

"AM I JUST THE TRIAL AT THE END OF YOUR WILDERNESS?"

FRONT COVER



EVERGREEN

BY KRISTA MARUSHY

*an intimate thriller, somewhere between romance and mystery
the Saskatchewan premiere of this award-winning new play*

WHEN: FEBRUARY 2-12, 2023

WHERE: THE BACKSTAGE STAGE AT THE REMAI ARTS CENTRE

BURNTTTHICKET.COM



BURNT THICKET THEATRE

Burnt Thicket Theatre is an independent company producing live theatre that brings awareness to real issues in our community, planting seeds for positive social change.

We create theatre productions that offer audiences a visceral immersion in another human being's lived experience, believing that "walking in someone else's shoes" is part of theatre's power. We believe in empowering artists to make work that matters, and the majority of our productions are the fruit of new script development processes.

Created in 2007 in Calgary, Burnt Thicket Theatre moved to Saskatoon in 2017. To date we have generated 8 professional touring productions that performed in 27 cities across Canada. In 2012 we toured *She Has a Name* for 5 months, impacting audiences from Halifax to Victoria with the struggle against human trafficking. Our most recent live world premiere, *My Little Plastic Jesus*, provoked dialogue about religion, politics and identity in living rooms across the prairies. Our production of *Every Brilliant Thing* inspired honest conversation about suicide and emotional wellness, most recently among nearly two thousand patrons at Rosebud Theatre last summer. In 2021-2022 we produced two fiction podcast series of world premiere plays for the ear. The latest is *We Treaty People*, in which 49 Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists collaborated on 19 episodes about truth and reconciliation.

We believe sharing stories that kindle hopeful change in people's lives matters, and it only happens through the collaborative faith and effort of a host of artists, donors and supporters, far beyond the artists and our staff listed here.

BTT Staff: Brooklynn Bitner (Marketing Associate), Tim Bratton (Artistic Associate), Yulissa Campos (Producing Associate), Stephen Waldschmidt (Artistic Director)



Land Acknowledgment

This beautiful land on which we gather today is Treaty Six territory. We are Treaty People, all of us. Burnt Thicket Theatre works to honour the spirit of the treaties, to collaborate respectfully with descendants of the original caretakers of these lands, and to participate in positive systemic change. This land is the traditional meeting ground and homeland of the First Nations, including the Cree, Saulteaux, Dene, Nakoda, Lakota, and Dakota Nations, as well as the Homeland of the Métis Nation. We are grateful for the opportunity to create and perform on this land that we share, understanding that this place has a rich, living history of Indigenous arts and culture. We'd like to encourage all of us to continue our learning journeys towards truth, reconciliation, and growing as peacemakers in our neighbourhoods and our nations.

EVERGREEN

by Krista Marushy

A Burnt Thicket Theatre production

Cast

(in order of appearance)

Tim Bratton* as Frank

Paige Francoeur as Angela

Andrea Folster as Marian

Production Team

Direction & Scenic Design by Stephen Waldschmidt

Associate Direction by Johanna Arnott

Lighting Design & Scenic Assistance by Conor Farrell

Sound Design by Tim Bratton

Stage Management by Liam Scramstad

Production Assistance by Søren Siebert

Graphic Design & Scenic Assistance by Brooklynn Bitner

Intimacy Direction by Kenn McLeod* (with Johanna Arnott)

Event Coordination by Carol Tebay

Lighting Technician - Tanqueray Strange

*The participation of these Artists is arranged by permission of Canadian Actors' Equity Association under the provisions of the Dance Opera Theatre Policy (DOT).

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Special Thanks to:

Jeremy Smith for mentoring and advising on the lighting design;

Heather Cant and all the amazing staff at Persephone Theatre for supporting us in every department, including Melanie Vanderlinde, Dan Hudson and the Box Office Team, Derek Butt, Jody Longworth, Ralph Blankenagel, Ryan Bobbert;

Carla Orosz, Beverley Kobelsky, Ken MacKenzie, Iain Rose, & USask Drama Dept.; Char Adrian, Jonnie Scrivens, & College Park Covenant Church; Cynthia Dyck & On the Boards; Ed Mendez & Gordon Tootoosis Nikāniwin Theatre Frank Engel, Bruce McKay, & La Troupe Du Jour; Val Lieske & Fire Exit Theatre;

Yvette Nolan, Diane Janvier-Dugan, Elizabeth Ahenakew, Jae Blakley, Katherine Panchuk, Nikolaos Konstantinidis, Stewart, Terry, and Jeff Folster, Thomas & Terri Lynn Friesen, Scott Cowan, and Jared Siebert;

Our Board Members: Jessica Isaak, Carol Tebay, Grant Schroeder, Adam Bourassa, Brendan Andrews, Rod Schellenberg, and Becky Thomas;

Burnt Thicket's generous donors, without whom we could not create theatre that matters.

Playwright's Notes

I started writing this play almost 15 years ago. It took several attempts to sort who it was about, and many years of waiting to see where they were going. Time afforded me two distinct vantage points, and along the way there have been adjustments, surprises, magic, and maturity. I've literally seen life from both sides of the counter.

Since the beginning, Evergreen had a strong sense of place. I've felt a kinship with this diner, and knew it to be an incubator for something significant. It wasn't always called The Evergreen, but it's true to its roots. This compilation of places and times is by no means biographical, but inspired by people I've known who've wrestled with what it means to truly love.

Thomas Merton writes about the wilderness as a place we go to meet with God. It isn't always a barren or desolate wasteland. For me, it brings to mind that scene in The NeverEnding story where Atreyu stands before a mirror and has to face himself. A wilderness can be lonely, but it can also be liberating. I think it reveals where we're wounded. On the other side I'm learning to be kinder with my complexities. To be both rooted and reaching. Even in the midst of the inexplicable.

So we wait, and we wonder. And in the weight, there is wonder.

Thank you for being a part of something I waited for.



-Krista Marushy

Director's Notes

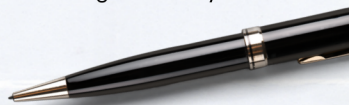
It's a gift to bring Krista Marushy's new play to the stage, and to you, our audiences. Krista has been an artistic collaborator for twenty years, since our days on staff together at Vancouver's Pacific Theatre, then cheering on James Popoff and me as we organized *Burnt Thicket* in 2007-2008 and began touring original work. Krista supported the company's move to Saskatoon in 2017, sharing many phone conversations about new plays and life as parents of young children. Krista introduced us to *Every Brilliant Thing*, hosted a performance of Tim Bratton's *My Little Plastic Jesus* in her Calgary home, and wrote *Middle Ground* for our first series of audio plays, *Tied In Knots*.

Krista shared her play *Evergreen* with me in 2018 and it went on my wish list, just before winning the Scripts On Fire competition with Fire Exit Theatre. Tim and I returned to it a year ago and realized this play speaks even more profoundly on this side of the pandemic.

Know anyone who has experienced some of these realities over the last three years: disappointment, abrupt life changes, isolation, vocational uncertainty, or feeling deeply misunderstood? How about anxiety, loneliness, or grief?

Now before you question your decision to come to the theatre today, think of this moment as if you're clinking up the first hill on a spectacular rollercoaster. I think you'll want to hear the questions the characters of *Evergreen* ask each other. Philosopher George Steiner said that works of art interrogate us, ask us, "What do you feel, what do you think of the possibilities of life, of the alternative shapes of being which are implicit in your experience of me, in our encounter?" (from Steiner's book *Real Presences*) Art can even say to us, "Change your life." May you risk hoping for something better than your fears, and take a step away from isolation toward being known. Now please keep your arms and legs inside your seat at all times – enjoy the ride!

-Stephen Waldschmidt



9 digital audio plays and **9 interviews** by a diverse group of 49 artists exploring the question, "**What does it mean to embrace all our relations?**" Be provoked by this original fiction podcast and hear the stirring call to truth and reconciliation in our neighbourhoods, all across Canada.
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burntthicket.com

Gratefully created on Treaty 6 Territory and
the traditional homeland of the Métis

CREATIVE TEAM

» Cast (in order of appearance)



Tim Bratton plays Frank, and Sound Designer

Tim is a Saskatoon-based actor, playwright, and sound designer who serves as the Artistic Associate for Burnt Thicket Theatre. You may have seen Tim on Saskatchewan stages in productions such as *Long Day's Journey Into Night* (Theatre Naught); *Cymbeline* (Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan); *The Fourth Wiseman* (Dancing Sky); *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, *Boeing Boeing*, *Pride & Prejudice*, and *Art* (all Persephone); or touring his one-person show, *My Little Plastic Jesus* (Burnt Thicket). Tim lives in Saskatoon with his lovely wife, Amy, and their two very active young boys.



Paige Francoeur plays Angela

Paige Francoeur (she / they) is an emerging artist living and working on Treaty 6 territory. Having recently completed her BFA Honours in Acting from the University of Saskatchewan, she is excited to be diving headfirst into the world of professional theatre. They were last seen in 2022's *The Love Interest* (Theatre Howl) and *Long Day's Journey into Night* (Theatre Naught). Coming up next for Paige: *Measure for Measure* (Live Five/ The Coterie). She is also honored to be participating in Persephone's Incubator series, where she will be workshopping her brand-new, as-of-yet-untitled play...better get writing!



Andrea Folster plays Marian

Andrea Folster (she/they) is a Saulteaux artist who has called Saskatoon home since the age of six; born in Winnipeg, she has roots in the Brokenhead Ojibway Nation. Holding a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Drama with a concentration in Acting from the University of Saskatchewan, in the fall of 2017 Andrea made her professional debut in Saskatoon. Their most recent appearances include Gordon Tootoosis Nikāniwin Theatre's production of *Two Indians* and Burnt Thicket Theatre's *Christmas Presence 2022*; she also contributed a short audio piece to It's Not a Box Theatre's *Overhear Saskatoon* and *Overhear Prague*, and can be heard in Amanda Trapp's "You Said We'd Be Together Forever", part of Burnt Thicket's *We Treaty People*. Working with Burnt Thicket in the soundbooth and onstage has been a joy and blessing. Miigwetch.



My Little PLASTIC Jesus

by Tim Bratton

When: June, 2023

Where: A living room near you! (TBA)

This one-man hit show will be selling out living rooms again! Tim Bratton finds hilarity and heartache as he unpacks his upbringing in evangelical pop culture, examining its folly and redeeming its faith. Experience an insider's quest to unravel his own existential crisis by deconstructing the culture he grew up in, with both satire and love.

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CREATIVE TEAM continued

»» Production Team



Johanna Arnott Associate Director

Johanna (she/her) is a multidisciplinary theatre artist who works primarily as an actor, writer, stage manager and newbie director. Her directorial debut was *Antifa Supersoldier* written by Caleigh Crow for the Short Cuts 2021. Since, she's had the pleasure of directing: *Sad Girls Watch the Princess Bride* (First Monday Sum Theatre), *You Said*

We'd be Together Forever (We Treaty People Burnt Thicket Theatre), *Breaking the Curse* (co-director; 25th Street Theatre & Ferre Play), and assistant directing *The Fiancée* (Persephone Theatre). When she's not working in theatre, Johanna enjoys knitting, saying hi to dogs, and doing crosswords with her fiancé.



Brooklynn Bitner Graphic Designer & Scenic Assistant

Near the end of her BA in Studio Art, Brooklynn stumbled across the USask Drama (Design) program and instantly fell in love with theatre. With a passion for bringing technology and the spectacle of film to a live stage, Brooklynn wants to wow audiences with transformative, dynamic designs. She originally pursued graphic design and animation, which she is now

happy to use as Marketing Associate with Burnt Thicket Theatre. A few of her recent design credits include *Iago Speaks* (Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan), *Flush* (La Troupe du Jour/Théâtre français de Toronto), and *Will et Ernest* (La Troupe du Jour).



Kenn McLeod Intimacy Director

Kenn McLeod (he/him) is a performer, director, educator, and Clown. As an Intimacy Director, Kenn has worked with Persephone Theatre (*The Mountaintop*), Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan (*Cymbeline*), & Ppl R Ppl Productions (*Hand to God*). Intimacy Direction is about creating a culture of consent in which intimate stories can be told with safety and

artistry. This allows intimacy to be a vital and joyful part of storytelling, where all artists are able to bring their whole selves to the work, while honoring each other's individual humanity. He has trained with Intimacy Directors and Coordinators. For more information visit www.idcprofessionals.com



Conor P. Farrell Lighting Designer & Scenic Assistant

Conor is a young Canadian artist based out of Saskatoon, SK; on the lands of Treaty 6. As an artist he is interested in explorations of identity and legacy; both within an individual and cultural context. Previously he assisted on SUM Theatre's offering of *Wâhkôhtowin*; and currently Conor is assisting on Persephone Theatre's production of *The Birds and the Bees* as well as co-designing this year's Theatre in the Park. Conor believes in the

power of immersive design and the importance of fun. He believes that everyone has a story to tell. Conor is an associate member of the Associated Designers of Canada (ADC659).



**Krista Marushy** Playwright

Krista is a Calgary actor & playwright who holds an M.F.A. in playwriting from Hollins University. She is a frequent collaborator with Fire Exit Theatre where Evergreen premiered in 2018. Additional writing credits include the radio drama *Middle Ground* (Burnt Thicket) *Conversations With ___?*, *The Last Supper Club* (Fire Exit Theatre), *A Dangerous View*, *The Xeno Station* (Jupiter Theatre), *The Curiosity Cabinet* (Best of Fest, Calgary International Fringe Festival), *Cultivation* (Pacific Theatre), *Nellie's Controversial Premier* (Rosebud Theatre/Heritage Park), *Secret Life Under the Stairs* (Wonderworks Theatre, published by Youthplays) and *The Green House* (2019 Scripts on Fire Competition Winner.) Follow her creative adventures on Instagram @krista_marushy

**Liam Scramstad** Stage Manager

Liam Scramstad is a Métis theatre artist and filmmaker based in Saskatoon. He is a graduate of the Motion Picture Arts program at the Recording Arts Institute of Saskatoon and has worked as a production manager, stage manager, sound designer, lighting tech and actor. Liam's recent projects include GTNT's *A Rez Christmas Carol* (production

manager, stage manager) and as an actor in SUM Theatre's '*First Monday*' reading of *Queens of Bingo* by Jennifer Dawn Bishop. Liam is excited to be making his debut with Burnt Thicket Theatre.

**Soren Siebert** Production Assistant

Søren is new on the block in the larger Saskatoon theatre community but has loved theatre since his first year of high school. The love of acting opened doors to trying new roles in theatre whether it was lighting, audio, or set design he was always down to try. Currently he is working on an unreleased video game soundtrack.

**Stephen Waldschmidt** Director & Scenic Designer

Stephen is grateful to work as a theatre artist and artistic director of Burnt Thicket Theatre. Directing credits include BTT's *Every Brilliant Thing*, *My Little Plastic Jesus*, and the national tour of *She Has a Name*. Acting credits include *The Resistable Rise of Arturo Ui* (Persephone Theatre), *Tent Meeting* (Rosebud Theatre), *Chickens* (Pacific Theatre);

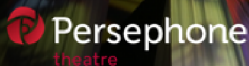
and the role of Jesus in *The Canadian Badlands Passion Play*. He recently wrote *Land*, an audio play for BTT's fiction podcast *We Treaty People*. Stephen holds a masters of fine arts and theology from Regent College and a BFA in drama from University of Calgary. He is most proud of his daughter and his two sons and sends loud thanks to Kirsten, his spouse and best friend, to Dale Marushy for his scenic design concepts, and to this creative team for all their collaboration and beautiful work!

Stobbepphoto

info@stobbepphoto.ca

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UP NEXT from Burnt Thicket Theatre



NEW BLOOD

A STORY OF RECONCILIATION

Conceived & Directed by Deanne Bertsch & Eulalia Running Rabbit

The music of Peter Gabriel and Blackfoot tradition combine in the inspiring true story of a residential school survivor, Chief Vincent Yellow Old Woman of Siksika Nation.

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