



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

alterNatives

BY DREW HAYDEN TAYLOR
DIRECTED BY XAVIER HUARD

A COLLABORATION WITH MENUENTAKUAN PRODUCTIONS

OCTOBER 17 TO NOVEMBER 5, 2023 AT CENTAUR THEATRE

STARRING CHARLES BENDER, NATALIE TANNOUS, ÉTIENNE THIBEAULT, LESLY VELÁZQUEZ,
NADIA VERRUCCI AND XAVIER WATSO

SET DESIGN XAVIER MARY - COSTUME DESIGN MEKY OTTAWA - LIGHTING DESIGN GONZALO
SOLDI - SOUND DESIGN ÉTIENNE THIBEAULT - STAGE MANAGER TREVOR BARRETTE -
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER MÉLANIE ERMEL

Montreal, QC (September 13, 2023) Centaur Theatre is proud to present the first show of its 2023-24 Season, **Drew Hayden Taylor's *alterNatives***, a collaboration with Montreal-based Indigenous theatre company **Menuentakuan Productions**. In ***alterNatives***, Taylor brings his trademark wit and cultural insight to this wry look at contemporary social dynamics. Directed by **Xavier Huard** and featuring an all star cast of **Charles Bender, Natalie Tannous, Étienne Thibeault, Lesly Velázquez, Nadia Verrucci** and **Xavier Watso**, ***alterNatives*** will be presented at Centaur Theatre, Oct. 17 to Nov. 5, 2023.

Hilarious and thought-provoking in equal measure, this comedy of manners shines a light on the cultural divides that still exist between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada. The play focuses on the

relationship between Angel, a young Anishinaabe science-fiction writer, and his partner Colleen, a university professor who studies Indigenous literature despite not being Indigenous herself. Colleen invites two of her friends – Dale and Michelle, a couple of white liberal vegans – to sit down and share a meal with two of Angel’s friends, a pair of radical anti-colonial activists who have dubbed themselves “alterNative warriors.” This results in everyone’s biases being on the table leading to a rip-roaring comedic experience.

Menuentakuan Productions presented a French-language version of *alterNatives* called *alterIndiens* at Théâtre Denise Pelletier in 2021; many of the talented bilingual cast members, (**Charles Bender**, **Étienne Thibeault**, and **Lesly Velázquez**) are returning for the English-language version of this production at Centaur. They will be joined by **Nadia Verrucci**, last seen at Centaur in *At the Beginning of Time* (2022), **Natalie Tannous**, last seen at Centaur in *The Baklava Recipe* (2018), as well as TikTok star **Xavier Watso**. The production is directed by esteemed Québécois artist **Xavier Huard**, co-founder of **Menuentakuan Productions**, which seeks to be a meeting place between Canada’s First Nations culture and the other cultures that enrich the Canadian and Québécois identity.

Playwright **Drew Hayden Taylor** is one of the most celebrated and well-known Indigenous playwrights in Canada, as well as a noted essayist, novelist, columnist, filmmaker, and TV host. He is Anishinaabe (Ojibway) from Curve Lake First Nation in Ontario. His CBC documentary *The Pretendians* won a Canadian Screen Award for Best Political/Social Documentary in 2022, and his popular APTN series *Going Native* has recently been renewed for a third season. His play *Someday* was performed in 1994 as part of Centaur’s 26th Season.

Director **Xavier Huard** is a 2013 graduate of the National Theatre School of Canada. Soon after completing his degree, he began directing theatrical projects in remote Aboriginal communities and in Haiti. In February 2015, along with **Marco Collin** and **Charles Bender**, he co-founded **Menuentakuan Productions**. On stage, he worked with Théâtre du Nouveau Monde in 2014 and 2015 in productions of *Cyrano de Bergerac* and *Les Trois-Mousquetaires*. In 2017 and 2018, he appeared at Salle Fred-Barry in *Antigone au printemps* and *Là où le sang se mêle*.

Charles Bender is a Huron-Wendat actor, director, translator, and the Co-Artistic Director of Menuentakuan. He is a frequent presence on APTN as both actor and host. He was recently host of the live broadcast of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation event in Ottawa on this same channel. Bender was last seen on-stage at Centaur in François Archambault’s *You Will Remember Me* (season 48).

This production is representative of Centaur’s commitment to giving voice to Indigenous theatre-makers and collaborating with its colleagues in the Francophone theatre world.

ABOUT CENTAUR THEATRE COMPANY

Centaur Theatre, located in the heart of Old Montreal, is devoted to telling stories on stage that expand our perceptions of the world. The company believes theatre serves a vital role in creating a healthy, democratic and progressive community. By training a fresh lens on the experience of being human, they foster an expansive spirit in artists and audiences alike.

ABOUT MENUENTAKUAN PRODUCTIONS

MENUENTAKUAN PRODUCTIONS offers itself, by means of theatre and performing arts, as a meeting place between Canada’s First Nations culture and the other cultures that enrich the Canadian and Québécois identity. Always with the goal of creating and structuring an intimate and significant meeting between these realities which live side by side, the company tackles its creations in a way that underlines Native peoples’ views on contemporary universal themes.

DETAILS

WHEN: Tuesday, October 17 to Sunday, November 5, 2023, Tuesdays and Saturdays at 8pm, and matinees on Saturday and Sundays at 2pm - Previews: October 17, 18, 19 at 8pm and Opening Night: October 20 at 8pm.

TALK BACKS: Thursday, October 19 (Preview): Pre-show convo @ 7:00pm

Saturday, October 21 (Matinee): Post-show Saturday Salon

Sunday, October 22 (Matinee): Sunday Chat-Up with **Drew Hayden Taylor** @ 12:30pm

Thursday, October 26 : Indigenous Language Forum with **Ange Loft** et **Charles Bender** @ 5pm

Thursday, October 26 : Post-show talkback

Sunday, October 29 : Post-show talkback

WHERE: Centaur 1, Centaur Theatre, 453 St. Francois-Xavier, Montreal.

TICKETS: Tickets ranging from \$30 – \$68, with subscription rates, group rates and student/senior discounts available. Tickets can be purchased at <https://centaurtheatre.com> or by phone at (514) 288-3161.

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