Abstract

Massey and Me: Conversations at the End of Theatre is a four-part audio and lecture experience inspired by the renowned Canadian Massey Lectures, with a dangling fifth part that introduces video in an attempt to disrupt the originating structure. This series delves into the cultural influence and enduring legacy of the Massey Commission, which has played a significant role in shaping Canadian culture since its establishment in 1951. The Massey Commission, led by Vincent Massey, was a critical undertaking that sought to investigate and revitalize Canadian arts and culture in post-World War II Canada. Its sweeping recommendations, including increased government funding and support for the arts, and a disavowal of Indigenous cultures, have had a profound impact on the development of Canadian identity, artistic expression, and Canada's place in the world. “Massey and Me” examines how these recommendations have influenced Canadian society and through introspective argumentation and personal narratives, aims to illuminate the cultural stranglehold that the Massey Commission has had over Canadian society and the narrator's own life. This research creation is an exploration of the intersections between culture, identity, and public policy, encouraging audiences to critically examine the enduring impacts of the Massey Commission, and structures that help to reify them, like the Massey Lectures and, without knowing what they are, seeks to open a portal for future possibilities.

Keywords: Theatre, Queer Theory, Performance, Decolonization, Cultural Diplomacy, Cultural Studies, Abolition, Autoethnography, Lecture
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This thesis is dedicated to the memory of

Peter Herrndorf CC ONC (1940-2023)
Who taught me what it might mean to be Canadian.

And

To the very much alive
Algonquin Elder Annie Smith St. Georges
Who taught me the rest.

Together a picture was formed.
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Chapter 1 – Introduction

Dear Reader,

What follows is an introduction to my audio and, latterly visual, Research Creation Project entitled: Massey and Me: Conversations at the End of Theatre.

I am crossing lines of tradition, demarcated by the parameters of my project, to reach you in written form. I offer you the opportunity to sit with my intentions before embarking on the actual journey of my project. My work was conceived in five parts, mainly as an auditory experience, and always as a quest. In keeping with this approach, I have employed a citational practice that coheres with listening, or radio practice, in place of a text-centered traditional academic citation practice. Each of the five research essay pieces are included in this thesis document, in written form, acting as an archive of the materiality of the auditory and visual expressions of my thesis. Unlike this introduction, the five chapters of my research creation are not intended to be read. Therefore, they exist here, in a written down form, in translation. The written representations are here only to fulfill the requirements set out by the academy, not as a reflection of the intents of my exploration.

My previous academic work looked closely at ideas regarding Failure in Performance. It was the subject of my master's thesis in Cultural Studies at Queen's University. Since that time, and largely influenced by Dr. Jack Halberstam's The Queer Art of Failure, my instincts have tended towards finding the flaws within any given exploration. And by way of situating this research creation that focused on the continuing clutches Vincent Massey's long since deceased hands hold on our present cultural condition, I employed "failure" and/or "flawed" as two states within which to live with my project. I think of these states as the place that exists between conscious disruption and unconscious revelations, with respect to the limits of the individual
trying to free themselves from their own positionality in exploring anything. For me it is the gap, for Leonard Cohen it is the crack, some call it the third space, regardless, it is a place of possibility that is limited only by the machinations of being human. This space of in-between can only be held open for moments at a time. Like the elevator door that resists the person who holds the door open too long, so too with the person who seeks to hold space for the possible impossibility of being trapped amid a story that tells us we were born free.

An example as to how this proves productive follows. While "whiteness" reflects the colour of my skin, it does not necessarily follow that the contents of my character cohere to a perceived or understood idea of "whiteness" as a place of privilege, racism, and oppression. That being said, I have little doubt that there are vestiges of all these elements in my character makeup. Some of this has to do with having been born white, but not all. In other words, "whiteness" is a roving bandit that can attach itself to any skin colour. The skin is only a fractional part of the problem. Be that as it may, it - white skin - remains a significant fraction when thinking about equity and the lack thereof. This example opens the door to the specific flaw and failings in my assessment of Vincent Massey and the impact on Canadian Culture for which he is personally responsible. Like "whiteness" a shorthand for a set of suppositions about behaviour, I put forward a similar idea in my work about "Massey". While he is not the sole proprietor of our cultural landscape, he is emblematic of a mindset, a position, a class bearing that feels quite present in many cultural spaces of Canada today. My research creation grapples with this, trying, often failing, to open landscapes for our consideration of this.

During my early research I found a pithy quote in Canadian Theatre historian, Alan Filewod’s 2002 monograph: Performing Canada: The Nation enacted in the Imagined Theatre. The title of his work first drew me in. The work proved closely aligned with my personal “feelings”, mine and the many academic contributions that helped shape these
"feelings" about Canada… the feeling that much, if not all of Canada, is performance. The word - performance - through my synthesis means a series of repeated actions enacted to create the sense of a fixed, knowable space while simultaneously understanding that it is not. Nestled within the pages of Performing Canada: The Nation enacted in the Imagined Theatre, I discovered the following quote. “in the end, [Massey was] the architect of the model of state patronage which established the conditions that professionalized the idea of Canadian Theatre.” (37)

This quote set much of my thinking in motion as it so perfectly underlined the lingering power of one man. This is the same Massey that shows up in the title of my thesis, and Filewod’s writings help to highlight Massey's central role in the 1951 Royal Commission on the National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences. In my opinion this typically un-pithy governmentalized title helps explain why the overly long titled Commission is commonly referred to as The Massey Commission.

This Upper-Canadian man of British descent, with a hint of good old American Chautauqua Big Tent rearing, was charged with leading a process that would define Canada to the world. This man who became Governor General of Canada and who fought and failed to be knighted by the Queen, this man’s findings, set in motion a culture plan for Canada that has largely remained intact. As a cultural thinker and theatrical enactor in the later stages of my career, I want to understand how, after 72 years, this plan still holds sway. Robertson Davies, an iconic Canadian novelist, playwright, and contributor to the Massey Commission wrote an influential novel entitled: What’s Bred in the Bone. Is this, like his title suggests, the state of Canadian Theatre today? Is this culture plan, now in its ‘troisième age’, (a nod to Simone de Beauvoir) so baked into our practice that we, as creators and patrons, can’t even taste it? Or -
perhaps with optimism in my written voice - does my position as an individual cresting towards their "third age" give me glasses that see only problems while a whole other universe of change and rebirth is unfolding? This would be a wonderful universe to have glasses for. I wonder whether there are moments in my work, if I was loaned a set of other glasses for a moment or two! Perhaps you will decide that yes, I was.

To work through my questions about the 1951 Massey Commission, I chose to climb aboard, dive deep and get into the ring with the eponymously named radio series - The Massey Lectures. This series started in 1961 and continues to this day. As a matrix for research and creation, with my project, that sought to wrestle with questions of cultural inheritance, it felt fitting to attempt this wrestle by working within the genealogical constraints of a direct descendant of the 1951 Commission. The lectures were named for Vincent Massey, the de facto father of our current Canadian cultural landscape. The thinkers - regardless of how diverse their origin stories or points of view might be - must house their thoughts within the same parameters shared by John Kenneth Galbraith, Martin Luther King Jr, Tanya Talaga and even the legendarily trickster infused performance stylings of Tomson Highway! When push comes to shove, each of the lectures were: Written. Recorded. Published. Regardless of who you are, or where you come from, the stronghold of the lecture as form persists. It is for this reason, this stronghold of form, that I decided to look at my research within the parameters of the Massey Lecture Series. I felt it might help me to better understand how limiting - or perhaps freeing - governing structures can be. I wanted to spend time with the ingredients of these lectures and note elements of their sixty years’ worth of varied flavourings. I wanted to employ the constraints of the lecture series to illuminate my questions.
With this in mind I made a series of recordings, formally inspired by The Massey Lectures, but I repurposed the structure to work through my questions about the state of theatre on this land. By working within the constraints of one institution, The Massey Lectures, I attempted to reflect another institution: theatrical production in Canada. In so doing, I embodied the feeling states of entrapment and harm coursing through the veins of any contemporary Canadian artist’s attempt at creation today. Yet it is not just "any Canadian artist" that I am considering in this experiment, because through this work I sought to unearth my own relationship and lineage to this white supremacist, Indigenous disavowing, culturecrat named Vincent Massey.

The lectures aim to show how, unconsciously I, along with many creative makers and consumers living on the northern half of Turtle Island, how we have been in bed with this man named Massey. In Jeremy O. Harris’ *Slave Play*, a mixed-race couple struggle with sex; because, as the scene in question asks, how can a black woman in America willingly spread her legs to a white man of British extraction? And yet mixed-race couples have been doing it for a very long time. This stark comparison led me to reimagine Michel Foucault’s ideas regarding the interweave of systems within the prison complex. I found myself thinking more deeply about the tangled relationships between historical acts and the carceral constraints still in place today. This shows up quite clearly in my third lecture. In this sense, theatre becomes an island within Foucault’s archipelago. It becomes a player on a stage that is built to uphold oppressions, incarcerations, and rampant inequities. So, within this framework, I was moved to ask: Should theatre, as it has been regularly defined, continue to be supported by state patronage in Canada? Once theatre is linked to its white supremacist and anti-Indigenous roots, how can support for it continue? The Massey Commission states that: "the Indian arts can never regain real form or
substance” and yet it was in this same document, that the idea was seeded - on unceded land - for the shape of professional theatre in this country. Is theatre - as defined in this way - like the toppling monuments of past heads of state - up for an abolitionist review?

While I don't address this head on in my research creation project, I do circle this thought throughout the work. And as current trends indicate, the historic not-for-profit professionalizing structure - across the performing arts sector - appears to be cracking. Not for Profit companies are beginning to close, audiences, now in a supposed post pandemic moment, are not picking up pre-pandemic practices. Many pundits believed that pre-pandemic practices were already in fail mode. I certainly felt this way. Now the data appears to support this. State patronage that kicked into high gear during COVID appears to have offered a false reprieve to a performing arts industry in distress.

As with the general structure of the annual Massey Lectures Series, my work also unfolds in five parts. Throughout I invite you, the listener, to travel with me from one point of interpolation to another. Each of the lectures are loosely tied to historical, cultural, and sonic references that I hoped would help get the listener closer to what I imagined the prevailing point of view on a topic might have been at that time. Each of the first four lectures are anachronistic as they hold elements of what was, what is, and perhaps what might become. The fifth unfolds visually but can also be visually listened to should you, dear reader, have access to audio description or though the written cues that exist as part of the archive of words for that chapter.

Back in the early 1980’s during my 1st year at Queen’s University, I was given a final assignment for Drama 100: “You arrive at the gates of the theatre, and you are allowed one question for the theatre gods, what is your question?” Mine was: “why are there gates?” Simple rebukes can puncture power. Questions hold power. I am older now. The question still holds
power but the ways in which gates appear feels far less evident than they did when I was younger. At the Canada Council you can't apply for a grant without having achieved certain recognizable markers. Those markers have changed. But what remains is the relationship of the artist to a colonial structure that is often heralded as one of the most successful outcomes of the Massey Commission.

In Canada, just like England, yet distinct from our neighbour to the south, theatre is spelled with an “re”, revealing an umbilical link as a rejected ward of Mother England (and un petit peu de père France as well). This tether situated Vincent Massey then, and sadly it would seem still now, as a suitable choice for being publicly entrusted to think about our future. Because now, like then, Canada is umbilically tied to England, just look at our money and our oath of citizenship.

“I swear (or affirm) that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to His Majesty King Charles the Third King of Canada His Heirs and Successors, and that I will faithfully observe the laws of Canada and fulfill my duties as a Canadian citizen.”

As a Cultural Studies student, I have come to understand “culture” as a site rife with slippage, and as a space comprising several interconnected possibilities. I have been inspired by the foundational ideas espoused by the makers of this area of study. Raymond Williams, in his 1958 work Culture, states that “culture is a whole way of life”. I can't help but subscribe to this idea. Richard Hoggart’s assertions regarding “the massification of culture” and finally Stuart Hall, whose many ideas pepper my approach. Hall asked us to connect divergent fields of study when taking on questions of culture and to prioritize positionality and social contexts when thinking through ideas; he showed us how the audience can both receive and produce culture; he was an early detector of the state’s capacity to create panic to make policing feel necessary; and
finally, he questioned the authority of a colonial technology like photography, holding authority over how the history of colonized subjects is remembered. All these ideas influenced how I thought about my project. But to respond, on the surface, to Hall’s big theme of merging streams of thought to make the necessary arguments... here’s me: on top of being a student, I am also a theatre maker, a white settler, a queer person/thinker and sometime theorist, a feminist, a change-maker and - for this project became something of an imaginary baker. I infused my project with all these identities. My overall approach - therefore - for this research creation, was fed by a series of unique and distinct ingredients, all aiming towards a layered experience for the listener.

To launch my creation, I imagined a very tall gateau, a confection baked for hungry mouths. In this glistening gateau, each layer offers the palate a brand-new sensation. But...there was treachery in my imagined cake, because within it lay the possibility of reaching people’s guts, guts that might have been more blissfully content before they ate the cake. I believe this was true of me. I imagined therefore, without any formal articulations to myself that I was making this cake for settlers and arrivants. While I hoped it would be of interest to Indigenous folks, the confection, while potentially revelatory to many, was not intended for those whose lived experience has been so shaped by the ignorance of others. The working image was inspired by a distant memory of tall cakes in cafe windows in Kathmandu. Remnants of the hippie migration of the 60’s, discovered by me in the 80’s as I skipped over open sewage in the streets, the juxtaposition too much. A transposition of one colonial relic to now. It is a very tall cake that a stoner would LOVE. A perfect snack for the munchies. I didn't plan on serving this cake, as part of my creation, instead I was leaning into the metaphor to help structure, texturize and flavour my re-imagined lecture series.
I share the following thought experiment with you, dear reader, to offer you a set of images to help frame the contents of my sonic world.

The white icing on this gateau is supreme, it reflects the light beautifully, and entices with its swirling white peaks and smooth cascading sides. Its crisp folds shroud the Battenberg-styled cake hidden within. Everything in this delicacy is covered in whiteness.

The ingredients for this icing are broken down in this way. One major part consists of my “spending time with” 60 years’ worth of existing Massey lectures. And four equal parts divided in this way:

1. they will be recorded,
2. they will be given in different locations,
3. they will advance a series of ideas,
4. they will travel through historical markers helping to historo-locate the listener.

Throw all the ingredients together, stir, cover, and set aside for later. I chose to make use of the eponymous lecture series as a coagulant for a set of larger questions about The Massey Report and how the cultural decisions laid down in 1951 are working through us today. Icing covers everything. Here too.

And now to the body of the cake. I chose the Battenberg stylings because of the apricot jam that courses through the gateau. I like that the jam is what binds the layers of cake hidden beneath the avalanche of white. This sweet, chewy, binding agent is perceptible with every bite. It is why I think of it as the audience.

In considering the original Massey Lectures, I wondered for whom was the series intended; who was being considered? Who wasn’t? This question of the audience, and the
historicity of inclusion and exclusion that is felt - if not expressed - in the creation and delivery of the original lecture series, held interest. I wanted to explore interpolation, or to speak in baker’s terms, how the consistency of the jam might change over time. In each lecture, I move closer to the present and throughout this progression, the characteristics of the audience once imagined as the “ideal Canadian” from 1961, when the lecture series was actually launched, begins to change. The jam is still needed to maintain the structure of the cake, so how does it retain its jam-ness when so many of its micro-ingredients change? To put it another way, if you, the cake eater, are diabetic, would six cups of white sugar to eight cups of apricots still make sense? Maybe some ground nuts, maple syrup and just one cup of white would be better for everyone? A different audience begins to emerge.

The recipe for the batter is easy to make but its eight ingredients can be difficult to source. With the following items in hand, I felt reasonably sure that the cake would be piquant and offer a pleasing decolonial aftertaste. Add in equal parts:

1. performance theory
2. my theatrical experience
3. affect
4. auto-ethnography
5. historiography
6. queer theory
7. contemporary theories on abolition and
8. race theory.

Mix it all together and separate it into two bowls. Add 2 drops of blue to one bowl and 2 drops of red to the other. Stir both vigorously. And Bake. Separately. Yum.
Under the icing of this tall, imaginary round gateau, and between the struts of jam, sit the freshly baked red and blue cakes, now divided into perfect squares in alternating colours. Picture a chess board and you will see what I am talking about. It’s a complicated image because the chess squares are stacked on top of one another, and as you cut past the white icing of my perfectly round cake this hidden pattern is revealed.

This gateau, when complete, dazzles. White on the outside, red, blue, and orange within. It is filled with playful possibilities for checkmate, supported by rivulets of reconsidered jam, and bathed in the puffiest cloud of ivory. It is perfect. Except for that missing thing that gives its presentation a unique “made in the colonies” je ne sais quoi.

Ringing the base of this ivory tower is a nest of pinecones. They sit as a symbol of what I have come to call - but my partner first named - The Pinecone Method. This is something I have been developing based on a practice I began when I moved to the woods in the summer of 2020. While there we co-exist amid an uncountable number of freshly fallen pinecones. To bring some order to my life I began a practice of picking up each of the pinecones and returning them to the base of trees. This task can never be completed. It is a meditation, an offering and reflective of a commitment to do the work. It is this practice, that ultimately, gets the cake made, one pinecone of return at a time. It represents the hidden part of my labour.

I intend to convey the balance of my findings within a sonic framework modelled on The Massey Lectures. Offered annually, this thinker’s series, comprised of a random but notable set of people, is named for the same man who carved a persisting vision for culture on this land. Which leads me to ponder how rare “random” is in cultural decision-making. This series of five lectures is given over a span of time, and in later years, over a span of place. Tanya Talaga, for example, in her 2018 Massey Lectures, began in Thunder Bay, then Halifax, on to Vancouver,
Saskatoon and ended the series in Toronto. During each lecture she met with local Elders and territorial community members. These same people, representatives from the various territories of unceded or unrecognized lands, were in attendance for the lectures. A notable evolution. A marker for a different consistency of jam.

I loosely divided the sixty plus year span of the Massey Lectures into four slices. The final lecture, the one that I brought to the woods happens after, in the time beyond the most recent 2022 lecture. But for the first four, you can imagine big pieces of "gateau" filled with surprise, nested in pinecones, and surrounded by the land that holds us all. And for the fifth…well, it takes the cake!

In the first lecture, offered up in the manner of 1961-76, my voice is the clearest, the least inflected by the crowding sounds of others... but as we approach the end of the fourth lecture, my voice becomes harder for the listener to hear. I worked to ensure that the audience CAN hear me, but I was interested in exploring the tension between the diminishment of vocal authority within a form that relies on this same authority to succeed. What begins in the first lecture as a playfully organized verbal repartee becomes much less playful and way more stylistically and formally fraught over the course of the lectures.

The first lecture, *Massey and Me: Conversations at the End of Theatre* centers on Massey the Man, and the history and historiography of the Massey Report. It begins to explore the lasting impacts up to the present. How did this formational document come to be? Who was involved? Who was Massey and what were the intentions behind this broad culture plan in post-World War II Canada? I aimed to offer a portrait of an intended Canada as laid out in this report and offer room to the listener to begin to think about how institutions such as The National Arts Centre, The Canada Council for the Arts, and several other institutions - such as SSRCH - and of course
The Massey Lecture Series itself, came into being. Without this first lecture underlining some of the key implications of the report itself, I would be unable to properly bake my central questions about the ethics of practicing theatre in Canada.

The second lecture, *HaroldTree: Conversations at the End of Theatre*, takes a genealogical look through the lens of Toronto at the progress and path of professional theatre in English Canada. This personalized survey of theatrical traditions in Canada from 1951 to present, offers needed background to lay the groundwork for questioning the viability of a professionalized theatre today. Even if theatre, as characterized by the report, can or will prevail - should it? At the core of my inquiry is this recurring question, one that becomes thematic: should the theatre on the northern part of Turtle Island (half of which is commonly called Canada) continue?

The third lecture: *Stumped* moves into an auto-ethnographic portrait that works with my positionality to locate my story as the primary voice in this lecture series. I like that this also aligns with the 1990’s, a major period in auto-ethnographic studies and the explosion of queer theory in lockstep with the certainty of queer frailty. The lecture was built in response to the work of Andrea Shin Ling.

The fourth lecture, *reCycling: Conversation at the End of Theatre* is the last fully auditory piece. This lecture covers the work of The Cycle(s). The Cycle is a trilogy of dramaturgical explorations that I created and co-curated during my time as Associate Artistic Director of English Theatre at Canada’s National Arts Centre. The Cycle focused on Indigenous Theatre, Deaf, disability and Mad Arts and Climate Change. To my mind, and observation, the points of intersection and indeed the ideas of intersectionality were progressively more in frame over the course of The Cycle. The trilogy happened over several years, beginning in 2014 and concluding
in 2020. It all began with the following subtitle: “Changing the face of Canadian Theatre” then moved to “Changing the shape of Canadian theatre”. By the time we hit the final cycle my honest subtitle could have been: Why theatre? Instead, it became: “The earth is watching...let’s act.” While the Cycle made change--it for example, led to the creation of the Indigenous Theatre department at the National Arts Centre--I feel certain that the bigger change was in me.

Throughout the course of that massive project, I came to better understand barriers that remain firmly in place. Gates that grant access over time but that - themselves - do not change shape or shift their position of power. It was through this work that I came to feel the carceral might of the Massey Report and why, at the conclusion of my work on The Cycle(s), I was pondering the value and values of my life’s work, theatre.

The final lecture, *The Woods: Conversations at the End of Theatre*, should feel like it has smashed through to another dimension. It is an anxious meditation on the central question. Should theatre in this place called Turtle Island (and sometimes Canada) continue? And if not, am I the right person to be asking this question. It is audio-recorded but also filmed. This co-called meditation happens outside, amid the trees and there is cake.

One of the unique demands of this project is the intent of wrapping the bulk of my theoretical interests into the actual lectures. Does my inquiry strain under the Big Cultural Tent erected by Vincent Massey, the architect of an imagined nation, or can my questions cohere, and/or transform to support a further decolonizing of hearts and minds living on and with this beautiful land. To be straight up my guiding question prevailed: can my work get out from under the body of Massey or not?

Well, that’s all for now. I hope you enjoy my work.
Sincerely,

Sarah Garton Stanley

PS This work, outside of my introductory and concluding remarks lives in other forms. While I have endeavoured to offer a fair and true archive of the works herein, there is nothing outside of the actual media that conveys all that I have been attempting to do.
Chapter 2 - Massey and Me: Conversations at the End of Theatre

Peace Tower Bells Chiming through to 12

Voice treatment in

The Latin words, patriae profuit, translate in English to mean “of benefit to county”. These words are engraved on a tombstone in Port Hope. A part of me died in Port Hope once. I made a move there after seeing a highway sign that beckoned a turn off. The sign said: Welcome Port Hope and I thought it would save me. I later realized that Welcome was a village close to Port Hope but by then I was already smitten, and off to Port Hope I went.

Voice treatment out

Music loop in here

Thank you for coming in. Whether the sun beats, or the rain falls, or the drums play or the mosquitoes bite, whether or not these things are in fact occurring - Thank you for coming. The fare for entry is a single Canadian penny. Don't worry! I will provide you with one. It's an old-fashioned exchange. I am hoping to spend a penny on you for your thoughts. I have often felt that audiences should be paid to attend the theatre. After all, it's hard to get to, often unfinished when you arrive, inhospitable while you are there, and hard to leave without causing offence. It's work. And in this society, we reward work with money. It makes a certain kind of sense.

I want to tell you everything right up front. Briefly. Twitter Style. So, you know right away. My name is Sarah Garton Stanley, and this is the first lecture type thing in a series of 5 lecture type things called Massey and Me: Conversations at the end of theatre. The format for this series came to mind because of the Massey Lectures. These annual lectures were named in honour of Vincent Massey. Vincent Massey led the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, best known as the Massey Report…. a document
that ended up charting the cultural course for Canada. I am curious about how a system, like the one we call Canadian theatre, took hold and what occurs when that same system loses its grip. For example, in 1951 The Massey Report stated: … *(Crackle on voice here)*"that a chain of legitimate theatres throughout Canada would make possible tours of competent professional companies from abroad, thus providing a stimulus to Canadian actors and playwrights and a useful example of the wide gulf separating the interested amateur from the competent professional (who has been thoroughly trained and apprenticed), learning his craft under the goad of sternly skillful direction and of ruthless competition." *(Crackle on voice out)* Thankfully, *that* notion has been losing strength. It is an exciting time. And a confusing one too There is still lot of 1951 in us today. I think of the power of that report like the chassis of a car. And the cultural scene in Canada is how that car looks. We don't see the chassis. We just see the car and think "hey, nice car!" Or lately we think "hmm how much does that car cost to run?" But we rarely think "I would really like to get underneath that car"

*Honk of a car horn*

*Chimes from the peace tower. (Treated vocal)*

A nation is an association of reasonable beings united in a peaceful sharing of the things they cherish; therefore, to determine the quality of a nation, you must consider what those things are.

St. Augustine, The City of God

*Chimes from the peace tower. The Time signature (Sound out)*

*Music in here*
Today - in this tent talk - I am taking what I hope are some peaceful moments to determine the quality of some very strong influences, like the Massey Report and the pennies that came to artists as a result. How to feel about them? They have both been good to me. In fact, I feel I have been given what - before now - was a seemingly indescribable amount of access. I believe, however, that one of the brilliant things of this moment is that we are learning how to describe things. For example, we come together here, at the Luminato Festival Toronto, at Woodbine Park, in Tkarón:to, on a beautiful tract of land that for centuries was cared for by the many first peoples of this region, the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishinaabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples. For millennia this very land offered some of the best fish and fowl a person could ever hope to eat and healing herbs a person could ever hope to have to heal.

This place welcomes you. Thanks for coming into the tent. We are on good land.

*Music out here*

Tents have been around since at least 40000 BC. In pre-history tents were covered in animal hides. But the structure, the idea, was as close to today’s tent as possible. Imagine, humans of the late stone age spending time in structures just like this! What were they thinking? Were they warm? Were they hoping for a better world? I wonder.

What is a tent for? Shelter? Injury? Illness, Ideas? Dreams? A place to hold anything, even fire, if you know how to vent it, a place to get wet, stay wet, wish you weren't wet, a place for mosquitoes and things that rustle beyond what you can see…is that a bear? Or a streetcar? Is that a snake in the grass or a snake in the grass dressed up like a man? In Australia, The Tent Embassy has been going for 50 years. It started as a site for resistance for aboriginal rights and it is still going strong. That's a long life for a tent. But if history is true, there hasn't always been a
tent there. Sometimes just an umbrella in the sand to mark the spot. But the idea of the tent endured. Resistance has grown. Changes have been made. Pretty sure this one, the one covering us now, will be gone in a matter of days. There is freedom in that. Poof! It's gone. But the idea of the tent, a cover that can quickly rise and just as quickly disappear returns again and again. Just like a show or an installation, here today, gone tomorrow, same with tents.

*Working Building sounds*

At different periods floors went down to protect the tent dwellers from the grounds below. Once a floor goes down a building is sure to crop up. More solid, sure, but far less hopeful. The foundations make the buildings rise and cuts off connections to the source. The earth. Tents mark the spot; they tell us where to look. They show us what tomorrow might bring. Buildings - on the other hand - tell us where we've been, and their structures work extra hard to keep us there. No wonder the future is so hard to imagine. Today, tents in the center of cities usually mean one of two things: celebration or dissent. But the idea for tent is something that endures. Used it then. We are using it now. Tents. Tentatively, but with vigour, I think Canada's cultural plan, the thing that makes us, well - Canadian - was born out of celebration and dissent plus a dash of fear.

*Music on top of construction sounds here* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iL1g8DGR06w

Like Noah's ark, there is never enough room for everyone. Sometimes folks get left out of the tent. Sometimes they can't find the tent. Unlike this tent… where because of the large opening you may be felt emboldened to just wander in… In other tents the flaps are often closed for warmth, for protection… and in that scenario… you would have to be pretty brazen to walk on into a tent. I mean: what's inside? Friend or foe? Best - for safety’s sake - to be invited in.

Luminato Festival Toronto made this invitation. The festival made it safe to enter the tent. Hey! I
might be onto a good tag line for culture in general. "Making it safe for you". I hope this experience so far - and right to the conclusion of my piece - feels like it has been made safe for you. I hope we can all work together to make invitation, be it accepting one, or offering one, central to the talk we make, and the work we do. Because post contact it has not been central to the creative commons of this land. And I think that's been verifiably true since 1951, a date that marks the unveiling of the Massey Report. It has not been safe. The tent flaps were all going down then. Brutalist architecture was wrapping itself around spaces. Fortresses to culture were being built out of tents. For many people there was no way in. I doubt very much that Massey and his gang intended this but those were the times. I think it's a good sign that one whole side of this tent is wide open.

*Working Building sounds come out here and song plays out into paragraph.*

When I was growing up, I was told that the US would eat us alive if we weren't careful. I wonder if it would have. Had we not developed a system for state patronage for the arts, would we have had a nation state to patronize (Or to criticize?). Historians feel that both the British North American Act (the thing that actually made Canada) and The Massey Report (which created what I like to think of as The Canada Show) were defensive moves. No one really wanted to make a country in 1867 but they felt for future security’s sake they should, and it got called Canada. There were only 4 provinces on board and one of them - Nova Scotia - felt completely duped by the transaction. That was the start of Canada, that, and the beginning - for real - of negating treaties and agreements to forge this country. Canada was likely a reworking of a Wendat or Haudenosaunee word for small town or settlement and was chosen to give substance to our new small town, Canada. I hope someone asked if it was okay that we did that. Like so many things of yore… I expect names were also assumed to be there for the taking. God given.

*The peace tower bells come back in here*
The lowly but lovely penny helped strengthen the shared aspects of this new country.

*(Throwback to CBC 1951 Insert https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/1951523141 at 24.50)*

It added a common cent. It added copper and zinc to our diets. Copper contributes to skin and hair by helping us make melanin, the brown-black pigment that helps protect our skin from the sun's harmful rays. Zinc helps cells in our body communicate with each other, aiding in nerve communication and hormone regulation. When my mum would say: "keep that penny out of your mouth" I truly think she got it wrong. I might have swallowed a penny once. Maybe that's why my granny was so amazed by my thick hair. My Granny was American. When she and my grandfather came to Canada they literally just walked in and settled. No questions asked. If you were white at the beginning of the twentieth century you could literally walk right in. My grandfather loved Montreal, loved Canada with a passion. But they both died Americans. Nothing wrong with that. It keeps options open. And options are great if you have them.

*Bring the building sounds back in underneath this para as the CBC insert start to run out*

In 1951, the Massey Report - in many ways - came about to offer Canada some options. It boldly suggested that our country, Canada, was deserving of its own coherent and supported cultural plan, something that might provide us with our own identity, make our country anew.

*(Building sounds out here)* At the time the commission was seen as something of a trojan horse, once inside the government's house certain things could happen that might more formally support the life and output of artists. It also paved the way for a lot of tents to transform into buildings. Tentatives became solid. The National Gallery finally found a home and so too did the long-held dream for a national theatre… that became what is today's National Arts Centre in Ottawa. The Massey Commission marked an enormous change in the country's direction but it, like the decision to make Canada a dominion in 1867, it happened in part to keep that crocodile to the south from eating us whole. I am not sure if we need another new idea of country to stop
that from happening now… I am not sure that there ever was a "we" in the sense that history tells us there was in 1867 and 1951… but I do think there is an ongoing need for some pretty big somethings. Perhaps a new chassis for a fuel-efficient car. Or some real reflection to acknowledge that endings, like saying goodbye to the theatre as it was defined in 1951 by 4 white dudes and a dame, can be a sobering and freeing.

* A bum smack and a crying baby *

Vincent Massey was born into one of the wealthiest upper Canadian families in 1887. His family facts: Methodist, they were originally British, then the US for a few generations, before settling on Jarvis Street in Toronto. In what was to become the Keg Mansion for a time. God, do you remember those baked potatoes? Sour cream and chives? Warm bread? Juicy steaks. Free parking? I ate in his house! Maybe you did too? The Masseys were very, very rich. they were the Massey family. The name we still hear today as it relates to farming. Massey-Harris which became the largest agricultural equipment maker in the British Empire. And in 1953 it merged with an American company to become Massey Ferguson. The Massey name remained and too bad the merger didn't happen a little sooner! Lawren Harris - the group of seven Lawren Harris - was good friends with Vincent… and he was also a son of the Harris side of Massey-Harris name! It has been floated that the reason the only working artist - Lawren Harris - who had a shot at being included as a commissioner on the Massey Commission was denied… was because people worried it would be called the Massey Harris Commission and that that would confuse the populace. A document intended to sway culture might be perceived as one to move cows.

* Lowing cows here *

Sometimes I wonder what might happen if all decisions were made without fear. Do you?
Massey wrote his American family history out of his memoirs. It is odd. His family was heavily engaged by the US and in particular The Chautauqua Movement, an American Methodist movement that was big in the 1880's right up to the 1920’s and is still going strong today. It - coincidentally - happened in tents. Initially started to offer bracing liberal arts education to Sunday school teachers, it soon expanded into a cultural meeting place for exchanges of all kinds of ideas, and it was a place where plays were performed, and speeches given. In 1904 the Chautauqua circuit began with the aim of delivering educational, spiritual, and cultural stimulation to rural and small-town America. It imprinted itself across the United States.

Everything about Chautauqua was unoriginal. In some ways I feel it celebrated this. Even today, its major calling card activity is for non-actors, usually academics, to take on historical characters and pretend to be them in speeches and Q and A's. It is a tradition that stems - it seems - from reading writing and ‘rithmetic… learning life by rote. Good orderly direction and a reverence for things past.

Chautauqua is an Iroquois word, a Haudenosaunee word that is believed to describe a bag tied in the middle or two moccasins tied together and that was the name of the body of water, the Chautauqua institute was founded on. The lake does look exactly as described long and lean and cinched in the middle. The Haudenosaunee knew what they were describing… unlike Canada with its misinformed choice of a word that describes village for a land mass that can never be one. The Chautauqua movement had no connection to its name or to any sense - I can find - of something shared between two parties, like say the land and the lake or the first peoples and the
Sunday School Chautauquans. Terra Nullius. It is a legal term that will forever haunt Turtle Island. It says no one was there. Everybody knew this wasn't true. Even then.

The Chautauqua institute was founded by Vincent Massey's uncle, in fact Vincent was named for him. And Vincent's father was a big financial supporter of the movement, they even owned a house on the Chautauqua property. And when the Massey Commission shared its findings one of the things it "found" was I quote:

*Voice treatment*

"Since the death of true Indian arts is inevitable, Indians should not be encouraged to prolong the existence of arts which - at best *must* be artificial - and at worst *are* degenerate."

*Voice treatment out*

Like any lecture type thing that speaks truth to power, I am sure an argument can be made for this quote being taken out of context… but given how young Vincent was raised to see and not see … it feels easy to understand how the commission got from *his* A to *their* B.

Chautauqua to Canada can you hear me?

*Music Out here and bring in the oldy timey scratchy sound for the quote*

A nation is an association of reasonable beings
united in a peaceful sharing of the things they
cherish; therefore, to determine the quality of a
nation, you must consider what those things are.

St. Augustine, The City of God

*Music in here*

This quote opened The Massey Report and the Massey report made Canada. The report came out at a time when Canada needed to be made. It was the dawning of mass culture, a moment when it became clear that without something to distinguish *us* from *them* that we would
become **them**, without something that could make **us** a distinct society - a phrase Quebec uses so potently to its advantage - **we**, Canada, that had fought the Hun and won, **we** would disappear into the cultural tsunami that was the USA. We needed ideas and words that could be repeated, mass produced, restated, printed, painted, and sung. We needed to make something massive happen. And - as if on cue - a guy with **mass** right in his name was there. It is not so strange if you think about it… names have presence and clues. Many English names were professional attributions that stuck Archer, Baker, Fisher. Mason, Smith, Tailor, Weaver, names like tents that were thrown up to give markers to a life and then - over time - became houses of Archer or Weaver, and the original meanings were buried in the foundations of strong family complexes.

*Peace tower bells Here*

I hope you are enjoying this talk so far… as mentioned earlier for the cost of admission I would like to offer you a penny. I invite you to take a penny from its container and keep it. Take a moment to locate the container. There is a sign above the container to help you find it. Next to the container you will find some hand sanitizer. These are the props for the show Take a moment to squirt your hand or the penny to ensure that everyone feels safe in this tent. All of those touches, the sign and the sanitizer are part of the design elements for the show. When the music begins to play that will be your cue to head over to the container and choose a penny from the pot. Hold it in your hand or put it in your pocket. You will become the actors in the show. And that friends is all we need to call it theatre. I am really looking forward to this part. I hope you are too. Take your time with it …together we will be giving these little pennies a break from what feels like their eventual erasure. It's only a play. If you hate pennies and all that they represent this act will not change the course of their true path. If you love pennies, it won't either. But for this show, for our tent theatre, they have been repurposed… but only for the time of this
talk and whatever else might linger when you go. And don’t forget. Poof! This tent will be gone soon anyway. Here comes the song. Enjoy the show.

*What comes next comes (Jacob Wren)*

> Thought I was tougher than I am
>
> thought give me everything you’ve got and I’ll just laugh
> thought I could take it like a man
> not like some man who’s been broken in half
> thought revolutions worth a try
> bigger they come, harder they fall made sense to me
> and if Goliath has to die
> hand me the sling shot and the rock and then we’ll see
> what comes next
> next thing you know the bombs are falling right and left
> I know, I’ve skipped over a few steps
> But we can’t, we can’t, we can’t
> we can’t give up now
> now that it’s too late
> too late to think, much less thoughtfully retaliate
> the years since world war two seem clear
> destroyed everything we should hold dear
> but perhaps we don’t
> we can’t, we can’t, we can’t
> we can’t, we can’t, we can’t
> we can’t, we can’t, we can’t
> give up now
> The school yard bully always knows
> to carefully select only the weakest foes
to hold them up and break them in
he’s sure that’s always the best way to begin
    knows a better model can’t exist
it might inspire the young people to resist
so we’ll send in the CIA
and make sure no one thinks there is a better way
    for what comes next
probably not billboards announcing: property is theft
just the decimation of the left
but we can’t, we can’t, we can’t
give up now
    now that we’ve already lost
the value of everything for which we only know the cost
written in the human lives
of foreigners who won’t survive
this great democracy
//we can’t, we can’t, we can’t,
we can’t, we can’t we can’t,
we can’t, we can’t give up
now

(this is 2:53 into song - I think I can bring in my text thank you where I have put the double //)

//Thank you. That is the voice of Jacob Wren. Jacob identifies as "he", lives in Montreal, and he's a little bit younger than me and has influenced many a generation of performance makers to question everything including - or maybe most especially - form. Follow him on twitter you won't regret it. I don't think.
I think I hold a lot in common with Vincent Massey. Like him, I believe in the possibility for wonderful things to occur here on this northern half of turtle island. And like him, I have used my privilege to enact some of my beliefs. I - like him - I assume - hope for the best outcome with the gestures towards transformations I have made. I never had the power he possessed… but I have always held an appetite for being part of the change. These commonalities are sometimes hard to take. But, as Jacob Wren, following his transition from his previous moniker Death Waits, said in the title of another of his staggering works of performance: En français comme en anglais, it’s easy to criticize. That show title has rattled around in my brain since first seeing it many, many years ago now. It is easy to criticize… it is much harder to find another path through.

I have come think of the Canada I grew up in… as an installation - like an art project - that has been on display since June 1, 1951. In my imagination this installation - called Canada - had a chief artist/architect. He was a lawyer and lover of amateur theatricals, a fancy dresser, and the chairman of the commission on national development in arts letters and sciences and he was called Vincent Massey.

*Reprise of music choice carillon from the top*

Patriae Profuit - He served his country. I wonder if Massey was the one who chose that for his gravestone in Port Hope. It is so very noble. I want to serve. I still aspire to this. Even though I question how we talk about country and certainly how he did. One thing feels indisputable… Vincent Massey served the country he created. Massey made the art project, he installed it. That's a big job. Once Massey passed away, in 1967, Canada was 100 years old and upkeep for the installation became a shared problem. Our problem. Also, our joy if you like thinking about what comes next. It really is just an installation after all.
Music from earlier returns here. (Full House Dusk)

As a child I struggled. Why, I wondered, should I believe in God when from all I could tell everything I was hearing about him came to me through the voices of a few chosen men.

Massey is just like that god and his installation just like god's kingdom. It's true. Because like the Christian god… whose image I was said to have been raised in… the same is true of Massey. I was raised to believe that culture according to certain undeniably elitist and rarefied notions was where our salvation as a new country, as an unrefined country, as a non-European country, as an empty country lay. I was raised to look above the land and away from the trees. I was told to have dominion over. So, like the child that I was, and very much still am, I have come to recognize that I don't believe in The Royal Commission on national development in Arts Sciences and Letters. Anymore. It has done a lot of good… perhaps that's why it took me half a century to figure it out.

When I turned 50 Yvette Nolan said to me: "it is time to elder up, Stanley." It was sobering and freeing to hear. Sobering because, oh god, I am old now, and freeing for the same reasons. Yvette is an old friend and one of the more influential theatre makers to have crossed paths with culture making on this land. She identifies as "she", she lives in Saskatchewan, and has worked in pretty near every part of this great land. She wrote about most things, and interpreted a ton of classics, in ways that blazed the trail so that many trailblazers could get recognized for their trailblazing. If you don't know her work, I encourage you to look her up. Check it out. She is a pioneer. She is still pioneering. This word - in its little house on the prairie definition - draws a lot of heat, and well it should. It's used to describe people who get to a territory and lay claim so others can follow. Interchangeable with settler. In these times of redress, repair, and reconciliation, a pioneer in this sense is not a compliment. But there is a less used definition that I think best describes pioneer in the way I intend: a plant or animal capable
of establishing itself in a bare, barren, or open area and initiating an ecological cycle. It is in this sense that I see Yvette Nolan to be the pioneer that she is. Yvette never tells me her age nor is she precise about her birthday, but I think we are within spitting distance on both counts. Children born in Canada in the 60's in the summertime.

_Music comes out here_

Thanks for coming. Really glad you are here. It has been such a lonely time. This tent time? It gives us a chance to reflect together. Everything has just been so socially distanced lately - you know? And…all the things that helped get us to here, like say, the Massey Report, or even the humble penny, well - something in me wants to honour the fact that they served. Attention must be paid. An acknowledgement that they did their time and that their time is done. A new time emerges. And so now with Massey and the Penny… Can we thank them? Can we let them go? So many goodbyes lately. What are a few more good ones? And what space appears when we do?

_Peace tower bells in here can we let it chime out to the full 12 bells_

Which leads me to ask if we are part of the installation that is Canada… what to do?

Anything can happen in a tent. This is both a blessing and a curse.

Everyone knows that if it rains you get wet. Everyone thinks that if you get the tent up in time you won't get wet. But you always do. You always do get wet. Because it always rains. At some point. It will rain.

It is raining now. We the installation that got called Canada is getting very wet. Soggy, limp, droopy, cold, clammy. It's a damp cold not a dry cold. It's a cold that gets into your bones. Makes sense.

But

Still, we pitch the tent. The idea for tent endures and
And Wow. I mean WOW! Nice tent.

I am going to finish this talk with the rest of Jacob's song. There's about another minute. When it's over… this first conversation at the end of theatre will also be done. Thank you so much for spending your time with me. Please keep your penny if you feel so moved. It's yours. At some point in your day, I hope you will consider taking a moment to bury it in a place that feels right. It did a good job for a time. It is made of good things. The land will receive it well. It is good land.

Thought dignity was still intact
can't one be bitter and still fiercely dignified
of course we're more adult than that
why get upset just because some politician lied

The world is big and full of death
so what's a little genocide just between friends
why get upset, why hold your breath
better to keep it all inside, wait until the end
and then what comes next
next thing you know the bombs are falling right and left
I know, I've skipped over a few steps.
but we can't, we can't, we can't
we can't give up now.

now that it's too late.
too late to think, much less thoughtfully retaliate
the years since World War two seem clear
destroyed everything we should hold dear
so, let's hold it dear and fight.
we can’t, we can’t, we can’t.

we can’t, we can’t, we can’t
we can’t, we can’t, we can’t
give up now
Chapter 3 – HaroldTree: Conversations at the End of Theatre

All of the text is spoken by me - Sarah Garton Stanley/SGS

(These names are said over a sound design of wind and weather. Later, towards the end of the piece, when the names come in, they dovetail and overlap one another.)

Bianca Jacobs
Richard Feren
Peter Lynch
Bob Wallace
Leslie Lester
David Duclos
Asher Turin
Sky Gilbert
Robin Fulford
Veronika Hurnik
Josie Le Grice
Eileen O’Toole
Tim Jones
Kim Roberts
Daniel Brooks
Richard Vaughan
Gwen Bartleman
Alisa Palmer
Bryan James
The Founders
Hillar Liitoja
Andrew Scorer
Joey Meyer  
Ron Kennell  
Jim Warren  
Rose Jacobson  

(AMBENT CONCERTO #1 in F. by Richard Feren is the bed track to the sound design)  

This is dedicated to the Stages of Transformations Creative Cohort.  
I was thinking about you when I was making this. Thinking about you dreaming futures.  
Thinking about institutions and all the ties that bind.  
And I steep my thinking in a statement from the extraordinary artist Marc Bahmuti Joseph, who in his role as head of Social Impact at the Kennedy Centre in Washington, has stated that "I am of the privileged and the hunted".  
To be Not of and OF. This feels like the work.  
To acknowledge the National Arts Centre situated on unceded Anishinaabeg territory, in what is colonially known as Ottawa. To acknowledge that the NAC, like the Kennedy Centre sits in relationship to Canada's house of government. To acknowledge therefore, that in the words of Marc Bahmuti Joseph, me a queer, gender non-conforming, woman, working within an institution like the NAC, I know a small corner of Joseph's sentence.  
We meet here… me a messenger carrying news of yesterday - to learn of the transformations that are in motion for your tomorrow. And I bring with me, or with me comes, an army of friends.  
Hello. My name is SGS or Sarah Garton Stanley. I am theatre maker who has been working on Turtle Island since 1985.  
(Sound of a camera)  
I am also a camera-shy white person.  
(sound of a camera)  
wishing they were anywhere near as interesting to look at as the people surrounding them.  
(sound of a camera)
I hide.

(sound of a camera)

I use she, her, they pronouns. I learned this was possible from you. It's just one more reason to dedicate this -

This Harold Tree to you.

Each of my audio pieces are subtitled Conversations at the End of Theatre.

This one is called the HaroldTree. It is a play on the word heraldry, a code of honour devised in the European High Middle Ages to distinguish the nobles from one another. It was part of the age of chivalry. This would be the exact opposite of Harold (after whom this piece was named) who loved to yell and often accompany his big booming voice with:

"You cocksucker"

This piece is called: HaroldTree: Conversations at the End of Theatre.

(sound of a chain saw)

In each piece of this 5-part project, I grapple with the evidence left by a cultural plan released in 1951 for a country known as Canada. The plan was called the Royal Commission on the Development of Arts and Letters and Sciences, or the Massey Report. It still is called this.

Here are 3 things that might be helpful to know a bit about.

1. When I talk about the Massey Report this is what I am talking about:

The Massey Report or "Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters, and Sciences," was a Canadian government-sponsored inquiry that aimed to assess the state of culture in post-World War II Canada, and to figure out a way for Canada to be taken more seriously by the rest of the world. The Commission was led by Vincent Massey, a prominent lawyer, cultural figure, and very rich man, and it was presented to the Federal Government in 1951. It called for greater support for Canadian arts. It also defined art in ways that are pretty tricky to navigate 72 years later. The Massey Report played a significant role in shaping Canadian cultural policy and identity and it is still trying to do that today. A
Commission that dismissed Indigenous art as… not worthy of consideration… still guides arts policy decisions on this land.

(sound of a chain saw)

2. When I talk about the Harold Awards this is what I am talking about:

The Harold Awards is an annual event celebrating Toronto's theatre community. Established in 1995, it's named in honour of the late Harold Kandel, who was known for his inappropriate sounds, his incredible cackle, and his love of the heckle. The awards seek to recognize and celebrate the achievements of theatre folks who have made something good happen for the community, for the stage, for their friends. The Award places value in community. The Harold Award winners are chosen each year, by the previous recipients, building a sense of community and connection. The event has become a beloved tradition and a highlight of the theatre calendar in Toronto. And to my mind a fantastic site of resistance to the Massey Commission's yearning for a professionalized theatre.

3. When I am talking about the HaroldTree I am talking about you and me and how we are connected. I made the name up. In other segments of my work, I talk of how I see Canada like an installation… and now, in this installation, I have imagined that a curator has placed a tree. A tree that reflects both the sturdiness but also unseeable parts of a theatre that grew within this installation called Canada. A tree that grew from the seeds set down in 1951. And I called this tree the HaroldTree because after almost 30 years of Harold Awards you can start to see a pattern for how a culture tree in Canada might grow. Especially when it's allowed to grow with love, kindness, connection, and care as part of its values. It struck me as a lovely option for a history of English Canadian Theatre as told through the lens of a community engaged project.

(sound of streetcar ding ding)

Toronto is not Canada. I know this. But listen…In Canada, it can be easy to forget. History is a fiction, and thanks to the resilience of one man, Harold Kandel, the Harolds are a good story to tell as to how things might be remembered.

(a blast of nature then a sound of a chain saw)
I hear the sounds of trees being felled.

(Tree falling)

It is so hard.

(Tree falling)

Mainly because this is a space for dreaming.

(Tree falling)

Or at least tracing a horizon line.

(Tree falling)

A vision world created through and by the generations.

(Tree falling)

Rings around the trunk.

(Tree falling)

If you cut down a Maple tree it won’t grow back.

(Tree falling)

This has given me pause.

(Tree falling)

Maybe I should wait. Let someone else take it down.

(Wind blowing. Tree cracking)

Even though the tree that grows is getting dangerously close to the house.

(Wind blowing. Tree cracking)

Even though it grew from a soil soaked in blood.

(Sound of a man in the distance warning…Timber)

Even though…this tree… this same tree…this HaroldTree has carried us for generations, A good strong maple can sometimes last 400 years, that’s a lot of rings, that's a lot of new branches, new leaves feeding the roots, helping the tree to grow. Maybe its roots, like the recycling of our cells over and over and over are brand new since it all started. Because… The HaroldTree started with rings like this:

(Tree falling)

That's a random reflection of a lot of he/him.

(Tree falling)

I had intended to build a tree of names. Names that started the tree, the 5 names just mentioned are a reflection of this. I had intended to go generation by generation to bring us to now, to you, to the people I am dedicating this piece to. To show the shoulders through time, each generation adding to the tree. Each new branch giving the maple leaf more vibrancy, more razzle dazzle come the fall. But if I do this, I hope you will allow yourself the time to add names that I have missed, or to repeat, for emphasis, names that you wish to hear more of. I hope you will notice who has been placed in the HaroldTree and who has yet to be named there. I hope you will name them.

I was seeking out an arborist. I was looking for a way to understand the forest. I was looking for a specialist to help increments of light reach us. I was looking for evidence of rot or health and from this diagnosis hoping to understand if the tree must fall. I think Harold has become that arborist. And through his life, and the community response to it, he has given me the chance to see the forest and the trees and the interconnectedness of history and change.

(Sound of streetcar ding ding)

Toronto is not Canada. I know this. But listen…In Canada, it can be easy to forget.

There are two pictures of people on the home page for the Harold Awards. When I look at the top picture taken in 1995, resplendent in black and white, here is what I see: a group of people posing playfully before the camera on the night of the first Harold Awards in Toronto. There are 7 standing in the back row and 5 seated in the front. The Awards were created to flatten the system of honouring that existed elsewhere in the prize world. We chose 13 as the number on purpose. Unlikely 13. Everyone looking like they were having a grand old time. Many of them giving a thumbs up, a tribute to Harold. In the picture there is one gay white man, one black man and had I not been onstage playing a trans
character at Canadian Stage that night, there would have been, in the parlance of the time, one lesbian, me. I note that Paul Bettis, who also identified as gay, is missing from the picture. In this 1995 capture:

*(sound of a camera)*

Just one person of colour, Luther Hansraj.

*(Champagne cork being Popped)*

It's just what the picture shows. It's on the landing page for the Harolds.

*(Sound of a camera)*

Below this picture, is a much larger picture, with a much larger group of people smiling up at the camera. No rows, this time, more organic, so many it seems they all don't quite fit into the frame. 31 by my count. And those present are a vibrant reflection of Toronto. This is the place that these awards were created for. A Toronto for today. The picture must have been taken pre Covid. I am going to guess it was 2019. It's a fabulous picture. So full of life. And so much bigger than the picture above.

I anticipated saying that change without change was not exactly possible. I expected to say that unless we change the installation, unless we chop down the tree, we won't ever get to a future that holds horizon lines. I expected to repeat the idea that because of the ways in which the culture plan that was made public 72 years ago, is still controlling us now, we must chop it down. And while this remains somewhat true. Resistance as you have shown me can happen around the edges. So… I think that what I thought… might be wrong. Or that part of my premise was wrong. My premise being that we need a new installation. We need to fell a tree. This might not tell a whole story. And it might lack care.

*(Sound of a man in the distance warning… Timber)*

Maybe the life of Harold Kandel was lived to teach, to offer me another way to think about things. To contemplate the power of the arborist over the force of the lumber jack.

At the time of his death…Harold's Toronto was in a moment of mega-musicals and with it came the promise that more than two impresarios could make a buck making theatre. And suddenly everything became oh so professional. The 80's were a tremendously destabilizing time. It brought the birth of deregulation and neoliberalism. The belief that the state should not be involved in the well-being of the
people took hold. One of the favourite spaces to ignore this reality was The Poor Alex. It was a 100-seat gem of a theatre tucked in behind the Future Bakery on Brunswick Avenue in the Annex. This building gave birth to much. In particular the Toronto premiere of Brad Fraser’s *Unidentified Human Remains and the True Nature of Love* and The Toronto Fringe. I worked on many shows in that space. It was magical and strange, and Harold cemented for me the wonder of it all.

Harold Kandel died in 1994. He was older than anybody I knew when I first started interacting with him in the 80's. He came to the theatre whenever he could and there was not a lot of space between his last time disrupting a well-placed pause and learning of his passing. I remember placing some earth on the casket at the burial site. It was the first time I had participated in the burial of a human. *(Over the course of this next section a recording of the Kaddish sourced from here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=luk85AVuHCg plays over the following text.)*

Even that seems so strange to me now. But it was the first time I had ever done this. Like so many of us in the Toronto Theatre Scene in the 80's and 90's. I had tolerated/loved/never really knew Harold. He was dependable. He loved ruining all pretense, jumping all cue lines and disrupting any show… as much as possible. He loved the front row. He loved the theatre, and the people who made it. He loved yelling our names while we were supposed to be playing someone else. He loved cutting through the bullshit. He loved saying cock sucker. And a thumbs up from him made all of us feel seen. There was a lesson in unconditional love. If you were willing to get up onstage, Harold was willing to make fun of you, or have fun with you for doing it. And it truly didn't matter if you were the most trained brilliant actor or someone getting up for the very first time, Harold was an equal opportunity disruptor. This felt important at the time, and it still does today. Aside from this I sadly and sheepishly knew very little about him.

*(The Kaddish is complete by here.)*

He was Jewish. This has no bearing on anything. Except that it was a surprise to discover. And it was the first time I had heard the Kaddish.
Through death comes new life. I am not ever sure of the ethical space a human can take up to ask what should die. But I know things need to. I know that Indigenous teachings have for centuries understood the necessity for controlled burns. I know that first peoples the world over, that climate activists and people living on and from the land today, have all met the eyes of an animal whose life they needed to take in order that they might survive. And from what I have come to understand… it’s this… that in the balancing of the world (A world can really only be as big as our senses can perceive) that in this balance the relationship between the animals, the humans, and all the green that breathes us and the water that lives us, that to rebalance the world, all the relations need to share in the "all that there is" so that there can be abundance for "all that are here" and "all that will come".

Not everyone is here. But everyone can be if the tree grows long enough. And if you add a storyteller then you have a story about the way theatre in Canada grew. It can be a fiction. History is. So, in this history, as told through the HaroldTree, the story can be a story of resistance and change. A story that sits beneath the stream, where all the change can happen. It is a story of resistance gifted to me by Harold. Something in Harold's actions tell me that he understood - or that it was understood - that without disruption we are lost. And through the force of it, through the force of his desire to cut the bullshit, to be the fool, he gifted a community with the possibility of a glorious tree, grown by love. A cavalcade of names linked one to the next by an internal system of care. A HaroldTree for us. A way to bring me here to you.

(Sound of a streetcar)

Toronto is not Canada. I know this. But listen…in this installation I discovered an arborist.

(A wind starts to run through the leaves as I start to read the names…it grows and music swells)

Listen…it's growing.

The Harold Awards recipients:

(In the following sections the names start off in single readings, then double, triple, quadruple and in the last section, 5 layers of names are heard simultaneously.)
Ahdri Zhina Mandiela
Tracy Wright
Jonathan da Silva
Fiona Jones
Alex Bulmer
Maxine Bailey
In Memory of Mark Shields
Sigrid Johnson
David Anderson
Ruthe Whiston
Maria Costa
Leah Cherniak
Lynda Hill

I was seeking out an arborist -

M. Nourbese Philips
Clare Coulter
Ed Roy
Rex Buckle
Eryn Dace Trudell
Jean Yoon
Toronto Arts Council
Rebecca Picherack
Ida Carnevale
Andrea Lundy
David Baile
Jennifer Brewin
Viv Moore

I was looking for a way to understand the forest -

Diane Roberts
Winston Morgan
Elly-Ray Hennessy
Will Sutton
Sharon Di Genova
Marion de Vries
Michael Hollingsworth
Peter Freund
Arturo Fresolone
Derek Bruce
Sally Szuster
Wendy Krekeler
Keith Cole

I was looking for a specialist to help increments of light reach us -

Sally Han
Sandra Hodnett
Marcus Magdalena + Chris Prideaux
Roger West
Jennifer Watkins
Rose Stella
Paul Bettis
Kimberly Purcell
Peter Nikolic
Natasha Parsons
Naomi Campbell
Nancy Webster
Adrien Whan
David Hoekstra
Jane Marsland
Daniel David Moses
Barbara Fingerole
Michelle Ramsay
Arts Vote
Kristen Van Alphen
Christine Moynihan + Mira Friedlander
Geoffrey Whynot
Gregory Nixon

That's a lot of rings-

Alison Sealy-Smith
Camilla Holland
Charissa Wilcox
Carrie Sagar
Lisa Nabieszko
Carol Rowntree
Derrick Chua
Franco Boni
Barbara Hall
Sam Nichols
Mallory Gilbert
Ronald Weihs + Judith Sandiford
Bob Naismith

That's a lot of new branches -

Weyni Mengesha
JP Robichaud
Fina MacDonell
Wendy White
Amah Harris
Cheryl Landy
George F. Walker
Kelly Thornton

Jan McIntyre
Jon Kaplan
Layne Coleman
Djanet Sears
Ross Manson
Shanna Miller
Grant Ramsay
Donald Carr
Lin Joyce
Robert Crew
Ruth Madoc-Jones
Jini Stolk
Mary-Jo Carter Dodd
Andy McKim
Jacquie Thomas + Michael Spence
Jim Garrard

d’bi young
Steve Lucas
Aviva Armour-Ostroff
Kirsten Johnson
Vera Cudjoe
Dianne Weinrib
Shawn Kerwin
Trina Sookhai
Kate Alton  Fina MacDonnell
Jacqueline Robertson Cull  Joanne Lamberton
Diana Belshaw  Ray Salvereda
Stephen Droge + Jacoba Knappen  Anne Anglin + Paul Thompson
Hrant Alianak  David French

New leaves feeding the roots, helping the tree to grow -

Amina Alfred  Satori Shakoor  Cayle Chernin
Trevor Schwellnus  Bill Stahl  Jonathan Rooke
Canadia dell’ Arte  Erika Hennebury  Jim Lefrancois
Moynan King  Clinton Walker  Cathy Gordon
Leonard McHardy+Johnny Harvey  Angela Rebeiro  Sandra Tulloch
Mimi Beck”  Lucy Rupert  Jennifer Goodwin
Vikki Anderson + Eric Stein  Allyson McMackon  Lindsay Anne Black
Larissa Mair  Jonathan Munro  Leslie Arden
Arwen MacDonnell  Nan Shepherd  Rick Banville
David Rayfield  Heather Kent  Teodoro Dragonieri
Claire Sakaki  Daryl Cloran  Lorenzo Savoini
Ted Johns + Janet Amos  David + Robin Craig  Ann + David Powell
Paul Ledoux  David Ferry + John Alcorn  Brendan/Iris/Geoffrey/Chris

Maybe its roots, like the recycling of our cells over and over and over are brand new since it all started -

Chris Owens + David Gale  Bernadette Jones  Anne Page
Paula Forst  Doug Morum  Michael Kruse
Paul Halferty  Judith Rudakoff  John Palmer
Justin Roddy  Andrew Dollar  Jordan Merkur
Jenny Ginder  Sue Edworthy  Bridget Mac
Zoja Smutny
The Actors’ Fund
Diane Leah
Glenn Davidson
Wayne Fairhead + Sue Daniel
Mike Ross
Sue Miner + Mark Brownell
Bonnie Green
Guntar Kravis
Patti Gale Peaker
Sharron Matthews
Mary Spyrakis
Andrew Lamb
Alex Eddington
Nina Okens
Thomas Ryder Payne + Katherine Grainger
Caroline Gillis
Bob Van Dyke
Jenni Burke
Karen Rodd
Paula Wing
Kristen Mueller
Marjorie Chan

I had intended to build a tree of names

Spirit Synott
Kathryn Westoll
Maria Popoff
Sheldon Rosen
Alison Smiley
Blair Francy
Claudine Domingue
Kenneth Wickes
Shawn Wright
Kate Ann Vandermeer
Farwah Gheewala
Hillary Thomson
Richard Lee
Bran Ramsey
Sholem Dolgoy
Tanisha Taitt
Alexis Da Silva-Powell
Meredith Potter
Grant Cowan
Steven Gallagher
Brad Lepp
Patty Jarvis
Dave McKay
Grant Cowan
Mawson Brothers
Ryan Kelly
Aislinn Rose
Zis Parra
Mawson Brothers
Falen Johnson
Robert Watson
Julie Tepperman
Brian Quiet
Ben Bier/Claire Burns
Andrea Scott
Andrea Battersby
Brittany Ryan
Cole Alvis
Holly Lloyd
Patricia Wilson
The Bellows
Ngizzi Paul
Kevin Wong
Dahila Katz
Mitchell Marcus
Jeff Ho
Owas Lightwala/ Kelly Read
Kevin Matthew Wong
James McKernan
Yolanda Bonnell
Vette Nolan
Thalia Kane
Shawn Duellin
Lake Reece
WaleedAbdulhamid
Nick Green
Dahua Katz
Sara Farb
Jasmine Chen
Owas Lightwala/ Kelly Read
Keiran Mathew Wong
James McKernan
Yolanda Bonnell
Maddie Baptista
DM St Bernard
Bri Puke
Mark Aikman
Crystal Lee
Virgilia Griffith
Anika Johnson/ Barb Johnson
Indrith Kasapi
Samantha Bellingham
Ryan G. Hinds/Aaron Kelly
Sylvia Defend

Leah Simone Bowen
Susanna Fournier
Sandra Corazza
Sandy Plunkett
Joseph Recinos
Motion
Tracy Michailidis
Christopher Wilson
Michael Wheeler
Linda Keyworth
Kelly Straughan/Kat Sauller
Jajube Mandiela
Bob Van Dyke
Matt Pilipak
Liza Paul
Joey O’Dell
Sedna Fiati
Tawshia McCarthy
Rebecca Perry
Adam Sukiyama/Izzy Black
Not everyone is here. But everyone can be if the tree grows long enough.

A HaroldTree for us.
Chapter 4 – Stumped: Conversations at the End of Theatre

Audience enters to regular installation lighting and ambient sound

Clayton welcomes folks to Rhubarb and to the land

Lighting shifts to establish the piece

Audio begins

(To the assembled)

Wow. I mean it's like…it's like a wow instillery! Like so much wow. (whispered fast counting)

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29,

30, 31, 32, 33… 34 wows.

(Deep inhale)

Can you smell it? What this artist, architect, and researcher Andrea Shin Ling has installed here…It's. A. Wow. She calls it Calculus of Infinite Rot 1.

Ambient forcefully out like a wind sweep or something then SILENCE

Can you hear it? The sounds of life. But you have to listen very closely.

Ambient back in

Here. Reverence. Here. Decay. Here. Beauty. Here Undulation. Disgust. Breath. Death. Life. It's like a tree farm for bad times. A Clear Cut of what was and what will be. A gap in the clock's tick. A space to remember our dreams or to dream them anew. And violence. Profiting from the casual use of violence… a space has been made to serve our contemplation on the nature of things. Things have died for this space. Things die. They just do.

Fun fact: we breathe our body weight in mold every two weeks. (Deep inhale)
It's tough to gauge but it looks like you - dear stumps - were close to my age when you were cut down. A pretty good run I'd say… but… as featured as you are…as real time streaming our gaze on nature has become…and as shimmery as the lighting appears to make your surfaces … I feel fucked… it's like a grief that runs ropes down the sides of my heart and yanks it up hard to the base of my throat…a stump of sad.

I have benefited from the chopping down of trees… and thought nothing of the life forces that were stopped… to feed my need to have a table to write upon.

To write this.

Dear stumps, your relatives died so i could write this. And your death has given me something to write about.

How do I thank you?

(Sound new note added to the pad)

You didn't choose to be here, at Buddies in Bad Times Theatre, you could've ended up at IKEA, in a Billy bookshelf, or in the walls of a house that shelters a man whose only wish is to re-elect Trump. Instead, you stand here, a Brancusi inspired feel to your shapes. Brancusi was European and known as the patriarch of modern sculpture. I am tired of that word. Patriarch. It's an old word. Brancusi died in 1957. At least I still have breath to share my thoughts. As for you dear stumps, your life force had already been taken… long before the artist brought you to the theatre. Your demise was not the artist's fault, artists don't take down lives. Other kinds of people do that. Not artists.

For now… Rest in peace dearly departed trees... I am not asking you to come back from the dead to appease my grief. Not that you could. Although that sure would feel nice. I might be looking at the shape of trees, but I know you are gone.
(SFX the hubbub of a crowd anticipating the top of the show might work nicely here? in this paragraph.)

(To the assembled)

To those of you who booked a ticket to this train of thought, you real time breathers, … thank-you for bringing your lives here - especially now in these heightened times - and sharing in this… my lecture type thing… It's part of a series of 5 similar lecture type things called: Massey and Me: Conversations at the end of Theatre. This one is called Stumped. Not that difficult to see why. If you like this one, something to look forward to, and if you don't, you can breathe deeply and enjoy the ephemeral nature of 'the theatre' even as we conversate at its end.

(SFX Above sound cleared by the same sound that followed "life" at the top?)

Questions to get us going:

What is an ensemble of actual tree stumps infused with foreign bodies doing here?

What percentage of this installation is queer?

Is that a smart question?

Who owns these stumps?

Is it you dear microbes, and mycelium? Is it you, dear Andrea who conceived of this space? Or is it you dear Buddies in Bad Times Theatre?

Who owns you?

They say that possession is nine tenths of the law. I take this to mean the stumps are - legally - where they should be. In crime shows if you are caught with it you did it. But I think it also means if you own it, even if the way you got it is say -questionable - it's still yours.
(To the stumps)

This feels right. When I look at you, dear Stumps, it feels true… That the progress of your decay…that the unasked-for inoculations… that the fact that you are here…in this black anti nature box…all of it is legally correct. It is correct. Nine Tenths of the law suggests this to be so. But…that also means one tenth of you remains… unclaimed.

(Match light and Prévert loop in here)

Lighting Shift to focus to audience more and bring in pennies?

(To the audience)

So… as this music plays, I turn my attention to you, you real time breathers, and ask that you take that precious legally unclaimed tenth and use it for - reverence? I am hoping you will move outside the algebra of justice and injustice, the mathematics of moral right and wrong, and place an offering at the base of a stump, a former tree, a stump. Something to say: "I am here with you, and I want to leave something behind… for when I walk away… to let history know that I was there". Imagine. It will be a trace of you, reverently left for the unclaimed tenth.

In the center of the space lies a collection of suitably distanced and sanitized Canadian pennies. Pennies will remain legal tender indefinitely but - google says - they are also biodegradable. That's a paradox. Still…I invite you to pick one up and place it at the base of a stump.

Lighting Shift to focus to a more meditative state that includes pennies and stumps?

Go ahead. Do it for me?

Really. Please. Do it!

Lyrics start here

Compagnons des mauvais jours
Je vous souhaite une bonne nuit

Et je m’en vais.

La recette a été mauvaise

C’est de ma faute

Tous les torts sont de mon côté

J’aurais dû vous écouter

J’aurais dû jouer du caniche

C’est une musique qui plaît

Mais je n’en ai fait qu’à ma tête

Et puis je me suis énervé.

Quand on joue du chien à poil dur

Il faut ménager son archet

Les gens ne viennent pas au concert

Pour entendre hurler à la mort

Et cette chanson de la Fourrière

Nous a causé le plus grand tort.

Compagnons des mauvais jours

Je vous souhaite une bonne nuit

Dormez

Rêvez

Moi je prends ma casquette

Et puis deux ou trois cigarettes dans le paquet

Et je m’en vais...
(we shift back to loop for rest of text)

Lighting shifts back to more present

Thank you. An act of engagement with the dead, of remembering the spirits of these trees that were... a wish... and as a way of welcoming new life, microbial life to the territory... that must have felt like "terra nullius", which means unoccupied or uninhabited. Terra Nullius is a legal framework that assumes that there were no previous inhabitants of consequence. These stumps, like the land they sprouted from, are - therefore - free to be possessed.

It's true. We are all colonizers. No matter how small a life might seem to be.

Music Out

Slow lights returning to focus on stumps

(to the stumps)

During this possession... you, dear stumps, are also serving in an artists' rendering, as stand-ins for a vision of the future... miasmatic infestations in the shape of trees that provide an unsettling possibility... to the real time breather... for the look of change... Like... the future might be different, but it might still look a bit the same... decay and regeneration based on the familiar... And I have come to stump for how things came to pass. And to think about the end of things. By the end things... I actually mean ideas... the end of ideas that can feel like things. Someone smart said: "it is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism". Hunh. But unless you break it down... imagining the end of the world is pretty hard too. By the end of the world, I mean the end of 1. you dear stumps, 2. this venerable institution we call Buddies in Bad Times Theatre and 3. CANADA.

Sure. Why not? The Great Big C.
So, to get to an end I am going to roll us back to a start.

*LX SOMETHING verdant*

*(to the stumps)*

To begin, you, dear stumps, you were trees, you were cut down, you were then spotted on the ground, and became subjects in an art experiment. Not unlike the Hollywood starlet sitting at the drugstore soda fountain and getting her break when seen sucking on a …straw…by a person with the power to have his straw sucked.

Except dear stumps now that you are here, in this space, it is you who are being sucked upon. From starlet to straw. From tree to stump. From then ’til now.

*Reprise of above ambient SQ sound out with the swish*

Can you hear it? The sounds of life?

*Ambient back in*

*LX slow fade towards black*

No one really knows how you, dear stumps, will look or feel when the curtain comes down on this performance but within the context of the contemporary theatrical landscape… we can be pretty sure that, alas, your starring role will come to an end. Some of you might be claimed for a time by sentimental art-scientists, or you might be followed on insta… but even then, at some point, you will face complete abandonment…and like the demise of so many Facebook groups…you will be deleted from our consciousness. Which is of course too bad. But also, a lot like life. And death. The shape of you will remain, for a time, somewhere. Which leads to a question: What makes watching your decay here any less or more enthralling than watching a body decomposing in the ground?

Much? I think not much.
It is perhaps why… I can't help but feel that we humans - not unlike you fungal and microbial presences feasting on the hulls of these former trees- that we humans are just like you. Hungry, writhing, moving without any real intelligence, a bit stinky, yet still hoping to be the ones to solve something, to create something.

Which leads me to think about Buddies and…

("BUDDIES” probably not said aloud)

Reprise the LX earlier

Another verse of Jacques Prévert wafts in

Compagnons des mauvais jours

Pensez à moi quelquefois

Plus tard...

Quand vous serez réveillé

we shift back to loop for rest of text

That song is based on a poem by Jacques Prévert. That poem gave buddies in bad times its name. I love it. Prévert was a Frenchman, a gay man, a man born man. He died in 1977 the same year that a transgender woman was allowed to play in a tennis tournament in New York, and when anti-gay rights activist Anita Bryant took a cream pie to the face, and when Harvey Milk became the first openly gay man elected to public office in the US and 2 years before Buddies in Bad Times Theatre was founded in 1979. Harvey Milk was shot and killed in 1978, a year after his rise to power and a year before Buddies. And still Buddies rose. Compagnons des mauvais jours, indeed.

Buddies in Bad Times Theatre. (Q10)
The music blends into the sound of floors being laid, and the unintelligible rhubarb of voices, and streetcars through to horses, flow under this next section.

All the layers beneath this space. There is the floor that was set down by the sweat and vision of Tim Jones, Sky Gilbert, and Gwen Bartleman. It’s an old floor now… but it still feels so new to me. And below that floor there is the scent of George Luscombe and Toronto Workshop Productions molded on the teachings of Joan Littlewood…a British theatre director who envisioned a socialist story telling space and who has been referred to as the mother of modern theatre. This gendering offends me. She did play and direct Mother Courage…so I guess it fits…but what might have been had she been referred to as the father of modern theatre and Peter Brook its mother? Maybe not a lot. They are both still British after all. And beneath the boards of Toronto Workshop Productions were tracks that supported the trams that slumbered through the younger streets of Toronto overnight. Before the trams were horses… and before that there was a very different set of visions for this land that had nothing to do with black boxes, fixed spaces, ownership, or possession. That was a long, long time ago.

(match to clearing sound)

When I was last here, I mean really here… I was embodied. I really was in my body back then… but I had much less sense of my voice. And yet. Fun Fact. I ran this place. Or led it. Or saved it. Or bled it. Or ruined it. Or renewed it. Or screwed it.

I was a busy body back then. And a lesbian leader.

(Ode to Goo Goo Dolls Iris short instrumental loop begins to play)

When I was last here, I mean really here, officially my time as artistic director started with the door you came through today being chain locked by a bailiff. The company I agreed to lead owed money in every direction. It had no board, no credit and for a time, thanks to decisions
I made… no staff and all the while I - it's newly appointed leader - sweated in corners and smiled in the middle of rooms and got to work.

I had not fallen yet. I had not been cut down. Yet.

It was a long time ago… but not as long ago as when there were different visions for this land…

My time was the time of saving structures while a whole other faction wanted to tear them down. It's old! It's useless! Some cried.

Question: Doesn't this drive toward destruction ultimately create more and more hungry ghosts?

Curious about this.

When I was last here, I mean really here it was all about the pennies. They were everywhere. In every crack and cranny of this space. Abandoned. Who needs pennies? And this was when we could still buy beer with change. It's true what people said: I didn't start my leadership with art. I started with pennies. I made it my mission to collect every single penny I found on the floors and in the crevices of this old building. I cleaned off the beer, the cum, the gum, I put a lot of energy into those copper symbols of something. It was laughable but I must have believed that the power of that faithful act would resuscitate the beast. All I can say about that is this…it worked.

Buddies couldn't be such a firestorm today had it not survived then.

It is called Buddies in Bad Times Theatre after all.

My name is Sarah Garton Stanley. And as the meanings of my names suggest: Princess Triangular Piece of Farmland of the Stoney Meadow, I am no authority on anything, really, but most especially trees. Although I truly love them. When I was last here, I mean really here, I was
just a Princess of the Stoney Meadow. That gendering offends me too. I wasn't using my middle name then; I didn't yet understand that I would need that space to grow (and that Garton could give me a piece of farmland to till) Besides - I truly loved the sound of my first and second name strung together. Sarah Stanley. Many people liked it too. I was almost always referred to with my two names. It was comforting. I knew who I was, and it felt like everyone else did too. The two names together felt front loaded with stories by the person using them to address me. Then again it was a name best known for the lead character Sarah Stanley on CBC's Flagship Show the Road to Avonlea. So, there's that.

During that time of the no-middle-name… I was a bottle-blonde, bike-riding, beer-swilling, chimney…smoking my insides out and blissfully unaware of the land I was being all-those-things upon. It was a stressful time.

_Goo Goo Dolls Iris lyrics:_

And I don't want the world to see me

Cause I don't think that they'd understand

When everything's made to be broken

I just want you to know who I am

*Back to iris loop with chainsaws and hand saws and skills saws*

Hello, Buddies, my old friend. It is so nice, so very nice, to be with you again.

To use a forestry term, I was a controlled burn that ultimately got out of control. Before my twin cities burned, let's call my lungs life and death, I quit smoking, left Toronto, and assumed my middle name. A bittersweet symphony. I used to smoke so much. Now I don't have to because the world is on fire. But I do need my middle name. I need to grow.
Every moment is some terrible moment of decay ... and then growth happens...decay always feels more certain.

Question: Is it?

*(To the stumps)*

I think, dear stumps... that I too have been being instilled. Just like you. Slowly...and on so many levels. And that I too am being used in the service of other beings, other ideas, other forces. I too have been placed in space, to be identified, to be objectified. I too am featured in an Installation. Mine too is an installation about Instillation. We are all in a show. You, me, the real time breathers, and you too, Andrea. Google says that Andrea means brave, Shin, New and Ling means the sound of dawn... Andrea Ling Bravely listening to the sound of a New Dawn at Buddies in Bad Times Theatre.

The sounds of dawn. Can you hear them?

They bring a new day.

*Music out*

**CANADA**

This building would not have become a theatre had a man named Vincent Massey not been given the resources to create what I consider to be a plan for the second largest installation in the world... just behind Russia's. That show..."The Soviet Union Show"... was given an edict in 1932... The Central Committee of the Communist Party decreed that all existing literary and artistic groups and organizations should be disbanded and replaced with unified associations of creative professions, and that officially approved art was required to follow the doctrine of Socialist Realism. That was what happened back in the USSR... But when I think about the shit arts organizations have to deal with here... Take Buddies, a queer actualizing organization,
well… it doesn’t sound altogether different. At least in Russia they officially don’t believe in Queers. Here, mercifully, I think we still do.

Question: Do we?

"The Soviet Union show" closed in 1989… when that famous wall came 'a tumbling down. It was a short run in Nation-State-Performances. Only 57 years! Massey's show, The Canada Show, opened in 1951 and is still playing 71 years later!... and like Calculus of Infinite Rot 1, … the Massey show, called Canada, well that show is set to close too. But for now…while both shows are still up and running…Andrea Shin Ling… je vous présente le très honorable Gouverneur Générale du Canada Vincent Massey

Google offers a search question: Why is Vincent Massey significant?

And the answer is:

In 1949, he was appointed chairman of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences. The ensuing report issued in 1951, known as the Massey Report, led to the creation of the Canada Council.

But it also led to everything. Like the definition of professional theatre. Like the creation of regional theatres. Like the way we DO theatre. Like the entrenchment of English and French values in all our cultural institutions… AND the total diminishment of Indigenous languages and culture in any of them. Like the idea that should - through this commission - we come to be a unified cultural force field, well watch out world! (and the US to the south) We - in our French and English way - are coming for you. Canada. And in a lot of ways this worked. Canada has been invited to some pretty fancy theatres thanks to this.
Because truly… the whole idea behind this commission was to export Canada to the world … To get the world to like us so that they would invest in us.

Question: what does being liked outside of capitalism feel like?

After the royal commission, Vincent Massey became the 18th Governor General of Canada. He was born in 1887 (John A Macdonald was prime minister then) and he died in 1967 at the very end of the Centennial year. He lived long enough to see his Canada show open to the world. And he had a great view because he was looking at it from England… where he lived out his final years. Fun fact: he wanted to be knighted by the Queen. And the Queen wanted to give him the highest order of chivalry she could bestow. The only way this could happen was by giving up his Canadian citizenship. He didn't. Still… Isn't it weird that someone charged with building a new Canada really wanted Queen Elizabeth's stamp of approval? But the Queen found a work around… and gave him the very rare Royal Victoria Chain. I mean when you get down to it… who doesn't love a queen? Vincent's first name was actually Charles, and his middle name was actually Vincent, which comes from the Latin, meaning to conquer. His first name, Charles, is derived from Olde English and means free man. I guess he preferred conquering to freedoming. It's a choice.

The Massey Lectures, the format that infuses my lecture-type-thing, were named for the same guy, and I hold him accountable for my voice invading your spore space consciousness today. How we make art makes us. It creates our world. So, blame him, Andrea, or truly, as South Park suggested, blame Massey's installation, blame Canada.

(A short snippet of “Blame Canada” that reminds us of the moment … and that flows in and fades out under the next paragraph)
And you know what's funny? I fully believe that Free Man the conqueror, Massey did make it! Made Canada! Made this second only to Russia sized installation called Canada…An installation that since 1951, we have been living, dreaming, and creating in…since his instillation began. He, and his gang of mostly boys, one girl shy of a shutout, and all of them white, developed it. They made Canada.

I believe that the Massey Commission was patient zero to our so-called Canada today. It was the super spreader event that, among other things, almost succeeded in silencing what Indigenous voices remained… and concurrently laid the groundwork for a white supremacist multi-cultural French and/or English "mosaic" that has brought us to now. Including the sound of my voice. Wow. Including the placement of your government funded stumps. Wow Including the tire fire that has been lit under this venerable institution, Buddies in Bad Times Theatre, Wow Wow, Wow! Including the spreading flames across the not-for-profit professional theatre sector on this land. Just a big old wow!

To find out how Vincent Massey was responsible for as much as I believe he was… stay tuned for more lectures! And in the meantime… don't be surprised by all that's falling. It's what happens at the end of an idea. Just ask the USSR.

(A short snippet of "Canada" that gives us a break, brings us back but doesn't leave us there too long) (

Question:

Microbes, as you creep and crawl along the carcasses of stumps, does this mean a thing to you?

Is that a smart question?
The center of things is this. Spaces like this, this space right here, your Bodies, this Black Box, Buddies in Bad Times Theatre, Canada…the truth about spaces like this is that they will eat you alive. It's just what happens. And dear stumps with the microbial maelstrom that is feasting upon you, you know what I mean. Or more precisely, you are evidence of my meaning.

Question: Would we rather be eaten alive while living or after we are gone?

(Prévert loop in here)

Buddies in bad times

I’m gonna say good night

Sleep

Dream

I’m gone

Just kidding. I love you too much to leave you.

Canadian author Suzanne Simard argues that trees are social, cooperative creatures connected through underground networks. In her book Finding the Mother Tree, a gendering that somehow doesn't offend me… she shows how trees communicate their vitality and vulnerabilities with communal lives not that different from our own. Come to think of it…it's hard to be offended by gendering as an act of reclamation.

Hey stumps, do you remember?

You, as shapes that retain the spirits of former trees?

Did the people who cut you down offer tobacco and explain why they were doing it? And did you, like Suzanne Simard suggests you might, inform other trees in your network that:

"people are coming back to take you down!? I bet you did. I bet you were brave and collaborative.
I hope the people who cut you down *did* make an offering. I hope that you received something good… while you were still fully alive to receive it.

Regardless… I'm hopeful that some trace of the copper we left… will reach some trace of you… as you transit. And that some trace of you… will inoculate us… as we bravely, listen to sounds of *the future* … at dawn.

Wow. Can you hear it? The sounds of life?

*BLACK OUT (3 seconds after line)*

*Lights restore to regular installation lighting/The ambience returns as the audience exits.*
Chapter 5 – reCycling: Conversations at the End of Theatre

reCycling: Conversations at the End of Theatre, is a multi-track audio piece that works to vocally embody the impossibility of deep systemic change and the unerring urge for this change to occur.

The following pages offer the reader a visual reference for the auditory experience. An attempt has been made to lay the work out in a way that might help some future explorers decode the reason behind the layout of the words.

This can in no way replace the actual work. And this is perhaps truer of this chapter than the three that precede it. This piece was conceived as audio dance between interweaving things. Language, concepts, sounds, events, and names. Lots and lots of names.

We will all have been here once. Most of us are still here now. But someday soon we won’t be. And our continuous efforts towards transformation and change, will, I hope, be picked up by more people who will offer their names.

A few technical notes that will help decipher the following document. Blue text indicates that the speaker is speaking English and purple indicates that the speaker is speaking French. The speaker is always me. The lyrics to the U2 song – referred to in the text - are in black, except when they show up once, in prose formatting, and are in this case blue. Penultimately, taking a leaf from early 20th century English language playwrighting, in certain sections that present more like prose formatting, I have made use of the backslash to loosely suggest where the overlapping opposing language will be heard coming in. Finally, all the names are in black. And so too are what I refer to as “sonic indications of what else the listener would be hearing if they were listening to the audio project.

A washing machine starts.
Spin.

Music in-

This is the final conversation. There is one more part but… after this… well… there will be one more part but no more conversation. Or if there is, it won't be led by my voice. Or at least that's what I believe now. I haven't made the last part of this 5-part series. Or perhaps I should say, it hasn't yet made me.

A washing machine stops. A washing machine starts.

Wash.

When I returned to grad school, I was already post-menopausal. It was operational.

Which is to say, the parts in me that would have kept me in my childbearing years were removed. Nonetheless I was old when I returned to school. Still in my 40's but, you know, old.

Now -of course - I was young. I mean, at that time, I wanted to study because I felt that I needed to learn how to write a sentence. That sentence ended up covering failure in performance and must have been syntactically strong enough to afford me a Master's in Cultural Studies from Queen's University.

Music continues- A washing machine starts.

Rinse. Rincez. Some years later, we'll call it a decade, Quelques années plus tard, nous l'appellerons une décennie I was then doubly post-menopause, not just operationally so… j'étais alors doublement ménopausée, pas seulement sur le plan opérationnel...and I felt compelled to attempt a paragraph. Et je me suis sentie obligée de tenter un paragraphe. A paragraph. Un paragraphe. So welcome. Bienvenue. Welcome to it. Bienvenue dans mon paragraphe. Welcome to my doubly post-menopausal paragraph. Bienvenue dans mon paragraphe doublement post ménopausique. Welcome to conversations at the end of theatre...Bienvenue aux conversations à
la fin du théâtre... where I do all the talking... ou je fais tout le discours. And the paragraphs are suspect. Et les paragraphes sont suspects.

A washing machine starts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lavez.</th>
<th>Wash.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dans cette conversation je dois essayer de tourner à travers notre débat... but that were co-created by my world of people. I began.</td>
<td>Nancy Webster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>travail sur le premier cycle juste avant d'obtenir mon diplôme avec ma maîtrise. J'ai terminé mon travail je fini my work on The Cycles shortly.</td>
<td>Andy Lunney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sur les cycles peu de temps avant de commencer à travailler sur ce projet de création de recherche.</td>
<td>Judi Pearl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De phrase en paragraphe, Du début à la fin d'un cycle de rotation à la fin du troisième</td>
<td>Ryan Cunningham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rinez, Lavez, Tournez.</td>
<td>Carolyn Wemen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rinez, Lavez, Tournez.</td>
<td>Peter Harrmdorf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rinez, Lavez, Tournez.</td>
<td>Monique Mojkica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rinez, Lavez, Tournez.</td>
<td>Michael Greweyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spin, Wash, Rinse.</td>
<td>Laakkuluk Williamson Bathory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spin, Wash, Rinse.</td>
<td>Herbie Barnes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rinez, Lavez, Tournez.</td>
<td>Daniel David Moses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mais maintenant quoi?</td>
<td>Margo Kane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La première année, jeter quelque chose au mur. Changer la face du théâtre canadien. La deuxième année rassemble les gens et expérimente.</td>
<td>Jani Lauzon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From sentence to paragraph. From the beginning of a spin cycle to the end of three.</td>
<td>Sheldon Eiter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gather people together and experiment.</td>
<td>Brian Calliou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Theatre Year two.</td>
<td>Cole Alvis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Theatre Year four.</td>
<td>Rachael Maza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gather people together, Year five. Gather people together. Why Theatre?</td>
<td>Marie Clements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why Theatre? Year six. Gather people together. A Pandemic and five minutes.</td>
<td>Nathan McIvor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La troisième année rassemble encore plus gens et expérimente.</td>
<td>Lise Ann Johnson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La troisième année rassemble.</td>
<td>Brian Quiri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year three. Gather even more people together and experiment.</td>
<td>Morindah Donnelly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing the shape of Canadian Theatre. Year four.</td>
<td>Naomi Campbell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why Theatre?...</td>
<td>Lib Spry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or the earth is watching... I left act</td>
<td>Elynn Payre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Et la pandémie rassemble les gens. La cinquième année rassemble les gens. La quatrième année rassemble les gens.</td>
<td>Andi Moro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why Theatre?...</td>
<td>Anns Smith St Georgas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Les maladies rassemblent des gens.</td>
<td>Tara Bogan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Les maladies rassemblent les gens.</td>
<td>Rose Stiegl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Une pandémie est le metteur de scène.</td>
<td>Drew Hayden Taylor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Une pandémie est le metteur de scène. Les maladies rassemble les gens.</td>
<td>Troy Emery Twigg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mais pourquoi le théâtre? La raison de la pandémie.</td>
<td>Justin Manyfingers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ou le texte regardé. Agissant.</td>
<td>Joelle Peters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Année sept recombiner un rassemblement pour une pandémie au milieu d'une crise.</td>
<td>Charles Bender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 7 Reassemble a gathering for a pandemic amid a crisis.</td>
<td>Brittany Ryan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rirez, Lavez, Riez.</td>
<td>IFFA Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tournez, Rinez, Lavez.</td>
<td>Shelby Stevenson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tournez, Rinez, Lavez.</td>
<td>Spin, Wash, Rinse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tournez, Rinez, Lavez.</td>
<td>Claytan Baranulik</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Music is continuing.
A buzzer sounds.

A clunky sounding washer shakes and churns and continues to work underneath next section.

Tournez.

Spin.

Industrial Music underscores

Entre le 5 et le 16 mai en 2015, en collaboration avec les conteurs Debajehmujig et/
Between May 5-16 in 2015, in collaboration with Debajehmujig/
l’Alliance des arts Autochtones, des créateurs de théâtre, des étudiants et des / Storytellers and Indigenous Performing Arts Alliance, theatre creators, / universitaires se sont réunis sur l’île Manitoulin pour s’immerger dans l’étude. /

students and scholars gathered on Manitoulin Island to immerse themselves / L’étude a culminé avec « Le Repast » un événement prolongé de deux jours et /

in The Study. The Study culminated in The Repast, an extended two-day/
de conversation qui, selon nous, avait le potentiel de changer fondamentalement /
presentation and conversation event which we believe had the potential to/
le visage du théâtre canadien. /

fundamentally change the face of Canadian theatre.

Le monde a changé ici. Cela n'avait rien à voir avec nous. Mais c'était personnel.

The WORLD CHANGED HERE. It had nothing to do with us. But it felt personal.

Cela n'avait rien à voir avec nous. Le monde a changé ici. Mais c'était personnel.

(Clanging of washing machine parts)
The world changed here. It had nothing to do with us. But it felt personal.

(Clanging of washing machine segue into instrumental loop of U2’s “Stuck in a Moment and You Can’t get out of.”)
| I will not forsake, the colors that you bring | accessible à toute personne qui ne peut pas voyagers ou ne rejointre pour une raison | to participate as “Respondents” | Rowan James |
| nights you filled with fireworks, they They left you with nothing | google docs. We made the room | Yousaf Khatouna |
| I am still enchanted by the light you brought to me I listen through your ears And through your eyes I can see | accessible to anyone not able to travel or to join us for any reason | Myles Taylor |
| And Stratford opened its doors | We changed the way we worked | Melissa Watson |
| | wide to the artists and their concerns and interests | Katherine Cullen |
| | | Melanie Gayle |
| Music starts to emerge. | Il est allié esprits et l’énergie étaient dévélées à la fin. | | |
| Nous n’étions pas encore au | Misty | | |
| pourquoi du théâtre, mais nous aurions dû être | Catherine Maier | | |
| | Sage Lovell | Eliza Chandler |
| | Joan MacNell | Niall MacNeill |
| | Shara Weaver | | |
| | why theatre? | Alan Shain |
| | why theatre? | Trudy Tigwell |
| | why theatre? | seeley quist |
| | why theatre? | Kat Germain |
| | why theatre? | Deborah Patterson |
| | why theatre? | Caroline Bowditch |
| | why theatre? | Laura Hook |
| | why theatre? | Matthew Pountney |
| | why theatre? | Jess Thom |
| | why theatre? | Mark Brose |
| | why theatre? | Tony Diament |
| | why theatre? | | |
| And you are such a fool | Liz MacDougall | | |
| To worry like you do, oh oh oh I know it’s tough And you can never get enough Of what you don’t really need now, my oh my mais, pourquoi du théâtre | Dan Watson | Kazumi Tsuruoka |
| | | Amy Barnett |
| | | Amelia Scott |

(The repeating text continues. Music starts to emerge.)
(The washing machine starts up again. And the music of industrial wash sound chime in again.)

Spin. Wash. Rinse/

Tournez. Rincez. Lavez. /

It culminated at the Shenkman Centre in Ottawa with The Republic of Inclusion, a /

Il a culminé avec le centre Shenkman à Ottawa avec la République de l'inclusion, /
multi-day presentation and conversation that was referred to as a psychedelic /
une conversation de plusieurs jours qui a été appelée un symposium /
symposium. Because it was/
psychédélique. Parce que c'était le cas.

“And if the night runs over and if the day won’t last, and if your way should falter along
the stony pass… It's just a moment, this time will pass.”

Mais pourquoi le théâtre? pourquoi le théâtre? pourquoi le théâtre? pourquoi
le théâtre? pourquoi le théâtre? pourquoi le théâtre? pourquoi le théâtre?

(The washing machine stops.)

pourquoi le théâtre? pourquoi le théâtre? pourquoi le théâtre? pourquoi le théâtre?

(The above text continues and morphs, repeating over music and under dialogue getting fainter
and more unrecognizable)
The water is building and taking over the names. The names are drowning in the water.
There is a work by Rebecca Belmore at Gros Morne National Park, Mi’kma’ki territory on the east coast of Canada. I discovered it from reading an article by artist and scholar, Dylan Robinson. In his piece called ‘Public Art Interpellation’, he looks at how many ways humans have it wrong when it comes to interpreting the world that lives with us. Le monde qui vit avec nous. He offers brave and massive art-based examples of how humans, largely humans who have set up shop on unceded and un-surrendered territories, bring their foreign lens to place. Dylan concludes his article with the introduction of Rebecca Belmore’s installation atop of a cliff called WAVE SOUND. Her piece invites the human to listen, a écouter, to hear what the water offers as it hits the shore. What do you hear?


Pourquoi le théâtre?

Why?

Pourquoi?

Why?

Pourquoi?

This is what ends the conversation at the end of theatre. And begins the listening for its beginning.

I think I thought there was enough water.

Je pense que je crois toujours qu’il y en a.
Chapter 6 – The Woods: Conversations at the End of Theatre

0:00:00 Fade in:  
A white cake in a plastic container sitting on top of pinecones.

0:00:01 A Voice:  
It’s a cake. That’s all. Just a white store-bought cake

0:00:15 Dissolves to Title:  
The Woods:

Birds

0:00:17 Fade of Cake:

The Woods:

0:00:29 Announcer Voice:  
The Massey Lectures. The series is named for the right honourable Vincent Massey CH.

0:00:35 Music comes in:  
Battle Hymn of the Republic

0:00:36 Dissolves to Title:

Conversations at the End of Theatre

0:0: 46 Dissolves to Title:  
A Video Essay by Sarah Garton Stanley

0:00:50 Fade to:  
Black

0:00:53 Fade up on:  
A shot of the woods.

0:00: 55 A Voice:  
That was the battle hymn of The Republic by Irving Bush (it was used to introduce Leslie Fielder’s 1978 Lecture series entitled “The Inadvertent Epic”).

And these are the woods.

0:01:20 Fade to:  
Black

0:01:26 Fade in:  
A white cake sitting on top of a mountain of pinecones.

0:01:31 Announcer Voice:  
The CBC now presents the first in the 1962 series: The Massey Lectures. The general series was inaugurated last year by the CBC as a permanent lectureship named for the Right Honourable Massey CH. The CBC now presents the first in the 1963 series: The Massey Lectures. The general series was inaugurated two years ago by the CBC…

0:01:49 Fade in:  
Over the cake, a high transparency face of Massey appears.

0:01:50 Announcer Voice:  
… as a permanent lectureship named for the Right Honourable Massey.

0:01:55 Music:  
Reprise of Battle Hymn of the Republic

0:01:56 Fade to:  
Black (Massey head last image to disappear)
Announcer Voice: Each year the CBC invites a distinguished scholar to broadcast a series of talks given the results of study in some special field. This year the Massey Lectures…

Music: Bach: Passacaglia in C Minor

Fade in: A white cake sitting on top of a mountain of pinecones.

A voice: We are listening to Johann Sebastian Bach’s Passacaglia in C Minor BWV 582 interpreted by Ton Koopman. It is a 17th century work, one of Bach’s best-known works and it was used to introduce Jane Jacobs’ 1979 lecture series entitled “Canadian Cities and Sovereignty Association”.

Dissolve to: Overhead shot of cake.

A voice: Just as the storming of the Bastille in 1789 was a French masses symbolic assault against absolutism the riots on early warning to white America that patience has run out.

Announcer voice: Ideas presents Dr. Martin Luther King int he first of five Massey Lectures for 1967. Good evening, tonight ideas on CBC FM brings you the beginning of the 1968 Massey Lectures. Ideas Network brings you the Massey Lectures for 1969. Ideas.

Music: A Gong

Fade in: Over the cake, a high transparency face of Massey appears.

Dissolve to: Angle on shot of cake colours shift through this section.

Announcer voice: Presents the 1971 Massey Lectures. Tonight, Ideas presents the first of the 1972 Massey Lectures. Welcome to Ideas, tonight, we begin a three-week series of programs designed around the 1974 Massey Lectures. The 1975 Massey Lectures. We present the 1977 Massey Lectures. And now, the 1978 Massey Lectures.

Music: Slowed down: Battle Hymn of the Republic

Dissolve to: A white cake sitting on top of a mound of pinecones.

A voice: The cake was intended as a methodology. An approach.

Slow fade in: Over the shot, a high transparency overhead of cake tin.

A voice: It was an unembodied theoretical notion for containing my thoughts as I embarked on a 5-part lecture series that attempted to use the constraints of the form – The Massey lectures - to
explore the carceral nature – the imprisoning feeling - of systemic thinking.

This 5th part, called The Woods: Conversations at the End of Theatre was intended as a leap into the unknown. Taking the unidirectional form of the lecture format and diving into dialogue.

The pinecones were intended as an offering.

The cake as a meditation.

These were my intentions.

0:06:19 Sound: Birds and Forest
0:06:40 Re-establishing: shot of cake on pinecones.
0:6:41 A voice: (whispers) Barbara Ward, Northrop Frye, Frank Underhill, C.B. Macpherson,
0:06:42 Slow dissolve to: overlays of images moving to close in on cake mountain.
0:08:19 Slow dissolve to: Camera pulling back to be looking through a window.
0:08:20 A voice: Neil Turok, Lawrence Hill, Adrienne Clarkson, Margaret Macmillan, Jennifer Welsh, Payam Akhavan, Tanya Talaga, Sally Armstrong, Ron Deibert, Esi Edugyan, Tomson Highway
0:08:43 Slow dissolve to: Camera closing in on cake overlay of Massey in the cake.
0:09:00 Dissolve to: Establishing shot of cake sitting atop the pinecones.
0:09:00 Announcer voice: Tonight, Ideas is proud to present the first of the 1981 Massey Lectures. The 1982 Massey Lectures. Tonight, we are proud to present the first of the 1983 Massey Lectures. Tonight, on Ideas we begin the 1984 Massey Lectures. Tonight, we begin our
The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation presents the 1989 Massey Lectures. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation first commissioned The Massey Lectures back in 1961 and they have become an annual event ever since. Tonight, and all this week, we present the 1991 Massey Lectures. This week you'll hear the 1992 Massey Lectures. We present the 1993 Massey Lectures. This week you'll hear the 1994 Massey Lectures. Presents the 1995 Massey Lectures. Welcome to the 1997 Massey Lectures. Tonight, episode one of the 1998 Massey Lectures. Welcome to the 1999 Massey Lectures.

Over time we become more Canadian through our choices. Our cultural choices. This was an idea instilled in the Massey Commission.

It was further imprinted upon us by the strengthening of the CRTC in the last century. In many ways it worked. More Canadian voices were heard. But how we defined Canada seemed/felt fixed. And then, thankfully Indigenous voices begin to make their way to the microphone. And with an increasing rate since the Truth and Reconciliation Commission happened.

In fact, if you are interested...as I am...you can chart cultural shifts, historic shifts in Canada through the curation of the chosen voices represented annually in The Massey Lectures. There is movement.

But the cake, the people who like cake, who eat the cake, how much have they changed? The CBC – the consistent purveyor of these voices, has been as constant as Massey himself. Personally, I have found tremendous comfort in all of this because I am in that cake.

But my comfort is not of interest here. My comfort takes over everything. But it is truly not of interest. So why is my voice saying these words, while looking at a white cake? Like the brilliant lecturing voices trapped within a form, so too am I. Stuck in an ideological framework that controls my culture.
making and partaking.

Shakespeare said: "there is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so".

This meditation… that spans the 70 plus years since the Massey commission and 60 plus years since the launch of the canonical Massey lectures got subsumed by the power of systemic thinking.

I placed a cake in the middle of the woods.

And focused cameras on that cake.

That white cake.

And I missed the forest.

Next time I won’t

0:12:54 Shot: Overhead of the cake.

0:12:58 Shot: Transparency of Massey in the cake.

0:09:24 Announcer voice: Tonight, on Ideas we present the first of the Massey Lectures for the year, 2000. Tonight the first of the 2001 Massey Lectures. Welcome to the inaugural evening of the 2002 Massey Lectures. Welcome to the 2003 Massey Lectures. And tonight, we’re in Ottawa for the opening of this year's national tour of the 2004 Massey Lectures. All this week, the 2005 Massey Lectures. All this week the 2007 CBC Massey Lectures. All this week the 2008 CBC Massey Lectures. All this week the 2009 CBC Massey Lectures. All this week we're bringing you the 2010 CBC Massey Lectures.

0:14:17 A voice: in these Massey Lectures I want to looks at blood from 5 angles I will touch on the physical properties of blood and its intersection with medicine both ancient and modern - I can take out ancient - beyond how blood functions in the body I am interested in how it weighs on the human mind - I can take out human - in how it weighs on the mind, in how it influences, how it shapes is sharper...

0:14:43 Announcer voice: That's Canadian writer, Lawrence Hill, before the first of the 2013 Massey lectures. And welcome to the first of the 2015 CBC Massey Lectures. And welcome to the first of the 2016 CBC Massey Lectures.

0:15:00 Shot: A human appears, camera left, looking at the cake.
And welcome to the first of the 2017 CBC Massey Lectures. That is the great drum of the Nishnawbe Aski nation proclaiming a loud welcome to the first of the 2018 CBC Massey Lectures. Welcome to Ideas and the first of the 2019 CBC Massey lectures. Welcome to Ideas and the first of the 2021 CBC Massey lectures. I'm Nahlah Ayed, welcome to the first of the 2022 CBC Massey Lectures.

The human has looked into the camera and when they are done the cake is gone. The woods...finally.

This is “Round Dance Instrumental” by Cris Derksen, a Turtle Island/Albertan/Canadian Born Composer and Cellist of Cree and Mennonite Heritage. Her music has not yet been part of the Massey lectures. But it is part of mine.

Black.

Conceived and Created by Sarah Garton Stanley
Camera and Editing Collaboration with Jonah Rubin-Flett

Fast shot of opening cake.

Music
"Battle Hymn of the Republic" by Irving Bush
"Passacaglia in C Minor BMV 582 Ton Koopman
"Variations" by Steve Reich
"Round Dance Instrumental" by Cris Derksen

Fast shot of cake starting to break down.

Thank You
Sherry Bie
Nick Carpenter
Sebastian De Line
Cris Derksen
Richard Feren
Yvette Nolan
Candice Phibbs
Lisa Cooke Ravensbergen
Dylan Robinson
Donna-Michelle St. Bernard
Tracey Erin Smith
Lib Spry
James Stanley
Julie Stewart
Camille Usher
Syrus Marcus Ware

Fast shot of cake more decayed.
0:16:41 Final Credits:  Shot on location on unceded Mi'kma'ki territory
   Called Gespugwi'tg
   The land is colonially known as South West Nova Scotia
   The forest is located there
   @2023

0:17:13 End:  Music and last credit are now gone.
Chapter 7 – Conclusion

Dear Reader,

Thank you for experiencing all five parts of my research creation: Massey and Me: Conversations at the End of Theatre.

I embarked on this project with a set of questions. One of two big questions was: could I, through this work, created in this way, get out from under the body of Vincent Massey? Without making you wait to get to the end of this writing, my answer is no. It is not unequivocal, there are ways in which I was able to free portions of my thinking, of myself, of this creation, but ultimately the imprimatur of the man and the part he played in rolling out a cultural plan for a 1951 nation was more powerful than me.

Had I chosen to examine the reach and presence of The Massey Commission through another portal, through gouache, or the Anishinaabeg tradition of bark biting, or through speculative fiction I might have had more success. Yet, my suspicions tell me that, still, no. I believe I would still have been pinned by the next layer of an interconnected system that was created to receive ideas through a lens created in a post-World War II nation state defining frenzy.

Strangely, over the course of this work, the urgency to get out from under the body of Massey shifted. Factors such as the crumbling of the support structures that were shored up during the COVID years began to falter and new ways of working began to crop up around me. Abolition, as a concept for theatrical transformation, began to infiltrate conversations, most notably in the work that director/playwright and community activator, Nikki Shaffeeullah facilitated through the National Arts Centre and Stages of Transformation. This two-year project
that followed on the heels of The Cycle(s) took a deep dive into the potential for abolitionist interventions as a mechanism for change. These examples, coupled with the generally agreed upon sense that we are amid a geopolitical reordering, planted a seed. I started to think more deeply about statements of goals and how, regardless of my expressed wish to look to the woods, to the trees for leadership, that despite this intentionality, I began to suspect that this was more an abdication of my responsibilities than a true interest. And by responsibilities I am referring to my humanity, especially as it pertains to the quickening pace of the climate catastrophe which is both a planetary and humanity crisis. I came to realize that not only can I not ask the trees for guidance, although I find them wise and providers of deep reflection, but that my responsibilities lie more in protecting their lives than sorting out mine. And this discovery is most reflected in the final piece: The Woods: Conversations at the End of Theatre.

It is said that we are all colonizers, that in nature you can see this, therefore in each of us this attribute exists. I am not prepared to argue this point. I believe there are ways to refute this claim but I - personally - am not a living example of this other point of view. I am a colonizer and I see this most clearly in my final work. I had thought and felt a million things as to what the last piece might say, what it might do. But when the time came to make it, I led with a white cake and the cameras followed. It turns out to have been a devastating yet poignant decision. It speaks loudly about my fascination with positionality but not as I would have hoped. It centralizes Massey and me in grotesque ways, and it quite literally defaces the woods. Does it hold interest? Yes. Does it help to shift the conversation towards a more conscious understanding of the ways in which templates for living might be re-inscribed? I really hope it does.

The other big question that floats throughout my entire research creation is "why theatre?" I place quotes around the question because in the chapter entitled: reCycling:
Conversations at the End of Theatre, it is repeated so often that it begins to make its own music. Connected to this was my related question about state patronage. I asked whether theatre, as defined by the Massey Commission, as a professional endeavor, in the manner of Eurocentric and white supremacist ideals, should be the recipient of state patronage. The question is too simplistic. On the face of it the answer is easy. No. it shouldn't. But what is the state? If culture reflects the state, then the state, in 2023, is still very comfortable with a white cake sitting in the middle of the forest.

How then are we concurrently watching systems break down all over the place? Governments are frayed and services are seemingly beyond repair. Housing, health, water, basic provisions for the balance of people on the northern half of Turtle Island are in steep decline. And this is what led me to think more deeply, and hopefully widely, about the structures that are holding back progress. My questions throughout this work all wend their way towards the state of Canada. I have suggested that Canada is an installation, and that like all installations it can change. I still believe that the installation known as Canada needs to. Yet, at the conclusion of my PhD, I remain uncertain as to the levers. Does the state first change, and culture follows? Or does culture through its material-making-urgency change the state? Or, as I have suggested with the concept of a third space, an in between place, maybe even a carceral space, have we reached a point where to think about culture nationally is to diminish the potential powers of both entities? Can I now say that I am freed as a result of this new understanding, or is it more accurate to say that - ongoingly entrapped - I can now note the complexity and try to parse what is achievable?

How do we make new models when nature imprints so much and nurture equally so? And are new models really the answer? Don't they become old as soon as they are made?
Entering the world of this project I thought I would leave this question for the trees. "Hey, trees, what do YOU think?" Early in my time with this project, I became disenchanted with this approach. I began to understand that I was asking the trees to do labour that was not theirs to do. Culture comes from nature. It is literally at the root of life. Biology shows this to be so. But my question to the trees only pertained to humans. And the lack of generosity and exchange in my question made me understand the following: my lens on the world, the glasses that I wear to see, were manufactured by a human-centered, Canadian anchored post-World War II story. The story, in this instance, refers to accepted general cultural conditions under which we, in Canada, are living. My placing of a cake instead of sitting with the trees reveal – again - that I am implicated, that I needed to contend with my role in the ongoing colonial project.

Why then would I have chosen a white cake? Truthfully, it was easy. I see this now. It offered a governing decision. Something to order the unorderable with. Yes, in theory, it makes a kind of sense to see it as an examination of the pervasiveness of the white culture the Massey Commission upholds. But…in a place where no white cake would EVER emerge, through MY imprimatur, I imposed it. I have come to really dislike this last chapter of my project. Not because it lacks interest but more because the interest it engenders comes from the incarceration of my own imagination. And because it reveals so much about the work I have yet to do. It is as though Michel Foucault in his brilliant *Discipline and Punish*, more deeply understood that abolition can only truly arrive when the spirit, the mind, and the body can be freed from the shackles of unconscious experience. To recognize this is powerful and important, it offers the possibility for synaptic change. Yet when thinking alongside Donna Haraway’s 2016 *Staying with the Trouble*, it feels truer that freedom from our entrapments might only happen in death or through the vicissitudes of species adaptation. In either case we won’t be who we were before either of these states emerge. Had I entered this
project through Leanne Simpson's land-based teachings I most definitely would have arrived at a different place. But the cake remains, and the reasons are clear. The imprint of the Massey Commission still guides me. And the cake, that eventually did start to decompose, that finally did get tried by a few brave and unfortunate animals, this cake still stands as sentry to the ongoing cultural infrastructure that we – on the northern half of Turtle Island are housed within. Not good for us, not found in nature and offering little to the natural world that it places itself within. Let's not let "them", all the other beings that we share this planet with, eat cake.

The installation needs to change. How this happens, who leads the change, and how long the transformation will take are questions beyond the scope of this project. But the installation does need to change. And if change is understood as a constant then it remains possible that we are already on the long road towards transformation. It is possible the concepts of emergence, resilience and restitution are agents at work within this constancy. This offers me some hope. I position myself as a puller of the ties, that bind this land to a non-productive way of making culture, and with this awareness I continue to cede my attachments to being a purveyor of solution. Indigenous ways of knowing must lead the thinking for the future of both the nation state of Canada and the culture that reflects it. I say this not because I believe this to be a solution but as a lens through which new thinking(s) and new actions can be taken.

In closing I want to reflect on the dedication I made for this writing. During a performance piece called DECLARATIONS created by the then nascent company, Article11, I sat in a The Salon at Canada's National Arts Centre. It was the spring of 2015. Peter A. Herrndorf was the Chairman and CEO of the NAC and Annie Smith St. Georges was becoming its resident Elder. Sitting in a world-building space intended to offer Indigenous and non-Indigenous folks a way to consider new - or previously hidden - ways of cultural creation, I was
struck by the impossible possibility of it all. The installation was installed in a hexagonal room. The architecture, brutalist to the core, resists (but also supports?) the circle within which the installation was built. And in this complex space of becoming, Annie opened the day.

When I think back on this moment I am struck. The re-energizing wellspring of the Massey Commission that helped build dreams for this space, that aimed to help build a proud and distinct nation, a nation state that - as a by-product - was to see Indigenous culture disappear, had failed. And not for the reasons I have danced with in this work. No. It failed because The Massey Commission was unable to see what was already there: a rich and variegated traditional landscape filled with resources, capacity, innovation, and imagination. The Commission failed to see what was already there. What was there has now far out run anything that was laid out by on high. The ground, the earth, WILL speak. I am struck by this now.

Did I get out from under Massey? Hell, no. But others have. Others will. I never did ask the trees a real question, yet I feel certain that the earth – and all that it contains - IS watching to see what we, what I will do.

Sincerely,

Sarah Garton Stanley


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Appendix A: Media for Chapter 2

Massey and Me: Conversations at the End of Theatre

Format: mp3

Length: 34:59

Performed Live: June 18, 2022, as part of the IDEAS Series at the Luminato Festival in Toronto

Key Collaborators: Nick Carpenter and Richard Feren

Media is in a DROPBOX shared to all participating individuals for my defence.

Here is the link: https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/k08hmhtse0813xbjdvwrh/Massey-and-Me-Chapter-2.mp3?rlkey=7vhf2x6ainry1g9ec2v8almyx&dl=0
Appendix B: Media for Chapter 3

HaroldTree: Conversations at the End of Theatre

Format: mp3

Length: 22:09

Launched: May 22, 2023, as part of Stages of Transformation at Tremors Festival in Vancouver

Key Collaborators: Richard Feren + The Stages of Transformation cohort.

Media is in a DROPBOX shared to all participating individuals for my defence.

Here is the link: https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/jan9on1bcbo7pst4vqk0c/HaroldTree-Chapter-3.wav?rlkey=n40aocqbph2o8p2ibk0ze598x&dl=0
Appendix C: Media for Chapter 4

Stumped: Conversations at the End of Theatre

Format: mp3

Length: 30:11

Launched: February 12, 2022, as part of the Rhubarb! Festival at Buddies in Bad Times Theatre in Toronto.

Key Collaborators: Nick Carpenter and Richard Feren

Media is in a DROPBOX shared to all participating individuals for my defence.

Here is the link: https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/xdap4j1jetrug5f499611/Stumped-Chapter-4.mp3?rlkey=1940od8mpi7ui3czgei21zskw&dl=0
Appendix D: Media for Chapter 5

reCycling: Conversations at the End of Theatre

Format: mp3

Length: 21:06

Launched: February 11, 2023, as part of the FOOT Festival at the University of Toronto in Toronto.

Key Collaborators: Nick Carpenter and Richard Feren

Media is in a DROPBOX shared to all participating individuals for my defence.

Here is the link: https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/7075560peb67twdjhxn6s/reCycled-Chapter-5.mp3?rlkey=h273u8nsrhr4z0zmd5tnkopv9&dl=0
Appendix D: Media for Chapter 6

The Woods: Conversations at the End of Theatre

Format: MPEG-4 Movie

Length: 17:19

Created: August 2023, at Birchdale, Nova Scotia.

Key Collaborators: Jonah Rubin-Flett and Birchdale

Media is in a DROPBOX shared to all participating individuals for my defence.

Here is the link: https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/164ij9ix58k243vrgzhwd/The-Woods-Chapter-6.mp4?rlkey=bvoip0hnatb274yksv5wb5ma7&dl=0