WORLD PREMIÈRE

1939

Stratford FESTIVAL

2022 STUDY GUIDE
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1939

By Jani Lauzon and Kaitlyn Riordan
Directed by Jani Lauzon

TOOLS FOR TEACHERS SPONSORED BY

canada life

Tools for Teachers include Prologues, Study Guides and Stratford Shorts.

PROUD SEASON PARTNERS

BMO

Production support for 1939 is generously provided by Karon C. Bales & Charles E. Beall and by M. Fainer.
Support for the creation of 1939 is generously provided by The Foerster Bernstein New Play Development Program.

Cover: From left – Kathleen MacLean, Richard Comeau, Wahsontiio Kirby, Tara Sky. Photography by David Hou.
1939
By Jani Lauzon and Kaitlyn Riordan
Directed by Jani Lauzon
Set Designer Joanna Yu | Costume Designer Asa Benally
Lighting Designer Louise Guinand | Sound Designer Wayne Kelso

CONTENT ADVISORY
The play is set in a residential school in 1939. While ultimately a story of hope and resilience that locates spaces in which Indigenous youth demonstrate agency and change, it explores the systemic erasure of Indigenous cultures by these institutions and its agents by way of racism, discrimination, colonial violence and family separation. To access the 24-hour Hope for Wellness Helpline, call toll-free at 1-855-242-3310 or connect to the online chat at www.hopeforwellness.ca.

GRADE RECOMMENDATION
7+

Born of both family legacy and the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 1939 has been guided by Indigenous Elders, Survivors and ceremony throughout its development.
SYNOPSIS

At a residential school in northern Ontario, five students are ordered to gather in a classroom. Two of them, Joseph Summers and his sister, Beth, have been at the school for seven years, but its policy of separating siblings has largely kept them apart—till now. Susan Blackbird, an orphan who has been there since she was four, struggles to connect with her barely remembered Cree heritage, while newcomer Evelyne Rice tries to avoid punishment by repressing her Mohawk culture and language. Jean Delorme, as a Métis student, is a rarity at the school and struggles to fit in.

English teacher Sian Ap Dafydd explains the reason for their summons: they have been chosen to entertain King George VI and his Queen on their forthcoming visit with a student performance of Shakespeare’s All’s Well That Ends Well. Firmly colonial in her notions and intentions, Ap Dafydd is as determined to get her young actors to deliver the “big round vowels” she considers essential to speaking Shakespeare as she is to show the royal couple how the students are learning to be “good little Canadians.”

But as rehearsals proceed, the students’ agency erupts as they learn about each other and discover parallels between the play’s characters and their own experiences. Confronting individual and collective tragedy with humour and strength, the students undertake a journey of self-discovery and empowerment—their resilience evoking Helena’s line in All’s Well: “Our remedies oft in ourselves do lie.”

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

- Global Competencies
  - Collaboration, Communication, Critical Thinking, Creativity, Learning to Learn/Self-Awareness
- Grades 7-8
  - Indigenous Languages
  - The Arts
  - Social Studies
  - Language
  - Health and Physical Education
- Grades 9-12
  - First Nations, Métis and Inuit Studies
  - Indigenous Languages
  - The Arts
  - Canadian and World Studies
  - English
  - Health and Physical Education
- Grades 11-12
  - Social Sciences and Humanities
- Post-Secondary
  - Suitable for courses in disciplines such as Indigenous Studies, Arts, Canadian Studies, Cultural Studies, Drama, English, Fine Arts, History, Human Rights, Religious Studies, Social Development Studies, Teacher Education and Theatre

THEMES

- Resources by theme are listed in the “About the Play” section of the Digital Study Guide.
- The Art of Resilience
- Collective Agency and First Nations, Métis and Inuit Activism
- Colonialism and the War on Indigenous Peoples
- The Doctrine of Discovery
- Indigeneity and Gender
- Giving Voice to Missing and Murdered Indigenous Children
- The Influence of the Written Word in Media and from Government
- Language as Culture, Language as Identity, Language as Power
- Loneliness and Isolation
- The Power of Storytelling and Theatre
- Residential Schools
- The Role of Humour in Navigating Racism, Trauma and Systemic Oppression
- Shakespeare and Adaptation, Disrupting the Myth That There is a “Right Way” to Perform Shakespeare
- Truth and Reconciliation
- 1939: History and Significance
DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION QUESTIONS

PRE-SHOW QUESTIONS

- What is colonialism? How does Shakespeare represent colonialism? Why does it become both important and challenging for the students in the play to disrupt/decolonize the colonial models of Shakespeare? What happens when they do?
- What are residential and day schools? What are their connections with colonialism? When considering your experience at school, what do you see as being different from a residential or day school?
- How does the media influence your beliefs about communities other than your own? What can you do to ensure you are mindful of the media you take in?
- There are more than 630 First Nation communities in Canada, which represent more than 50 Nations and 50 Indigenous languages. Many Inuit live in 53 communities across the northern regions comprising Inuvialuit (Northwest Territories and Yukon), Nunavik (Northern Quebec), Nunatsiavut (Labrador), and Nunavut as well as in communities across Canada. With a unique history, culture, language, and territory, Mètis are a distinct Indigenous people living across Canada. When learning about Indigeneity, why do you think specificity is important?

POST-SHOW QUESTIONS

Offers by Robin Stadelbauer, Indigenous Relations Coordinator at the University of Waterloo

- That particular part of the production stands out in your mind—a line, an action, a theme, or something else? Why do you think this resonates for you?
- Did anything surprise you or resonate with you about Indigenous Knowledges shared within the play? Share three pieces of Indigenous knowledge that you remember.
- Do you see parallels between how the Indigenous children in 1939 were perceived and treated at the school and how Indigenous people are perceived in Canada today? If yes, were these perceptions negative or positive? How do you think these perceptions are perpetuated?
- Identify one behaviour, rule, or restriction placed on an Indian* Residential School attendee and how this behaviour, rule or restriction could potentially impact the attendee for the remainder of their life and potentially their children and grandchildren’s lives.

Further Questions

- Why is acknowledging the specific Indigenous territories in which you live, work, and play important?
- Using the Native Land Digital map, locate the territory or territories you live on, as well as the Languages and Treaties.
- In 1939, where and how do racism and discrimination appear in the play? Share examples of how racism and discrimination are still active in Canada today.
- Identify the connections between the characters in 1939 and the territories they are from, as well as their ancestral homes. How might learning more about this connection advance your understanding of the characters in the play?
- If the characters do not know where they are from, how might this affect their experience of themselves and their interpersonal relationships?
- Define ‘resilience’. What does resilience mean to you? Think about a time when you were resilient. In what ways do you recognize resilience in the young people in the play? Which specific scene or character stands out to you?
- Read and listen to the CBC report titled “Stories of Mohawk Institute Residential School...” What does it look and feel like to remember and honour Survivors of the residential and day school systems today? Think of three actions you will take to do so in your own life.
- How did the elements of humour in 1939 impact your experience? What effect do the combined genres of comedy and tragedy have on the play? What role do you think humour plays in exploring issues of racism and discrimination?
- Why do you think the playwrights included “The Maple Leaf Forever”? What is its significance to the story?
- In what ways does 1939 respond to the 83rd Call to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission? Why might it be important for Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists to work together on projects that contribute to rebuilding relationships among non-Indigenous and Indigenous people, communities and Nations? What might this approach be missing?
- What did watching the students experiencing cultural authenticity in juxtaposition with inauthenticity reveal to you?
- Authenticity: traditional medicines, rituals, sharing of Indigenous Knowledges, individual characters’ differentiating perspectives
- Inauthenticity: costumes, stereotypes, generalizations
- Extension: How might this reflect contemporary issues of cultural appropriation vs. cultural appreciation? List three examples found in media sources.
- Reflect on your cultural heritage(s). Then, think about a culture that you have experienced (i.e. through language, nationality, rituals, holidays, food, etc.) that you are not familiar with. How do you begin to respectfully engage with cultures that are unfamiliar to yours and have conversations? What are the challenges? Suggest three ways in which we could begin to work through these challenges.
- Define ‘reconciliation’. Define ‘conciliation’. How are these two actions different? Why might one be more effective than the other?

*Note: The term ‘Indian’ when used to describe First Nations people is derogatory and offensive. This language is used in this Study Guide as it was and is still used by the government of Canada within its legislation (Atahko)
MINDS ON
PRE-SHOW EXERCISE
RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS IN CANADA: A TIMELINE
Objective: To reflect on current knowledge and build understanding of the residential school system in what is now called Canada. To respond to the historical and present-day contexts of First Nations, Métis and Inuit resilience in the process of decolonization.
Materials: Video by Heritage Canada, access to the internet, monitor and speakers for presentation, writing utensils and paper.
1. Invite students to jot down their current knowledge of the residential school system. If known, write where they learned what they know.
2. Watch Residential Schools in Canada: A Timeline.
3. Split class into groups to complete shared research.
   a. Define ‘assimilation’. Why was this an objective for the governing bodies of residential schools?
   b. Who is Dr. Peter Bryce? Why is he important in our understanding of the legacies of residential schools?
   c. What is the Indian Act? What are its implications for Indigenous Peoples in Canada?
   d. What is the ‘Sixties Scoop’? How does it continue to have implications for Indigenous Peoples today?
   e. Who is Phil Fontaine? What was his role in creating change in government policy?
   f. Who is Justice Murray Sinclair? What is the important statement featured in the video that he made in reference to the reconciliation process? Share three examples of what has been done in the past year that demonstrates active remembrance.

POSSIBLE EXTENSIONS
EXPLORING APOLOGIES
● What makes a meaningful apology?
● Review former Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s Statement of apology to former students of Indian Residential Schools in 2008.
● What do you see as potential issues with this apology? What would you change in this apology?

THE MEANING OF INTERGENERATIONAL
● Ask students to define ‘intergenerational’. Before your students attend the show, invite them to be mindful of the intergenerational experiences within the characters’ lives. Have them write down one example that stands out to them.

POST-SHOW EXERCISE
RESPONDING TO REHEARSAL
Objective: To listen and respond to a conversation between community Elders and the play’s director as they respond to their experience attending a rehearsal of 1939.
Materials: Video, speaker and monitor, device with internet access, paper and writing materials.
In the video, you will meet:
Elder Elizabeth (Liz) Stevens of Ojibwe and Potawatomi lineage, residing in Kettle & Stony Point First Nation. Liz is an Ojibwe Language Instructor, Consulting Elder at the Stratford Festival and a Script Consultant on 1939.
Elder Jean Becker, who is Inuk, a member of the Nunatsiavut Territory of Labrador and Associate Vice-President of the Office of Indigenous Relations at the University of Waterloo.
Jani Lauzon, a multidisciplinary artist of Métis/French/Finnish ancestry. Jani is the co-playwright and director of 1939.
1. Watch the conversation as a class.
2. On their own, students write down one takeaway and something that surprised them during the conversation.
3. In small groups, discuss these takeaways and discoveries.

POST-SHOW EXERCISE
1939 IN THE NEWS
Objective: To explore a primary source from the year 1939 and interrogate the representation of events in the media.
Materials: Copies of the article, pieces of butcher paper with a large print copy of the article secured in the center (one per group), markers and highlighters.
1. Read the 1939 coverage of the Royal Tour in the Ottawa Citizen (pp. 1-3).
2. In small groups, students gather around a piece of butcher paper with the article in the center.
3. Pose the question: “Who is represented in the article?” Students use their markers to call attention to who is mentioned in the article—in silence.
4. Pose the question: “What might be missing from the article?” Ask students to add and write down questions they have about what could be absent from the article—in silence.
5. Ask students to reflect on their experience watching the production of 1939.
6. Pose the question: “How do the students and the figure of Madge Macbeth (the reporter) attempt to change this narrative? Why might this be important?” Ask students to discuss, using examples from 1939.
CONNECTION TO THE ARCHIVES

SHINGWAUK RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS CENTRE

The Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre (SRSC) is a cross-cultural research and educational project of Algoma University (through the technological and archival expertise of the Arthur A. Wishart Library) and the Children of Shingwauk Alumni Association (CSAA), which includes former students of the Residential schools, staff, descendants, family, and friends. Algoma University is located on the site (and uses some of the buildings) of the former Shingwauk and Wawanosh Indian Residential Schools in Sault Ste. Marie. Governance for the SRSC runs through a joint AU/CSAA Heritage Committee, which shares responsibility for the Centre evenly between the two partners.

Krista McCracken, Researcher/Curator and their team offered research tools, archival documents, and resource links which supported the development of 1939. Jani Lauzon, Kaitlyn Riordan and Dr. Sorouja Moll visited the SRSC to explore the archives, meet with Shirley Horn, first Chancellor of Algoma University and Survivor, the Children of Shingwauk Alumni Association, as well as artists and community members. Explore the public archive and contact the Centre for more information.

THE MUSH HOLE PROJECT (2016, 2022)

To access the virtual stream of Dejidwayo’do:weht (We are Thinking of it Again): Mush Hole 2.0, contact Woodland Cultural Centre.

The original Mush Hole Project was presented in 2016 and was an immersive, site-specific art and performance installation at the former Mohawk Institute Indian Residential School (Woodland Cultural Centre) in Brantford. This collaborative project aimed to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s Calls to Action and to preserve, query, and reveal the complex personal, political, and public narratives around Canada’s residential school system.

The objective of the Mush Hole Project was to engage with the site of Canada’s first Residential School as a space in which Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists and scholars can meet and 1) acknowledge the residential school legacy, 2) challenge the concepts of “truth” and “reconciliation,” and 3) practice interdisciplinary art and performative methods of decolonization.

Dejidwayo’do:weht (We are Thinking of it Again): Mush Hole 2.0 aimed to raise the public profile of residential schools and their ongoing devastating impact through a cross-cultural artistic lens that was showcased digitally as a 3-day virtual stream. This project was funded through the Canada Council for the Arts’ Digital Now Fund.
FROM THE STRATFORD ARCHIVES

Acclaimed actor Graham Greene, Oneida and from Six Nations of the Grand River, played Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* and Lennie in *Of Mice and Men* in the Stratford Festival’s 2007 season. Greene’s illustrious career brought him to projects on stage and screen, including *Dances With Wolves*, for which he received an Academy Award Nomination for Best Supporting Actor, honouring his performance as Ziŋtká Nagwáka (Kicking Bird). Releasing in 2023, Graham Greene will be starring in the Marvel television series *Echo*, based on the Marvel Comics character of the same name.

The Stratford Festival’s Archives maintains, conserves and protects records about the Festival and makes those materials available to people around the world. Their collection contains material ranging from 1952 right up to the present and includes administrative documents, production records, photographs, design artwork, scores, audio-visual recordings, promotional materials, costumes, props, set decorations and much more. These materials are collected and preserved with the aim of documenting the history of the Festival, preserving the page-to-stage process, and capturing the creative processes involved in numerous other activities that contribute to the Festival each season.

In addition to visiting the Archives in person, you can explore a selection of their holdings via their online catalogue.
STUDY GUIDES

Study Guides of all 2022 plays are available free of charge online on our website.

RESOURCES

To access links to the listed resources, please see the “Resources” section in the Digital Study Guide for this production.

EXPLORING 1939

TRAILER

HOUSE PROGRAM

STUDY GUIDE PDF

VIDEO CONVERSATION BETWEEN ELDERS LIZ STEVENS AND JEAN BECKER, MODERATED BY JANI LAUZON

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO INDIGENOUS SPEAKERS SERIES: JANI LAUZON AND KAITLYN RIORDAN

REFLECTIONS ON 1939 BY ROBIN STADELBAUER

RESOURCES BY THEME

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

FOR INDIGENOUS LEARNERS AND EDUCATORS

ATLOHSA FAMILY HEALING SERVICES

NATIVE CANADIAN CENTRE OF TORONTO

WE MATTER CAMPAIGN

FOR INDIGENOUS LEARNERS AND EDUCATORS

THE ART OF SOVEREIGNTY – TVO PODCAST

This podcast’s hosts Carl Beaver and Shelby Lisk “explore the lives of eight First Nations artists whose art reclaims our voices and identities in a country that tried to silence them.”

FACING HISTORY & OURSELVES – STOLEN LIVES, FACING CANADA

FIRST PEOPLES LAW – READING LISTS

INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL HISTORY AND DIALOGUE CENTRE

INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS – GOVERNMENT OF CANADA


NATIONAL CENTRE FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION – REPORTS

STOLEN CHILDREN | RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SURVIVORS SPEAK OUT

WHERE ARE THE CHILDREN

WHOSE LAND – LESSON PLANS

WOODLAND CULTURAL CENTRE – EDUCATION

ARCHIVAL PORTALS

The following are archival portals provided by Research Dramaturge Dr. Sorouja Moll and utilized by the creative team throughout the development of 1939.

Canada. (1867-). “House of Common Debates, 1st Parliament, 1st Session: Vol. 1. Canadian Parliamentary Historical Resources. Note: All sessions are available online. Use “search” function to locate keywords. Web: https://parl.canadiana.ca/view/oop.debates_HOC0101_01/1


Globe & Mail: Canada’s Heritage from 1844. Note: access using the school’s online library service. Web: https://www.proquest.com/resultsol/E5774861870C4896PQ/1


BOOKING INFORMATION: TICKETS, WORKSHOPS, CHATS AND TOURS

STUDENT MATINÉES
You may book any available date, but selected student matinée performances for this show are at 2 p.m. on the following dates:

- Wednesday, September 28th
- Thursday, October 6th
- Friday, October 7th
- Wednesday, October 12th
- Thursday, October 7th
- Friday, October 13th
- Friday, October 14th
- Wednesday, October 19th
- Thursday, October 20th
- Thursday, October 27th
- Friday, October 21st
- Tuesday, October 25th
- Wednesday, October 26th

WORKSHOPS, CHATS AND TOURS
Pre or Post-Show Workshops, Chats and Tours (virtual, onsite or at your school/centre) can be booked by calling the Box Office at 1.800.567.1600.

SOCIAL MEDIA

/StratfordFestival /stratfest /stratfordfestival /stratfest /stratfest

SPECIAL THANKS
Study Guide was written in collaboration with the creative team of 1939, Dr. Sorouja Moll–Research Dramaturge on 1939–and Robin Stadelbauer–Indigenous Relations Coordinator at the University of Waterloo.

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