

## **BEAR GREASE**

### ENRICHMENT GUIDE



**A LightningCloud Production  
Directed by Crystle Lightning  
Citadel Theatre & A LightningCloud Production**

**Thank you to Sheldon Elter for his Indigenous Cultural Consultation and additions  
to this Enrichment Guide**

We wish to acknowledge that the land on which we gather is Treaty No. 6 territory and a traditional meeting ground and home of the First Nations, including both the treaty signatories – Cree, Saulteaux, Nakota Sioux, Stony and Cree-Iroquois – as well as other Indigenous peoples, such as the Blackfoot and Métis, who occupied this land. We extend our appreciation for the opportunity to live, create and perform on this territory.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |         |
|---|---------|
| Theatre Etiquette   | Page 3  |
| Characters  | Page 4  |
| Synopsis  | Page 4  |
| Musical Numbers   | Page 4  |
| Terms at a Glance   | Page 5  |
| Themes  | Page 7  |
| Indigenous Joy, by Sheldon Elter  | Page 7  |
| Production Elements   | Page 8  |
| Thrust Stage  | Page 8  |
| Interview with <i>Bear Grease</i> Co-Creator,<br>Henry “Cloud” Andrade                        | Page 9  |
| History & Context   | Page 11 |
| <i>Bear Grease</i> , an Indigenous reimagining of<br>the 1972 Broadway musical, <i>Grease</i> | Page 11 |
| Curriculum Alignment  | Page 12 |
| References  | Page 13 |
| Further Reading & Resources   | Page 13 |
| Government and Foundation Funders   | Page 14 |

## **THEATRE ETIQUETTE**

Going to the theatre is an engaging and interactive experience. We want you to be an active participant when you see our shows: laugh when it's funny, cry when it's sad, gasp when it's shocking, and enjoy the experience as much as possible. But we want you to do this in the most respectful way possible, for both the performers and your fellow audience members. To ensure the most positive experience, please review the following information prior to arriving.

### **THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ARE NOT ALLOWED IN THE THEATRE:**

- Outside food or beverages. Only beverages purchased in the lobby and placed in a Citadel Sippy and bottled water will be allowed in the theatre. Unwrapped ice cream bars may be taken into the theatre. Please enjoy all other snacks in the lobby.
- Cameras and other recording devices (please note that taking photographs or other recordings in the theatre is strictly prohibited by law).

### **BASIC COURTESY:**

- Please turn OFF and put away all electronic devices such as cell phones, gaming systems, etc. prior to entering the theatre.
- Do not place your feet on the seat in front of you.
- The actors onstage can see and hear the audience during the performance – it is important that audience members not talk or move around during the performance, as this can be distracting for the actors and fellow audience members.
- There is no dress code at the Citadel Theatre, but we respectfully request that patrons refrain from wearing hats in the theatre.
- For the safety of those with allergies, please refrain from using perfumes or scented products before coming to the theatre.
- Please do not place backpacks or other bags in the aisle in front of your feet, as this may impair the ability of persons to exit the row in an emergency.

### **INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR:**

Citadel Theatre representatives watch carefully during performances for inappropriate behaviour, especially behaviour that could endanger an actor or audience member.

Inappropriate behaviour includes, but is not limited to:

- Talking in the audience
- The use of laser pointers or other light or sound-emitting devices
- Interfering with an actor or the performance (tripping, throwing items on or near the stage, etc.)

Audience members identified as engaging in this type of behaviour will be removed from the theatre during the performance or at intermission.

## CHARACTERS

Danny  
Sandy  
Rezzo  
Marty  
Frenchie  
Canuckie  
Sonnie Boy  
Jan  
Roger  
Butter

## SYNOPSIS

Taking *Grease* on an Indigenous joyride, with fashion that slays, humour that tickles your funny bone, and music that makes you groove! It's a rez makeover for the beloved characters, keeping the authenticity alive while adding a burst of cultural flair.

## MUSICAL NUMBERS

*The musical numbers are listed order of appearance in the production.*

### ACT 1

“Be My Baby” Performed by Tammy Rae  
“Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow” Performed by Melody McArthur  
“Twilight Time” Performed by Bryce Morin  
“Only You” Performed by Bryce Morin  
“Summer Snagging” Performed by Bryce Morin and Melody McArthur and Ensemble  
“Somehow Closer” Performed by Bryce Morin, Justin Giehm, Raven Bright, Kean Buffalo and Rodney McLeod  
“Hang It Up Daddy” Performed by Melody McArthur and Teniel Whiskeyjack  
“Bear Grease Lightning” Performed by Bryce Morin

### ACT 2

“Brusha” Performed by Skylene Gladue aka Nipîy Iskwew  
“Sandra Dee” Performed by Tammy Rae  
“Devoted to Roundies” Performed by Bryce Morin  
“Hopelessly Devoted to You” Performed by Melody McArthur  
“Wichihin” Performed by Tammy Rae  
“Tic Toc Ya Don’t Stop” Performed by Bryce Morin and Melody McArthur  
“Meet Me at the Pow Wow” Performed by Bryce Morin and Melody McArthur

## TERMS AT A GLANCE

*This section defines and offers context for some of the vocabulary used throughout the Production.*

**Aunties:** A term of endearment for Indigenous matriarchs who are wiser to the world than the person using the term.

**Bannock:** A type of bread made with wheat flour, shaped into round, flat cakes and fried or baked.

**Chief and Council:** The majority of First Nations governments are composed of a chief and councillors who are responsible for making decisions on behalf of the First Nation and its members.

**Colonization:** The action or process of settling among and establishing control over the indigenous people of an area.

**Columbus:** Christopher Columbus was a navigator who explored the Americas under the flag of Spain. His voyages across the Atlantic paved the way for European colonization and exploitation of the Americas.

**Frybread:** A flatbread that's fried in oil, shortening or lard. The difference between bannock and frybread is that often Bannock was baked in an oven or over a fire while frybread was cooked in oil, but the terms can be used interchangeably.

**Genocide:** The deliberate killing of a large number of people from a particular nation or ethnic group with the aim of destroying that nation or group.

**Graham Greene:** An actor. Graham Greene is Oneida of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and grew up in Hamilton, ON. He rose to global fame with his Academy Award-nominated performance as Kicking Bird in *Dances with Wolves*.

**Grand entry:** A ceremonial procession that marks the beginning of a powwow, showcasing dancers, drummers, and tribal representatives as they enter the performance area.

**Indian Act:** The primary law the Canadian federal government uses to administer Indian Status, local First Nations governments and the management of reserve land. First introduced in 1876, the Act subsumed a number of colonial laws that aimed to eliminate First Nations culture in favour of assimilation into Euro-Canadian society. A new version of the Act was passed in 1951, and since then, has been amended several times, most significantly in 1985, with changes mainly focusing on the removal of discriminatory sections. It is an evolving, paradoxical document that has enabled trauma, human rights violations and social and cultural disruption for generations of Indigenous Peoples.

**Infanticide:** The crime of killing a child within a year of its birth.

**Neechimoose:** Nicimos (nee-chee-moose) means sweetheart in the Cree language.

**PETA:** People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) is the largest animal rights organization in the world, with more than 3 million members and supporters.

**Peyak Niso:** The Cree words for the numbers "One" and "Two".

**Peyote stitch:** A basic bead weaving technique used to create beaded pieces without a loom.

**Powwow:** A social gathering where everyone is welcome. There is dancing, singing and feasting, held by many Indigenous communities, to celebrate Indigenous Culture.

**Rez:** Slang for a First Nation reserve. A reserve is land set aside by the Canadian government for use by First Nations.

**Riel High School:** The imagined high school in *Bear Grease* named after Louis Riel who was a Canadian politician, a founder of the province of Manitoba, and a political leader of the Métis people.

**Round dance:** A traditional Indigenous dance ceremony in which participants form a circle and move in a clockwise direction.

**Sage:** Considered one of the Four Sacred Medicines by many Indigenous peoples in North America, sage is used to prepare people for ceremonies and teachings.

**Snag:** Snagging is tongue-in-cheek slang used in many Indigenous communities that is interchangeable with the term “hooking up” or “making out.”

**Status card:** An identity document that confirms you are registered as a Status Indian under the *Indian Act*.

**Sweetgrass:** Considered one of the Four Sacred Medicines by many Indigenous peoples in North America, sweetgrass is the sacred hair of Mother Earth. Like sage and cedar, sweetgrass is used for smudging and purification.

**Tansi:** “Hello” in Cree.

**Treaties:** Treaties are agreements made between the Government of Canada, Indigenous groups and often provinces and territories that define ongoing rights and obligations on all sides.

**Tuguye:** A Cree slang word for penis.

**Wintergreen Copenhagen:** A type of chewing tobacco with a subtle sweetness.

## THEMES

### INDIGENOUS JOY, by Sheldon Elter

Comedy is as essential as water. It heals and nurtures, and makes up most of our composition.

When asked to write material or consult on preexisting work, I am there to bring a unique perspective. An Indigenous lens. To splice roots, bridge gaps, and, quite simply, to solve all the world's problems.

JK about the last part. When approaching how to present Indigenous stories and experiences as modern Indigenous artists, it is certainly part of our story to use art to express the immense suffering of Indigenous peoples on this continent as a result of colonization. Part of the Indigenous work I love is art that is able to celebrate our resilience through the tools and medicine of humour as a way to survive. What has sometimes been missing in modern colonized media, is Indigenous joy. Underneath an oppressors thumb, is quite simply, the JOY of still being here.

When I met *Bear Grease's* creators, Henry and Crystle, I felt they were family and I felt their JOY. Their ability to include all of those around them in their conversations and include them in their personal expression makes them brilliant artists, in my mind.

They bridge gaps between cultures, and repair the bridges between those that have been separated by colonial oppression.

All this is done by having a good time. They present their artistic expression by sharing it in an honest and joyful way, while using the tools of the colonizers' medium: a predominantly white pop culture phenomenon that, in this case, is the mega-musical *Grease*. The pop culture might not have been theirs to begin with, but they have taken what was left for them, and made it accessible for large, diverse audiences to understand why they are still here.

They are resilient, resistant, and most importantly, artists to pay attention to. They are bringing joy to large, diverse audiences, while presenting their unique experience as Indigenous people, and they make it accessible for those that are not them. Did I mention that they give opportunities to young Indigenous artists who should be seen and celebrated?

I love seeing Indigenous JOY. It doesn't mean that we have solved the world's problems with colonization, but celebrating Indigenous JOY the way *Bear Grease* does, quite simply means "you get it." Have a laugh. Have fun. When you do, you will realize that we are all not so different. Indigenous content with a big ole spoon of sugar only makes the real medicine go down smooth, especially for a non-Indigenous audience who can begin to open their ears and hearts when they are able to access the story of our people through laughter and the sharing of joy.



The cast of *Bear Grease* perform in a theatre

Image Credit: Unknown



## PRODUCTION ELEMENTS

### THRUST STAGE

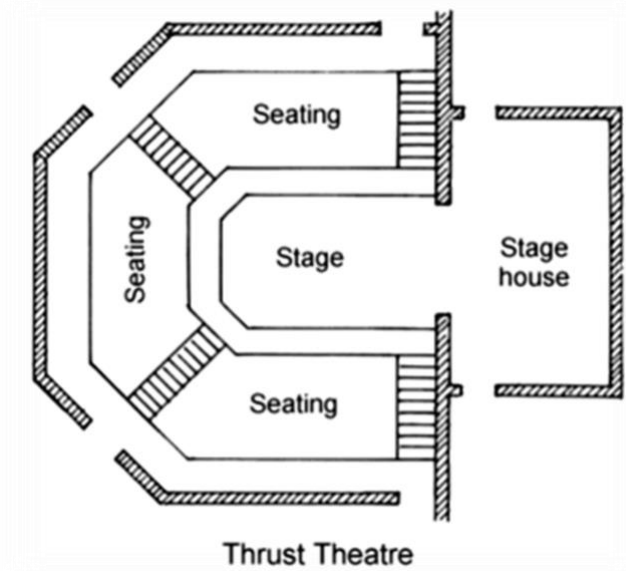
The thrust stage configuration is one of the oldest in theatre history. It refers to a stage (or performance space) that extends forward into the audience. A thrust stage is especially effective for drawing in the audience and actively connecting them with the action onstage.

The Maclab Theatre at the Citadel is a classic example of a thrust stage. This type of stage is used to extend the playing space out into the audience, and enables actors to enter and exit through vomitoriums (voms) and onto the stage.

Thrust stages were used in Spain's Golden Age of theatre (which started in 1570), and were called *corrales*, as well as in the traditional Noh theatre of Japan. This design was also popular in London during the Elizabethan era, and is the layout of the famous Globe Theatre where

many of Shakespeare's plays were performed. Between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century's proscenium stages (which only expose the front of the stage to the audience) dominated theatre across the world, as the popular movement of staging focused on creating and maintaining illusion.

However, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century theatre started moving back to performances that focused on actor-audience contact, which brought the thrust stage back to popularity. Still, thrust stages are most often used for concert-style performances, rather than traditional theatre.



The layout of the Maclab Theatre at the Citadel Theatre



## INTERVIEW WITH *BEAR GREASE* CO-CREATOR, HENRY “CLOUD” ANDRADE

### 1. What gave you and Crystle Lightning the inspiration for *Bear Grease*?

We wrote *Bear Grease* on the couch. We were kinda just scrolling through cable, and we saw that *Grease* was on, and we both were like: “perfect!” We had a lot to say about *Grease*. And then we were like: “What if there was a Native *Grease*?” And then we just started freestyle the songs: “Met a girl, she’s Enoch Cree.” And then she hits me with: “Met a boy he’s not related to me.” We just died, man! We wrote that whole song right there and then. We didn’t even finish the movie. And then the pandemic hit not too far after that, which kind of made us hunker down and just finish writing. We wrote a good 35-45 minute version of it and kinda turned it into a LightningCloud hip-hop show mixed with the *Grease* theme. We called it *Bannock Grease* at first, but then we thought that was too geographical a name, and so then we called it *Bear Grease*.



Crystle Lightning and Henry “Cloud” Andrade  
*Image credit unknown*

Thankfully, Murray at the Fringe reached out to us and was like “Hey, I want a Lightning/Cloud concert for the Fringe. We have the Pêhonân initiative this year where we dedicate space to Indigenous folks and some Indigenous theatre.” And we were like: “You know what now that you mention that we wrote a little a little musical called *Bear Grease* and would love to would love to try it out at Fringe”. He gave us our opportunity to perform at the Fringe and we freaking sold out in 15 minutes. Fastest selling show at the 2021 festival. Holy cannoli! And they had had another one, and then everybody was upset that they missed it, and so we rented out the Garneau Theatre. Did it another three times. Sold them out. Then we did the Westbury and it was a wrap from there. We started touring it and building it as we went along. It’s been a dream and it’s been wild and here we are three years later, 170 shows in. HOT DAMN!

2. Where has *Bear Grease* toured?

For our first tour out of Edmonton, we were invited to Calgary by Making Treaty 7, Michelle Thrush and that team. It was great that they believed in the show, and that turned into a tour for us to go down into Denver, Colorado, Las Vegas, and California. We've been to quite a few casinos that have supported us in Pechanga Casino in California, Seminole in Florida, Black Bear Casino and Shooting Star Casino in Minnesota. Wisconsin, Minnesota North, South Dakota, Fargo, Bismarck, Las Vegas, the West Coast, down Washington, and Oregon. All over BC and Saskatchewan and Manitoba. We've been as far east as Thunder Bay and Ottawa. We really can't wait to do the Maritimes, and the East Coasts of Canada and the US. There are still so many places we haven't hit yet so we're super stoked to do that, but our favourite so far has been Southwest, like Albuquerque for the Gathering of Nations powwow. It's been so well received.

3. What's your favourite part of collaborating with Crystle Lighting on *Bear Grease*?

My favorite part about collaborating with my beautiful wife, Crystle, is that we love the closeness: Where everything we do, we get to win together... Writing, creating. We like working together, since the moment we've met we work together, you know, touring as LightningCloud, and creating hip-hop music and incorporating that theatrical performing arts to hip-hop shows. It's what's brought us to now. It's just been amazing. Living in our 40s, this is all I've ever wanted to do: create opportunities for other people by doing something that I love with my wife. It's just so amazing. She's my McCartney. I'm her Lennon.



## HISTORY & CONTEXT

### **BEAR GREASE, AN INDIGENOUS REIMAGINGING OF THE 1972 BROADWAY MUSICAL, GREASE**

When asked about the inspiration for creating *Bear Grease*, Crystle Lightning and Henry “Cloud Andrade” talk about sitting on the couch one evening in their home watching the 1978 film adaptation of *Grease* based on the 1972 Broadway musical with music, lyrics, and a book by [Jim Jacobs](#) and [Warren Casey](#).

Lighting and Andrade talk about how they began to make up their own lyrics to some of the popular songs in the movie musical and noticing how well they worked with a comedic Indigenous spin.



The cast of *Bear Grease* pose in a theatre  
Image Credit: Unknown

The two co-creators had a good laugh and began to imagine how fun it would be to have an all-Indigenous version of *Grease* and how exciting seeing that representation would be onstage.

*Grease* is a 1972 Broadway musical named after the 1950s United working-class subculture known as “greasers.” Set in 1959 at the fictional Rydell High School in Northwest Chicago, the musical follows ten working-class teenagers as they navigate the complexities of peer pressure, politics, personal core values, and love.

Though some think of *Grease* as a trivial musical about The Fabulous Fifties, it is considered by many to be the story of America’s tumultuous crossing over from the 50s to the 60s. *Bear Grease* offers its own crossing-over by reimagining Indigenous characters and places within its reimagined musical adaptation.

At its core, *Grease* is about identity and the struggle to find and maintain one's identity amid the pressures of society. *Bear Grease*’s Indigenization deepens that core plot point with a healthy dose of Indigenous joy and celebration in every place it tours.

*Bear Grease* tailors each show to the communities and territories they are visiting. They’ll change last names and language used in the show to personalize the message and stories that *Bear Grease* tells wherever they are, inspired by that iconic Broadway musical and film that is so much part of our zeitgeist, no matter where you come from.

## CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT

*Participation as an audience member at the Citadel Theatre aligns with the Alberta Education Curriculum.*

### Drama (Junior High)

**GOAL I-** To acquire knowledge of self and others through participation in and reflection on dramatic experience.

**Objectives-** The Student will:

- Strengthen their powers of concentration.
- Extend the ability to think imaginatively and creatively.
- Extend the ability to explore, control and express emotions.
- Extend the ability to explore meaning through abstract concepts.
- Develop the ability to offer and accept constructive criticism.

**GOAL II-** To develop an appreciation for drama and theatre as a process and art form.

**Objectives-** The Student will:

- Develop awareness of various conventions of theatre.
- Develop awareness of drama and theatre by viewing as great a variety of theatrical presentations as possible.
- Develop the ability to analyze and assess the process and the art.
- Develop recognition of and respect for excellence in drama and theatre.

### Drama (10-20-30)

**GOAL I-** To acquire knowledge of self and others through participation in and reflection on dramatic experience.

**Objectives-** The Student will:

- Extend their ability to concentrate.
- Extend understanding of, acceptance of, and empathy for others.
- Demonstrate respect for others — their rights, ideas, abilities and differences.
- Demonstrate the ability to offer, accept, and reflect upon constructive criticism.

**GOAL II-** To develop competency in communication skills through participation in and exploration of various dramatic disciplines.

**Objectives-** The Student will:

- Demonstrate understanding of integration of disciplines to enrich a theatrical presentation.

**GOAL III-** To develop an appreciation of drama and theatre as a process and art form.

**Objectives-** The Student will:

- Explore various conventions and traditions of theatre.
- Broaden knowledge of theatre by viewing as great a variety of theatrical presentations as possible.
- Demonstrate the ability to critically assess the process of art.
- Demonstrate recognition of and respect for excellence in drama and theatre.
- Develop an awareness of aesthetics in visual and performing arts.

## REFERENCES

Canadianencyclopedia.com, accessed on October 7, 2024

<[The Indian Act](#)>

Canada.ca, accessed on October 7, 2024

<[About Treaties](#)>

Beadage.net, accessed on October 7, 2024

<[Peyote Stitch](#)>

Aht.ca, accessed on October 7, 2024

<[THE FOUR SACRED MEDICINES](#)>

Beargreaselive.com, accessed on October 8, 2024

<[Bear Grease](#)>

Newlinetheatre.com, accessed on October 8, 2024

<[Inside Grease: Background and Analysis, by Scott Miller](#)>

Cbc.ca, accessed on October 8, 2024

<[How this all-Indigenous production of Grease brings Indigenous humour, culture to the 1978 classic, by Sara Kae](#)>

## FURTHER READING & RESOURCES

[The Musical Grease gets an Indigenous Upgrade](#)

[Interview with Crystle Lightning and Bear Grease that Played at the Jonas Applegarth Theatre back in 2022](#)

[Celebrate 49 Years of Grease With a Look Back at the Original Broadway Production and Beyond](#)

[Stories that brought us Indigenous Joy in 2023](#)

[National Indigenous History Month: These teens talk about reclaiming joy | CBC Kids News](#)

---

## GOVERNMENT AND FOUNDATION FUNDERS

