

Wednesday, September 22, 2021, 7 PM Thursday, September 23, 2021, 7 PM

Indigenous Performance Productions'

# **WELCOME TO INDIAN COUNTRY**

Moss Arts Center Street and Davis Performance Hall Anne and Ellen Fife Theatre





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# WELCOME TO INDIAN COUNTRY

Andre Bouchard (Kootenai/Ojibwe/Pend d'Oreille/Salish descent), founder and executive creative producer Vanessa Marenco, marketing and development intern Lynette Barnier, web designer

### Cast:

Rena Priest (Lummi), storyteller and Washington state poet laureate
Delbert Anderson (Diné and Navajo), music director,
trumpet, and theremin
Nick Lucero (Peruvian Indigenous), percussion
Mali Obomsawin (Abenaki), vocals, bass, and guitar
Nokosee Fields (Osage), bass and fiddle
Julia Keefe (Nez Perce), assistant director, vocals, piano, and guitar



Welcome to Indian Country is a National Performance Network (NPN) Creation and Development Fund project co-commissioned by Native American Community Development Corporation/All My Relations Arts in partnership with the Moss Arts Center at Virginia Tech, the Washington Center for the Performing Arts, the Hopkins Center for the Performing Arts at Dartmouth College, and NPN. The Creation and Development Fund is supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts (a federal agency). For more information, please visit npnweb.org.

Presented in partnership with the American Indian and Indigenous Community Center

This performance is supported in part by a gift from Clem and Georgia Carter.

# **Program Notes**

This is Indian Country. Welcome. This land called Turtle Island. The traditional homelands of the Tutelo, Monacan, Monetan, and Saponi Tribes, whose ancestors now mainly belong to the Cayuga Tribe. The hundreds of nations who have called it home since time immemorial.

Today we gather to celebrate a point in time. We come together to celebrate life, love, and connection with culture. We come together to honor our ancestors. Join with us in celebration. Tonight we are a community.

This show was realized through the hard work of many people. We thank our ancestors. We are the dreams of our ancestors, without whose strength we would not be given life. They speak to us today. We give thanks to the community who came together to realize this dream and to give voice to these stories. We give thanks to our partners at the Moss Arts Center and to Margaret Lawrence for her commitment to creating equity for Native performing artists.

Indigenous Performance Productions was started in 2019 to expand the tour booking and management work that was migrated from Walrus Arts Management. The mission of Indigenous Performance Productions is to produce, promote, present, manage, and advance education around Indigenous performing arts and artists. Indigenous Performance Productions' vision is to create equity and opportunity for Indigenous performing artists by providing opportunity to amplify stories through live performances.

This is these artists' first performance at the Moss Arts Center.

### Tell Us What You Think!

We'd love your feedback on this performance. If you complete the short survey, you can enter for a chance to win two tickets to Imani Winds and Catalyst Quartet on Thursday, October 28, 2021.



# **Biographies**



### **DELBERT ANDERSON,** trumpet

Delbert Anderson is a Diné trumpet artist, composer, and educator who attended Eastern New Mexico University studying music education and performance. Anderson is the jazz director at San Juan College, founder of the San Juan Jazz Society, and is credited as a Native American music ambassador. Anderson's music is inspired through his Navajo cultural background and fused with influences of jazz, funk, hiphop, and Southwestern styles. Anderson has created experimental educational programs

and is known as an arts project developer. He also serves as a national and international arts consultant specializing in community development. Anderson has performed and worked with some of today's top music professionals, such as Phil Manzanera, Jon Faddis, T. S. Monk, Bobby Watson, John Lindemann (two-time Grammy-winning producer), and more. Anderson continues his mission of creating opportunities in the arts, educating Native American youth and sharing messages of hope, life, and positivity.



### NOKOSEE FIELDS,

fiddle, bass, and vocals

Nokosee Fields (Osage) was born and raised in Stillwater, Oklahoma, studying orchestral violin at a young age. After years of learning and performing classical music, Fields turned his attention to traditional American music, performing, teaching, and touring professionally. As a bassist, he tours with the country band Western Centuries, as well as the old-time band Steam Machine. As a teacher, he has taught at the Augusta Heritage Center, tutored at Centrum's festival of American fiddle tunes, and was

the artist in residence for the Portland Old-Time Music Gathering. He has placed in numerous fiddle contests and most notably took first in the 2019 Appalachian String Band Music Festival fiddle competition. Fields' lengthy and diverse experience in the performing arts gives him a unique approach to creating, listening to, and facilitating music.

### Biographies (continued)



### JULIA KEEFE, jazz vocals and piano

Julia Keefe (Nez Perce), assistant director for *Welcome to Indian Country*, grew up on the Nez Perce Indian reservation in Idaho and graduated from the Manhattan School of Music's master's in music jazz vocals program in 2019 and from the University of Miami's Frost School of Music in 2011. Prepandemic, Keefe made her living as a New York City-based professional jazz singer in both recorded tunes and live performances. She blends a quirky sense of humor with jazz of the 1940s and '50s, creating a jovial

marmalade of smooth vocals and rapier wit. She has had the honor of opening for jazz legends, such as Tony Bennett and Esperanza Spalding. Her life's work is the revival and honoring of the Coeur d'Alene jazz musician and legend Mildred Bailey and is the leader of the campaign to induct Bailey into the Jazz Hall of Fame. For more information about Keefe, please visit juliakeefe.com.



### NICHOLAS LUCERO, percussion

Born in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and raised in southern Colorado, Nicholas Lucero has had toured in the drum seat internationally with several jazz artists and nationally with artists that range from jazz, folk, blues, rock, and everything in between. Cofounder of the San Juan Jazz Society and the Indigenous Community Arts Foundation and co-creator of eight touring projects, Lucero has developed a strong focus with his musical journey: elevating modern Indigenous art and destroying

stereotypes of what Indigenous music can be. Featured in such publications as the *Smithsonian Magazine*, *Chamber Music of America Magazine*, and on Grammy.com, Lucero currently composes and tours with a jazz trio, a hip-hop focused group, symphonic arrangements of jazz and hip-hop, a musical, and continues to work with artists such as Phil Manzanera of Roxy Music, South African percussionist Dan Chiorboli, and longtime friend and bandmate Delbert Anderson.



### MALI OBOMSAWIN,

bass, vocals, and guitar

Mali Obomsawin is a musician, activist, and citizen of the Abenaki First Nation at Odanak. Obomsawin is a bassist, songwriter, composer, and singer with an eclectic background in pop, free/avantgarde music, and American roots styles. She tours internationally with her indie folk rock band, Lula Wiles (Smithsonian Folkways Recordings), and gigs as a freelance bassist in New York City where she resides. As an Indigenous liberation activist and scholar, she

has most recently published her work in *Smithsonian Folklife Magazine* and the *Boston Globe*. Obomsowen received a bachelor's degree in government and comparative literature from Dartmouth College in 2018.



### **RENA PRIEST,** poet

Rena Priest is a poet and an enrolled member of the Lhaq'temish (Lummi) Nation. Priest has been appointed to serve as Washington State's poet laureate for the term of April 2021-2023. She is also the recipient of the Vadon Foundation Fellowship (2020) and an Allied Arts Foundation Professional Poets Award (2020). She has attended residencies at Hedgebrook, Mineral School, and Hawthornden Castle. Her debut collection, Patriarchy Blues, was published by MoonPath Press and received an American

Book Award. Her second collection, *Sublime Subliminal*, is available from Floating Bridge Press. Individual poems are featured at Poets.org, Poetry Northwest, Pontoon Poetry, A Dozen Nothing, and elsewhere. Priest has also published non-fiction pieces in *High Country News, YES! Magazine, Seattle Met, Adventures NW*, and *Nautilus*. She is a National Geographic Explorer (2018-2020) and a Jack Straw Writer (2019). Priest holds a master's of fine art from Sarah Lawrence College.

# **Engagement Events**

Tuesday, September 21, 2021

# OLD TIME ACOUSTIC JAM WITH WELCOME TO INDIAN COUNTRY MUSICIANS

Nokosee Fields and Mali Obomsawin led this informal session for sharing stories and playing old time music.

# Wednesday, September 22, 2021 CLASS VISIT: INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN INDIAN STUDIES

Undergraduate students in a sociology course met with fiddler Nokosee Fields to discuss the influence of Native traditions on Appalachian arts and culture.

### **CLASS VISIT: LANGUAGES OF NATIVE AMERICA**

Poet Rena Priest spoke with Virginia Tech undergraduate students about her tribe's language, Xwlemi Chosen, and integrating it with her writing.

### POST-PERFORMANCE Q&A

Members of Welcome to Indian Country discuss the project's development and aims with attendees of this moderated dialogue.

Special thanks to the American Indian and Indigenous Community Center, Sam Cook, Melissa Faircloth, Victoria Ferguson, and Mae Hey

# Go Deeper

What are some of the thematic or structural links you perceived among the seven songs and seven stories of *Welcome to Indian Country*? What do those connections illuminate about contemporary life in Native communities, history, and intercultural exchange?

### In the Galleries

Open through November 20, 2021

### SHIELA PREE BRIGHT: A BEAUTIFUL STRUGGLE

Ruth C. Horton Gallery

"We are a resilient people... We are Black and beautiful. This is the beautiful struggle." —Sheila Pree Bright

This exhibition features large-scale photographs by Atlanta-based photographer Sheila Pree Bright that portray in poignant terms the Black Lives Matter gatherings of recent years in protest of police violence and sociopolitical inequities, while also calling into question preconceived stereotypes of African Americans and their communities. Curated by Margo Ann Crutchfield.

# LARRY FINK: GATHERING: PEARLS AND POLYESTER Miles C. Horton Jr. Gallery and Sherwood Payne Quillen '71 Reception Gallery

This exhibition features a selection of photographic prints by Larry Fink that spotlight the role of clothing and adornment in celebratory gatherings in two distinct American cultures during the 1970s and '80s: the glamorous high society of New York City and the spirited country life of Martins Creek, Pennsylvania. The exhibition also features garments on loan from the Oris Glisson Historic Textile and Costume Collection, evidencing the unique materiality of this era. Curated by graduate assistant Ali Palin.

#### GALLERY HOURS

Wednesday-Friday, 10 AM-5 PM Saturday, 10 AM-4 PM

To arrange a group tour or class visit, please contact Meggin Hicklin, exhibitions program manager, at megh79@vt.edu.

# Land Acknowledgement

Virginia Tech acknowledges that we live and work on the Tutelo/Monacan People's homeland and we recognize their continued relationships with their lands and waterways. We further acknowledge that legislation and practices like the Morrill Act (1862) enabled the commonwealth of Virginia to finance and found Virginia Tech through the forced removal of Native Nations from their lands, both locally and in western territories.

We understand that honoring Native Peoples without explicit material commitments falls short of our institutional responsibilities. Through sustained, transparent, and meaningful engagement with the Tutelo/Monacan Peoples and other Native Nations, we commit to changing the trajectory of Virginia Tech's history by increasing Indigenous student, staff, and faculty recruitment and retention, diversifying course offerings, and meeting the growing needs of all Virginia tribes and supporting their sovereignty.

We must also recognize that enslaved Black people generated revenue and resources used to establish Virginia Tech and were prohibited from attending until 1953. Through InclusiveVT, the institutional and individual commitment to *Ut Prosim* (That I May Serve) in the spirit of community, diversity, and excellence, we commit to advancing a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive community.

### **Health and Wellness**

The Moss Arts Center adheres to the guidelines of the Virginia Department of Health and Virginia Tech in its operations, including protocols for distancing, face coverings, and cleaning and sanitation. Our status may change according to changes in university operating procedures. Find the most up to date information at artscenter.vt.edu/visit.

We ask patrons to do their part in keeping our community healthy. If you feel unwell, please stay home.

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Jon Catherwood-Ginn, associate director of programming
Meggin Hicklin, exhibitions program manager

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# Special Thanks

We are grateful for the generosity of our patrons and donors who sustain the Moss Arts Center with their annual gifts. The impact of all contributions, no matter the amount, is significant in helping us transform lives through exploration and engagement with the arts and the creative process. We are honored to have received cash donations during the period of July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021, from the following:

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# **DUETS—**Dianne Reeves, Chucho Valdés, and Joe Lovano

\$25-\$55 \$10 students with ID and youth 18 and under MOSS /RTS CENTER



# Visit the 52nd annual YMCA Craft Fair & annual Y Book Fair Nov. 12- Nov. 14, 2021

at Christiansburg Recreation Center 1600 N. Franklin St, Christiansburg

### The Y Craft Fair is back in person this year!

Artists are invited to apply for our Craft Fair. Information on how to participate and application form available at this link: www.vtymca.org/y-craft-fair/

THIS YEAR THE ANNUAL Y BOOK FAIR WILL BE PART OF OUR CRAFT FAIR.

### WELCOMING WEEK

The 1st annual Y Welcoming Week just ended and was a great success. We enjoyed meeting so many members of our diverse community and we hope we were able to share the message #AllAreWelcomeHere. Thanks to our amazing partners who worked with us to plan such a great week of activities. Town of Blacksburg: Literacy Volunteers of the NRV: Blacksburg Library: Blacksburg Museum



Now available-Welcoming Week t-shirts!
Visit our website to purchase! www.vtymca.org

The YMCA at Virginia Tech began in 1873 and served as an integral part of the university during its early years until the mid 1960's .

From that cornerstone came the building we know today as the home for the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences. From 1899 until we moved to Squires Student Center, this was the Y and the center of campus.



In 1899, VT students' families, alumni, and friends gathered resources to lay the cornerstone for the Y's first building. The Y created and promoted Hokie Stone as an architectural tradtion & standard (the first building with Hokie Stone)

In 1972 the Y donated the building to Virginia Tech for its bicenennial.



