



Artwork by Rhonda Apetagon

PIMOOTAYOWIN: A FESTIVAL OF NEW WORK
Annual festival brings six new Indigenous works to life

June 14 - 19, 2026

Tom Hendry Warehouse

WINNIPEG, June 12, 2026 – Royal MTC is proud to present the sixth annual Pimootayowin: A Festival of New Work leading up to Indigenous Peoples Day. This free festival showcases the storytelling of the 2025/26 cohort of the Pimootayowin Creators Circle with a nightly script-reading series that provides an intimate look at the art of storytelling.

Pimootayowin is an Anishinaabemowin word meaning journey, a word chosen by the late Program Director and Governor General Award-winning playwright Ian Ross, who explained, “The creation of new art is often described as a journey, so too, our lives. In any journey, we often don’t know what lies ahead but we can emerge enriched by them.”

A special thank you to Herbie Barnes, who stepped in as Interim Program director to guide the cohort through the rest of the season.

Several works developed in the Creators Circle have found life on other stages, notably Rosanna Deerchild's *The Secret to Good Tea*, David McLeod's *ELEVATE: Manaqji'idiwin* and Rhona Apetagon's ghost story, *In the Shadow Beyond the Pines*.

2026 Festival Schedule

Sunday, June 14 - 7 pm

HOW TO DRESS FOR A FUNERAL

By Kim and Jordan Wheeler

How to Dress for a Funeral takes us on a journey through the relationships between a husband and wife and their Cree and Caucasian mothers. Each of them has to find their way through the stages of grief while examining their own complicated relationships with each other. Through dark humour, thoughtful conversation, arguments and love, *How to Dress for a Funeral* will make you laugh, cry and think about your own mortality, all while making you plan on what you want to take with you into the next life.

Available with ASL Interpretation

Monday, June 15 - 7 pm

ECHOES ACROSS THE WATER: AN ANISHINAABE SOLDIERS' STORY

By April Seenie-Penner

This emotional play follows two Anishinaabe brothers who are shaped by love, war and deep ties to their community, land and waters. Albert and Joseph leave their Southern Manitoba First Nation to serve in the Canadian Army during World War II. The play explores the lasting impacts of war seen through the eyes of Anishinaabe soldiers, all while nurturing the strength of family bonds and the enduring spirit of the Anishinaabe people.

Tuesday, June 16 - 7 pm

STATUS ERROR

By Arlea Ashcroft

A story about Indigenous identity set in the punk music scene. Three Indigenous women approaching middle age form a punk band and enter an Indigenous Music Contest in the hope of winning a big cash prize to alleviate their money troubles, even though none of them has ever been in a band before. One of the women discovers she's not Indigenous. At all. She's a Pretendian. How does this revelation affect the band? What fallout does it have on their lifelong relationship as best friends, and how does it affect her place in the world? Or was it a Status Error?

Wednesday, June 17 - 7 pm

MUSKRAT AND GREMLIN GO HOME

By Michael Hutchinson

The play takes place on a highway as two young men head to their rez. Over the course of the journey, Muskrat and Gremlin get three rides, first from a First Nation family, then a police officer and finally a van full of drunks. Each ride represents a kind of First Nation judgement against other First Nation people, while the cars themselves are symbols of colonialism and the city. While these individuals are strangers, their judgements are well-known and part of the First Nation environment.

Thursday, June 18 - 7 pm

SHELTER FROM THE STORM

By Curtis Kaltenbaugh

Kylie and Matthew are estranged siblings on either side of the homelessness crisis. Kylie is two-spirited and unhoused, reeling from a traumatic upbringing. Her friend, Zoe, is attacked for not paying back a debt. Together, they struggle with getting off the streets in Winnipeg's downtown core. Zoe and Kylie meet street outreach nurse, Matthew, who informs them that the city is moving to shut down all encampments—effective immediately. With their world seemingly closing in around them, Kylie and Zoe must navigate their safety, while Kylie and Matthew must reckon with their shared past before these two worlds irrevocably collide.

Friday, June 19 - 7 pm

THE SHOES STAY

By Liz Barron

The Shoes Stay follows Sarah, a woman fleeing an unnamed past who arrives in a small-town diner in Gibson, BC, carrying only a backpack and a collection of carefully preserved Fluevog shoes. Taken in by her estranged uncle and his partner, she begins to rebuild a quiet life through routine, community and unexpected connection with a local man, Cliff. But as warmth and belonging begin to take hold, an unseen presence tracking her through digital traces closes in. Moving between intimacy and unease, the play explores memory, autonomy and the fragile act of starting over when the past refuses to stay buried.

More information including playwright bios can be found at royalmtc.ca

This is a free event with general admission, pre-registration is encouraged, but not required. Doors open 30 minutes before the readings begin. All are welcome.

Royal MTC is grateful for the generous support of our Pimootayowin Creators Circle sponsor, TD Ready Commitment and Festival sponsor Eagle Vision.

About Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre

The Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre produces 10 plays on two stages, a regional tour, a wide range of youth programming and two festivals: Pimootayowin: A Festival of New Work and North America's second-largest Fringe, the Winnipeg Fringe Theatre Festival. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Kelly Thornton and Executive Director Evan Klassen, Royal MTC remains Manitoba's flagship theatre

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For more information, please contact:

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