for decades. In 2010, after receiving permission from my late grandma's sisters to fictionalize around the scant facts we knew about Grandma Mary's time down south, *The Ministry of Grace* was born.

I've been blessed to have much development support to get the play to its rehearsal draft. The teachings I've gathered along the way have illuminated the reality that every Indigenous storytelling can be an opportunity for healing on some level. This play has been exactly that, in no small part thanks to the creative and production team for this world premiere.

The culture at the Belfry is unique on Turtle Island. Each team member is committed, supportive and invested. By now the bonus Canada 150 funding is long gone, and the hype around "reconciliation" has faded to a distant murmur, yet the Belfry is enacting many of the 94 Calls to Action that emerged from the TRC.

Indigenous voices are being handed a powerful platform, and invited to sing out without caveat. We are honoured to be on Lekwungen land with this story of one powerful Nlaka'pamux woman who dares to love.



Tara Beagan

Photo by Peter Pokorny

PLAY DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

The play was at Native Earth Performing Arts' Weesageechak Begins to Dance Festival in 2010. An ensuing reading took place in residence at NEPA, and Kenneth T. Williams made an immeasurable contribution. The play was further developed in residence at the National Arts Centre in 2011 and a reading took place at the Magnetic North Festival. Playwrights Workshop Montreal supported the work in 2014. ARTICLE 11 held a production workshop in 2015, in partnership with the City of Toronto.



Best wishes

to all Belfry Theatre supporters
for an enriching 2020...full of "Grace."

Hon. Carole James, MLA

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ACTING COMPANY



Stafford Perry Brother Cain

Stafford is so excited and grateful to be making his Belfry debut, especially with such a remarkable group of artists on this incredible production. Stafford has worked on stages across the country. Some favorite credits include: *Strangers on a Train* (Vertigo Theatre), *One Man, Two Guvnors* (Theatre Calgary), *The Wars* (Vancouver Playhouse), *Major Barbara* (American Conservatory Theatre), *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike* (Alberta Theatre Projects), *As You Like It* (The Citadel Theatre), *Romeo and Juliet* (Neptune Theatre). Stafford would like to thank his family, Meredith, Llewyn and Gallagher for making life so wonderful.



PJ Prudat Mary

PJ is a Métis actor and writer. Select credits: *The Unnatural and Accidental Women* (NAC-Indigenous Theatre), *Iphigenia and the Furies* (SAGA Collectif), *Honour Beat* (Theatre Calgary), *Everything I Couldn't Tell You* (Spiderbones), *Saint Joan, Wilde Tales, A Christmas Carol* (Shaw Festival), *Moonlodge* (Urban Ink), *Beaver* (WeWillMeet/Storefront), *Reckoning* (Article 11), *Twelfth Night, The Adventures of a Black Girl in Search of God, Copper Thunderbird* (National Arts Centre), *Ipperwash, Almighty Voice and His Wife, free as injuns* (Native Earth), *Café Daughter* (Gwaandak). Kitatamihinâwâw. Other: Creator-In-Residence (Nightswimming Theatre) RBC Resident Creator (Canadian Stage) the Johanna Metcalf Performing Arts Prize nominee, and Jesse Richardson Award nominee (*Moonlodge*).



Sheldon Elter Clem

Sheldon's credits include: *Bears* (Belfry Theatre), *Métis Mutt* (One Little Indian Productions), *After The Fire* (Punctuate Theatre), *The Comedy Company* (Shadow Theatre), *Stories From the Red Dirt Road, Martin Guerre* (Charlottetown Festival), *Evangeline* (Citadel Theatre/Charlottetown Festival), *Crazy For You* (Citadel Theatre/Theatre Calgary), *Christmas Carol, Alice Through The Looking Glass, One Man Two Guvnors, Julius Caesar, A Prairie Boy's Winter, and Vimy* (Citadel Theatre), *Tartuffe, Sound of Music, Enron* (NAC), *Nevermore* (Catalyst Theatre). TV credits: *Hank Williams' First Nation* (APTN), *Hell On Wheels* (AMC). He is the co-star, writer, and co-executive producer on *Delmer and Marta*, and *CAUTION: May Contain Nuts* (APTN) He is a core member of the ukulele rock band sensation, The Be Arthurs.



Lara Schmitz Lizzie Mae

Lara is an actor, educator, and budding playwright. Her acting credits include *Iceland* (Theatre Calgary), *Sextet* (Verb), *The Lonely Diner, The Hollow* (Vertigo), *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike* (Alberta Theatre Projects), *It's A Wonderful Life* (Theatre NorthWest), *Much Ado About Nothing* (Thou Art Here), *Twelfth Night* (The Shakespeare Company), *Time Present* (Lunchbox), *We Are All Treaty People, The General* (Quest), and *Bashir Lazhar* (Downstage). Thank you to the Belfry Theatre and Tara Beagan for this incredible opportunity. Much love to her family and KP.

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CREATIVE TEAM



Tara Beagan Playwright & Director

Born in Niisitapi country, Tara is a proud Ntlaka'pamux and Irish "Canadian" halfbreed. She is a Dora Mavor Moore and Betty Mitchell award nominated director and playwright and has written twenty-eight plays. She served as Artistic Director of Native Earth Performing Arts from 2011–2013 and has been playwright-in-residence at the National Arts Centre and Cahoots Theatre. Currently, she co-helms ARTICLE 11 with her most cherished collaborator, favourite artist and true love, Andy Moro. ARTICLE 11, now based in Mohkintsis, has brought Indigenous Activist art works to the NAC, the ROM, Kingcome Inlet, Kamloops, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Calgary's City Hall, the Edinburgh Fringe, Wellington, Aotearoa (NZ), Sydney, and Melbourne.



Andy Moro Set & Lighting Designer

Andy is a mixed Euro/Omushkegowuk (Cree) multi-disciplinary artist and Co-founding Director of ARTICLE 11 with Tara Beagan. The UNDRIP Article 11 protects the right to *practice, revitalize, protect and develop all manifestations of culture, artefacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies and visual and performing arts and literature*. ARTICLE 11's newest work *Deer Woman* has met acclaim at the Edinburgh and Sydney festivals, Kia Mau Aotearoa, and Arts Centre Melbourne – with upcoming dates in Columbia and Perth. Moro's recent work includes Marie Clement's *The Unnatural and Accidental Women* (National Arts Centre), *Missing for Pacific Opera Victoria* and Savage Society's *Skyborn* by Quelema Sparrow currently at The Culch in Vancouver.



Jeff Chief Costume Designer

Jeff is a Plains Cree costume designer from Saskatchewan. Costume Designs: *Kronborg – The Hamlet Rock Musical* (Confederation Centre of the Arts), *Honour Beat* (Theatre Calgary), *Hedda Noir* (Theatre NorthWest), *Le Wild West Show de Gabriel Dumont* (National Arts Centre), *Ipperwash* (Blyth Festival), *In Care* (GTNT), *Popcorn Elder* (SNTC/Dancing Sky Theatre), *Dreary and Izzy* (Theatre NorthWest), *Othello* (Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan), *Where the Blood Mixes* (Western Canada Theatre), *Migration* (Red Sky/Black Grace), *A Man A Fish*, *God of Carnage*, and *The Berlin Blues* (Persephone Theatre).

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CREATIVE TEAM



Allison Lynch Composer & Sound Designer

Allison is a Calgary-based actor, singer, music director and composer. Favourite design credits: *A Christmas Carol, The Scarlet Letter* (Betty Award) (Theatre Calgary), *As You Like It, Romeo and Juliet* (Theatre Calgary-SBTB), *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (Betty Nomination), *The Penelopiad* (Betty and Jessie Nominations – ATP/Arts Club), *Double Indemnity* (Vertigo), *Benefit, Bone Cage* (Downstage), *Equivocation* (GZT, Shakespeare Company), *Shakespeare's Will* (Sage), *The List, Thy Neighbour's Wife, It is Solved by Walking, The Russian Play* (Betty nomination), *Essay* (Urban Curvz/Handsome Alice), *The adventures of a Black Girl in Search of God* (Ellipses Tree), *Book Club I and II* (Lunchbox). Allison also has three Betty awards for acting and loves to sing jazz and ride motorcycles. Her album, *Skin & Flame* is on CDBaby and iTunes.



Morgan Yamada Fight Director

Morgan works as a Fight Choreographer, Actor and Arts Educator. She is a Graduate of the University of Alberta's BFA Acting Program as well as an Advanced Actor Combatant and Teacher Apprentice with Fight Directors Canada. Some of her recent fight directing work includes: *Three Ladies* (Remix the Ritual), *Joan & Talbot* (Thou Art Here – Kaliedo Festival 2019), *Dead Centre of Town 2018* (Catch the Keys Productions) and *Art* (Shadow Theatre). She is overjoyed to be choreographing and collaborating with such an amazing and inspiring team! To see more of her work follow @morganyamada on Instagram.



Meghan Speakman Stage Manager

Meghan is excited to be working on her first show at the Belfry, and with such a great group of people. Though based in Toronto, she has worked as a stage manager with various theatre companies across North America. Recent credits include *Cottagers and Indians* (Tarragon), *The Election* (Common Boots), *Hand to God* (Coal Mine Theatre), *Outside* (Roseneath), *Athabasca* (Convergence Theatre), *Brighton Beach Memoirs* (Harold Green Jewish Theatre), *Animal Farm* (Soulpepper), *Stupidhead!* (Theatre Passe Muraille), *Lunenburg* (Upper Canada Playhouse), *Early August* (Lighthouse Festival Theatre), *Come Down From Up River* (Foster Festival). Meghan is a graduate of Ryerson Theatre School. Much love, as always, to Ephraim.



Becca Jorgensen Assistant Stage Manager

Becca is a Victoria born and raised stage manager and avid runner. This marks her fourth season working and creating with the Belfry family. For the Belfry: *Every Brilliant Thing, Bears, Griffin & Sabine, Bed & Breakfast, A Christmas Carol*. Other favourites elsewhere: *The Piano Teacher* (Arts Club), *La Bohème, Il Trittico* (POV), *Mamma Mia!, Kim's Convenience, 2 Pianos, 4 Hands* (Cheminus Theatre Festival), *Sweeney Todd* (Blue Bridge Repertory). Becca is a graduate of the University of Victoria.

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The use of cameras, smartphones or audio/visual recording equipment is strictly prohibited. Please turn off all personal electronic devices prior to the performance. If you need to be contacted in an emergency, please leave your name and seat number with our House Manager.

Latecomers & Re-admission

The Director of each production designates moments in the show when the seating of latecomers will cause the least distraction for actors and audience members. Should you leave the theatre, our House Manager will not be able to reseat you until one of these breaks, but you can watch the performance on the monitor in our lobby

Perfume and Cologne

Please refrain from using perfume and cologne when you come to the theatre. Some of our patrons are highly allergic to scents.

Drinks

To cut down on plastic we have moved to glassware in the lobby. If you still wish to take your drink into the theatre please transfer it to a disposable cup, available at the bar.

Food

Please feel free to take only food you've purchased from the Belfry bar into the theatre. Our goodies are packaged so that they don't make a lot of noise, to minimize disturbing your fellow audience members.

Lost and Found

Please check with our House Manager if you have lost an item in the theatre.

Script Library

Read the play before or after you see it. We have scripts of the season's plays available at the Box Office, plus a bookcase filled with Canadian plays, all for reading in the Lobby.

Lobby Touchscreen

The TV monitor in our new lobby is a touchscreen device. By touching the screen you can delve deeper into each production, learn about the artists who created the show, and much more. Give it a try.

PRE-PERFORMANCE

B4Play

Live talk shows hosted by CBC Radio's Gregor Craigie and featuring artists from the upcoming show, along with experts from the community, have been designed to provide insight into each Mainstage production.

Each event, held the Saturday prior to Opening, is free to attend and is also livestreamed on Facebook, and available as a podcast on our website.

Podcasts

Listen and download the full interviews from each B4Play, recent stories from The Flame, our storytelling series, and more at belfry.bc.ca/podcasts.

Upstage Magazine

Our magazine provides insight into each Mainstage production, further enriching your experience. Upstage is available in the Lobby and on our website. Drop us a line at hello@belfry.bc.ca for an advance copy.

FOLLOWING THE PERFORMANCE

Afterplay

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Following every evening Mainstage performance (except Opening Night and Talkback Thursday) we offer facilitated discussions – audience member to audience member. Stick around - these are a great opportunity to discuss the play and the ideas it contains.

Talkback Thursday

Meet the actors post-performance when they return to the stage to answer questions and provide insight into the play.

ACCESSIBLE PERFORMANCES

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For patrons with low or no vision, we offer one VocalEye performance during each Mainstage production. Trained Audio Describers provide descriptions of the visual elements of the show, allowing people with low vision to enjoy the theatrical experience without missing any of the details..

Hearing Assist

For patrons who are hard of hearing, the theatre is equipped with an infra-red hearing assist system. We have 6 devices available through the Box Office.

Babes in Arms and Free Childcare Performances

The Belfry is proud to produce adult contemporary theatre. Most of our productions are not suitable for young children. Sorry, we do not admit babes in arms. To help young parents experience the Belfry, we offer inexpensive tickets and free childcare on select afternoons. To book your tickets and a spot for your kids (between 3–10 years old), please call our Box Office at 250-385-6815.

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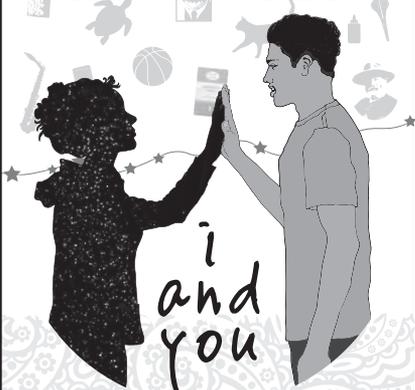
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