

Visual Guide and Story for Where Have All the Buffalo Gone?

A visual story helps people
prepare for a new
experience or decide if this
show works for them



May 27th 28th 29th 30th 2025

at the Waterfront Theatre
on Granville Island

A Métis love-story that transcends time to safeguard history.

What information is in here?

You can click on the things you want to know about

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This is the visual story for the show. [Click here to see the visual guide for Waterfront Theatre.](#)

Schedule / Important times

These times will be a little different for every performance.

The performance is about 50 minutes long.

There is no intermission

Schedule	10:30am show	12:30pm show
● The doors open and you can find your seat	10:00am	12:00pm
● The show starts	10:30am	12:30pm
● The show finishes	11:20am	1:20pm

Before the show starts there will be a short announcement by the front of house manager.

Low sensory show

This is a low sensory show.

That means that the sounds and lights in the show are not intense to most people.

To find out more about the lights and sounds in the show, go to the next pages.

The Stage

This is what the stage looks like.



The things on the stage won't move.
The half circle screen will also be used to make shadows.
The grass on the side sometimes has green grass and
sometimes it doesn't. Sometimes it has flowers.

The Performers



Izzy Bull Bear (They/Them) plays several roles:
Napew, Louis, Jean, Louis, John, Jean



Lynny Bonin (She/Her) plays several roles:
Iskwewo, Marie, Marie Rose, Marie, Rose, Marie



The Performers



Danica Charlie (She/They)
plays the Buffalo



The Buffalo is a giant puppet and Danica is inside of it

The Stage Manager



Jessica Adamson (She/They)

Jessica will be in the booth at the back of the theatre running the lights and the sound for the show, sometimes she comes onto the stage at the end of the show when everyone bows.



The Curtain Speech

Before the show starts someone will come to the stage and talk.
It might be a little bit different, but these are the things they often talk about:

- The Indigenous land we are on
- Thank you to sponsors and donors and volunteers
- How you can donate to the festival or help in other ways

This is someone doing
a curtain speech.
When you go, it could
be another person.

This is a short speech
between 1-3 minutes

[Click here to read the speech](#)

About the Story

Where Have All The Buffalo Gone?

By Tai Amy Grauman

The show is about the loves, the losses and the fight of Treaty 6's Métis people and their love and kinship to the buffalo.

It is a love story about two Star People and a Buffalo. The two people meet each other and the buffalo again at different times, as different people. All these times are important to Métis history. For example: how the Star People were created amongst the stars, how the Métis nation started, trading fur with colonisers, the disappearance of the buffalo and the the political uprising of the Métis Association of Alberta.

At the beginning of each scene, "Marie" tells everyone what year it is and the challenges for the Métis people at that time.

Things in the story that might be intense

These are some things that happen or are talked about in the show that might be intense.

This does not include intense sound or lights, we will tell you about those next.

Here is the list, on the next pages we will explain more, or you can click on them.

- [Battles/War](#)
- [Residential school and talk of death](#)
- [Colonialism](#)
- [Talking in different languages](#)
- [Hunting, shooting and butchering animals](#)
- [Falling in love](#)
- [Characters arguing](#)
- [Characters dancing \(Jigging\)](#)

Battles/War

Mary will tell everyone about
the Battle of Batoche (1885)
and the Great War (World War I - 1915).

You will hear war sounds and gunfire
and there is the shadow of a soldier with a gun.



Residential Schools and dying

Marie Rose and Louis run away from their residential school after they hear that one of their friends might be dead because he was speaking Cree.

They try to escape and get lost in the cold winter. They both imagine they see a buffalo and they follow it to a safe place. This is a metaphor for their death.



Colonialism

Mary talks about how the Canadian Government treated the Métis people, for example:

- Louis Riel was hanged for treason.
- Scrip is offered to give land back to the Métis people. Only around 5% of the scrip was accepted because much of the land was hundreds of miles away from where the people were living.
- The Métis people could not get jobs and were not allowed to own animals (horses/farm animals) or land.
- Many Métis people lived in ditches - they were called the Road Allowance People.
- The Métis people were not allowed to speak their own language or go to school.

Talking in different languages

Marie and Louis speak English, however, in many scenes they say words in French, Cree and Michif.

Hunting, killing and butchering animals

- Marie and Louis pretend to hunt, shoot and butcher a buffalo.
There won't be any blood or real meat.
- Marie pretends to skin a rabbit.
There won't be any blood or a real animal, she is pretends with a rabbit skin and a fake knife.



Falling in love

In each scene, a man and woman are already in love or fall in love.
There are several marriage proposals. There is hugging, rubbing noses and twirling in the air.



Arguing

There are arguments.

Here are some examples.



Here Mary Rose doesn't want
Jean to go fight in the war.



They are angry at the government
and tell them at a protest.

Dancing (jigging)

There are several celebrations during the show where the characters dance with traditional jigging steps.



Sound

The show is not very loud. It is mostly talking. Sometimes, there are background sounds like: insects at night, a war or people talking but it will not be loud.

Between scenes, there is often a soundscape. It is gentle and sounds a bit like wind.

There will also be fiddle music with one violin playing.

The performers will wear microphones but they are hidden.

All other sounds are recorded.

See next the page for a list of the most intense sounds

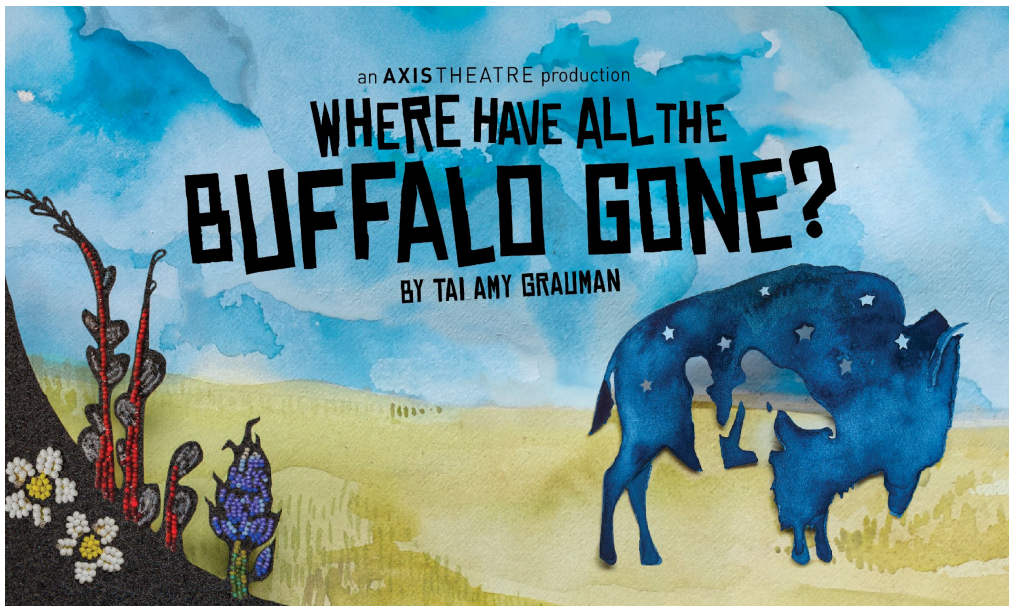
Most intense sounds

- When the fiddle music starts, it can be a bit sudden
- Explosion/earthquake (at the end of scene 1)
- Battle sounds and gunshots
- Grunting, growling and snorting Buffalo
- Cold winter wind storm blowing
- People cheering and shouting when they are happy
- Banging a gavel

Study Guide

For teachers or people who want to learn more, you can see the study guide on our website:

<https://www.axistheatre.com/where-have-all-the-buffalo-gone>



Lights

There are no intense lights, no flashing lights, strobes or blackouts.

Most of the time it looks like daylight,

like this:



It is darker for scenes that are in the evening

like this:



Go to the next
page for more
about the
lights

Light between scenes

When one scene is over, it will become a little darker to let everyone know what scene is over and now we go to the next scene, but it will never be completely dark.

Like here:

Go to the next
page for more
about the
lights



Creation (Star World)

The first scene is in the star world where there are a lot of stars, the large dots in this picture are the stars. At the end of the scene there is an explosion and the stars (the dots on the floor and the screen) start to spin.



Go to the next
page for more
about the
lights

Red light

There is one scene
where there is a lot of
red light.

It happens after Rose
and Jean get married.

It gets a little darker
when Jean starts
talking to the
government.

Go to the next
page for more
about the
lights



Buffalo in the stars

Sometimes the buffalo has lots of little lights inside because the buffalo is from the stars.



Go to the next
page for more
about the
lights

Catching a star

Napew catches a star (their child) and tosses it to Iskwewo who catches it.



Go to the next
page for more
about the
lights



Shadows on the screen

Sometimes someone goes behind the screen and we can see their shadow.

Here are some examples.



Go to the next
page for more
about the
lights



How People React

Usually people sit and watch.

Sometimes they laugh, but not very loudly.

Sometimes they are sad.

But they usually don't say anything.

At the end everyone claps and sometimes people also cheer.

How People React

This is an email Laura sent us after seeing the show to let us know she really like the show.

“I just wanted to say, my husband, daughter (12) and I just came home from attending the live performance of “Where Have All The Buffalo Gone?” and it was so brilliantly well done. Everyone should see this piece, for all ages. It’s educational in a fun way, and keeps you engaged the whole time. I cried twice, my husband said it was more than that. Good thing it was dark in there. A total must see!”

Chi Miigwetch –
Laura Ayotte

SPOILER ALERT :

Don't read this unless you want to know everything that happens.

Visual Story

At the beginning of the play, the stage is empty and the lights are low. Ethereal music underscores the entire first scene:

We are in the stars (the Creation World)

- Buffalo enters and explores the stage
- Iskwewo (Woman) enters and tell the Buffalo about a dream she had about falling to the big, big rock (Earth).
- Her partner Napew (Man) enters. He tells her that he found a star (their daughter – see the light in her hand).
- She tells him of her dream.
- He asks her to marry him. She says yes.
- There is a big explosion/earthquake and Iskwewo falls to earth with her Buffalo and her child. Napew promises to find her on the big, big rock (earth).



Scene two:

Marie in the year 1830 (Alberta). She meets Louis Callihoo ,the famous Suntraveller from out east (Montreal). She takes him hunting for buffalo. He asks her to go to the dance with him at the fort. She agrees. They fall in love while dancing and he asks her to marry him. She says yes.



Scene three:

The year is 1850 (Fort Edmonton, Alberta). Marie, the daughter of Louis and Marie Callihoo enters. She delivers a monologue about the Métis people and their struggle to survive in Canada. Hundreds of Métis men fought against the Canadian authorities in the Battle of Batoche (1885). That same year, the leader of the Métis resistance, Louis Riel, is hanged for treason.

*"My people will sleep for one hundred years,
but when they awake, it will be the artists who
give them their spirit back."*

~ Louis Riel





Scene four:

Marie Rose, the great granddaughter of Marie Callihoo enters; she is 15 years old. It is 1915, the Great War (WWI). Jean, her fiancé, enters with a letter from the Canadian Government (War Department). He tells her he must fight in the war to become a Canadian citizen, she does not want him to, telling him he's too young (16 years old). However, he tells her he must and promises to return to marry her. At the end of the scene, we find out that that he has died on the frontlines.

Scene five:

Marie Rose Beaugard is 12 years old and the great, great, great granddaughter of Marie Callihoo and Louis Callihoo. The year is 1925. She and her boyfriend, Louis, are at the Sacred Heart Residential School. Marie tells Louis that their friend, Sara, might have been killed for speaking Cree. They run away but become lost in a snowstorm and die of exposure. A spirit Buffalo enters and guides them to the Star World.





Scene six:

Marie Rose Beauregard enters. Her great, great grandmother, her great grandmother, her grandmother and her mother were all Maries. But she goes by the name Rose. It is 1935, the age of the Road Allowance. The buffalo have all but disappeared. John, her fiancé, enters and teaches her how to write. Then he asks her to marry him. She says yes, they dance and celebrate, but he's pulled away from her to fight for their people's rights in front of the Alberta Government.

Scene seven:

Rose Marie Callihoo, the great, great, great granddaughter of Marie Callihoo and Louis Callihoo (The Suntraveller), is 16 years old. It is 2025 and Marie is a student at Ardrossan High School in Alberta. She meets Jean, another student at the school for the first time. They become friends and make plans to to spend time together. This is the end of the play as the spirit Buffalo enters and returns to the Star World.



The actors take a bow at the end of the show. They introduce themselves, the stage manager and do a short Question and Answer period (5-10 minutes).



Credits

This Visual Story was created by [Axis Theatre](#) with the help of a template created with the input of many consultants, patrons, artists and fellow arts organizations.

Special thanks to the Vancouver International Children's Festival, the members of their Youth Council on Relaxed Performances, Intrepid Theatre, Vancouver Writers Fest, PuSh, the Gateway Theatre and Jake Anthony.

Want to create a visual story for your show, event or venue?
Email Anika Vervecken and she will share the template: access.activator@gmail.com

We welcome all feedback!