

O'BRIEN

WRITTEN BY
THOMAS HODD

TNB.NB.CA



tnb theatre
NEW BRUNSWICK

THEATRE NEW BRUNSWICK SEASON 24/25

A black and white photograph of a street scene. In the foreground, a vintage car is partially visible, with its rear and side panels. The background shows a multi-story building with many windows. The overall scene is somewhat faded and has a historical feel.

March 5-8 Fredericton

March 9 Saint John

March 11 Riverview

March 12 Miramichi

March 13 Dalhousie

March 14 Florenceville-Bristol

March 15 Saint Andrews

March 16 Fredericton

About the Play

The O'Brien family are a third-generation Irish family, living and working in Saint John, New Brunswick. It is 1914, and Hap O'Brien, a conductor for the St. John Street Railway Company, is raising two sons with wife Kate. The family is forced to confront the real-world turmoil of social and labour unrest in Saint John, on the eve of the First World War.

***This show contains water haze, strobing light, and loud sounds.**

Message from Playwright, Thomas Hodd



History is usually told by a cast of important public figures. But the O'Briens are no such characters. They are third-generation Irish Saint Johners, and you will not find them in a book, an archive, or a diary. They are an idea – the idea that history can be told through the eyes of those most impacted by the decisions of the powerful few. They are an Everyman family, forced to confront the real-world turmoil of social and labour unrest in Saint John, New Brunswick, on the eve of the First World War. What they offer is a simple message: even the powerless have agency.

Playwright's Biography

Born and raised in Saint John, Thomas Hodd is Professor of English at Université de Moncton, where he teaches drama, creative writing and Canadian literature. His essays and reviews have appeared in The Globe and Mail, Toronto Star, Canadian Art, and the Literary Review of Canada, among others. He is the editor of Will R. Bird's war stories, A Soldier's Place (Nimbus 2018) as well as Mary Melville, the Psychic: A Critical Edition (Borealis 2019). His acting credits include stints with KV Players, St.F.X. University's Theatre Antigonish, and the Saint John Theatre Company; he also served briefly as a theatre critic for The Telegraph Journal. His first play, No Man Is an Island, was produced by the Atlantic Repertory Company in 2019 and again in 2021.

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Theatre New Brunswick is one of Canada's oldest running professional regional theatre companies. Through our mainstage productions we strive to highlight and celebrate the best New Brunswick and Maritime talent on and off the stage. Each year, our Young Company delivers the magic of live theatre to thousands of elementary, middle, and high school students province-wide. The shining star of TNB is our Theatre School which trains and mentors nearly 400 K-12 students annually in musical theatre, acting, and playwriting.

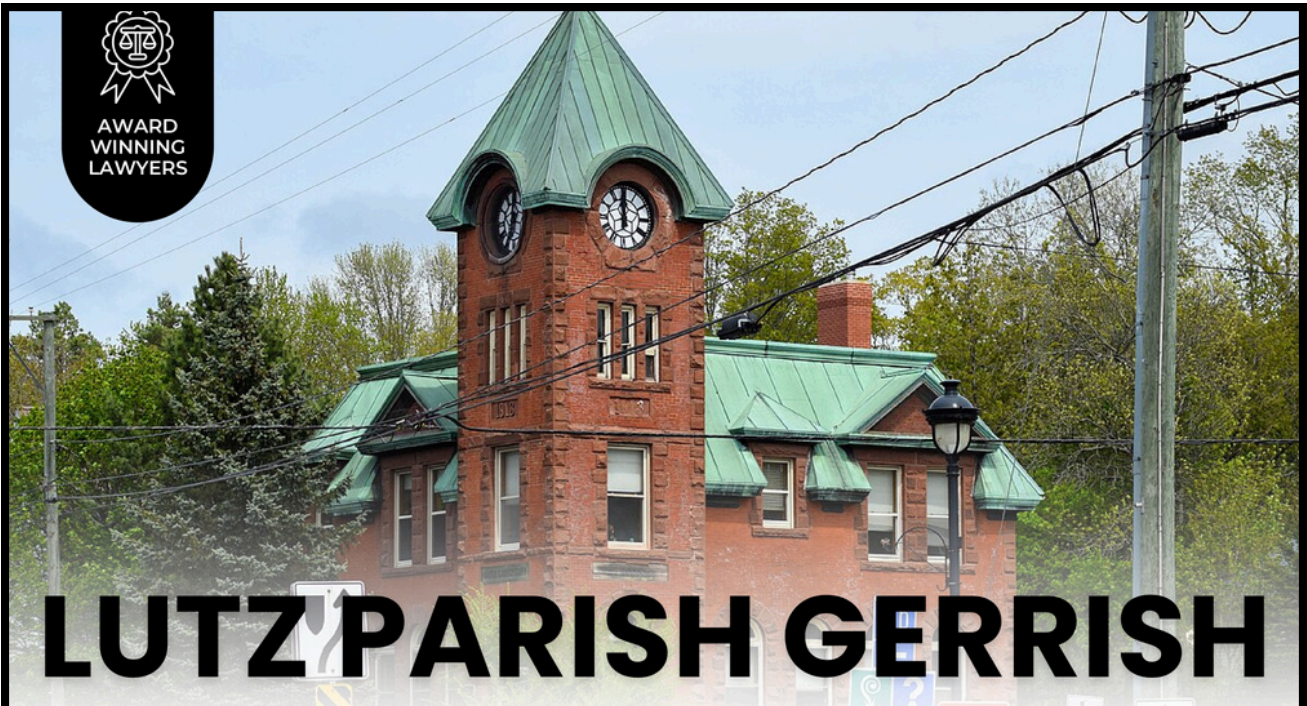
TNB is an integral part of New Brunswick's rich cultural landscape. We pride ourselves on a legacy of diverse programming and community partnerships.. Through the power of art we support Maritime voices and are committed to producing transformative content, fostering the imagination, and awakening New Brunswick audiences.

Theatre New Brunswick is an active member of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres (PACT).

We engage under the terms of the Canadian Theatre Agreement, professional artists who are members of the Candian Actor's Equity Association.



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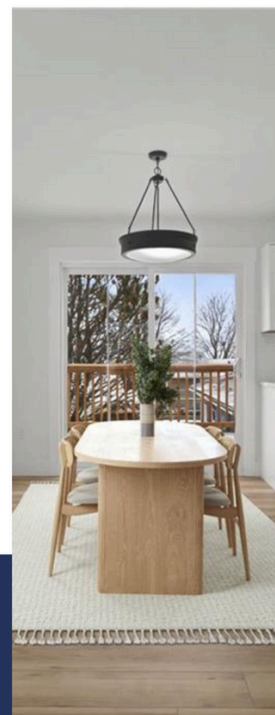


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Message from Artistic & Executive Director Natasha MacLellan



I am so thrilled to finally be premiering O'Brien by Thomas Hodd.

When we began working on O'Brien during our second Fall Festival of New Plays, I knew Tom had created a special play. Even on Zoom, where we worked because it was still COVID days, the O'Brien's story shone through our little screens. I love plays about work, I love plays about regular people and I love local stories. This play is the perfect trifecta for me. I'm deeply proud of our multicultural cast, who all come from and long for different Homelands. I think having so many different backgrounds telling this story deepens it. I'm grateful once again to work with a design team who make everything more beautiful, and work with such care and love. I'm also truly grateful to our stage management team, who kept this large cast on track, and the TNB staff who have kept TNB on the rails while I've spent the last two months in rehearsal.

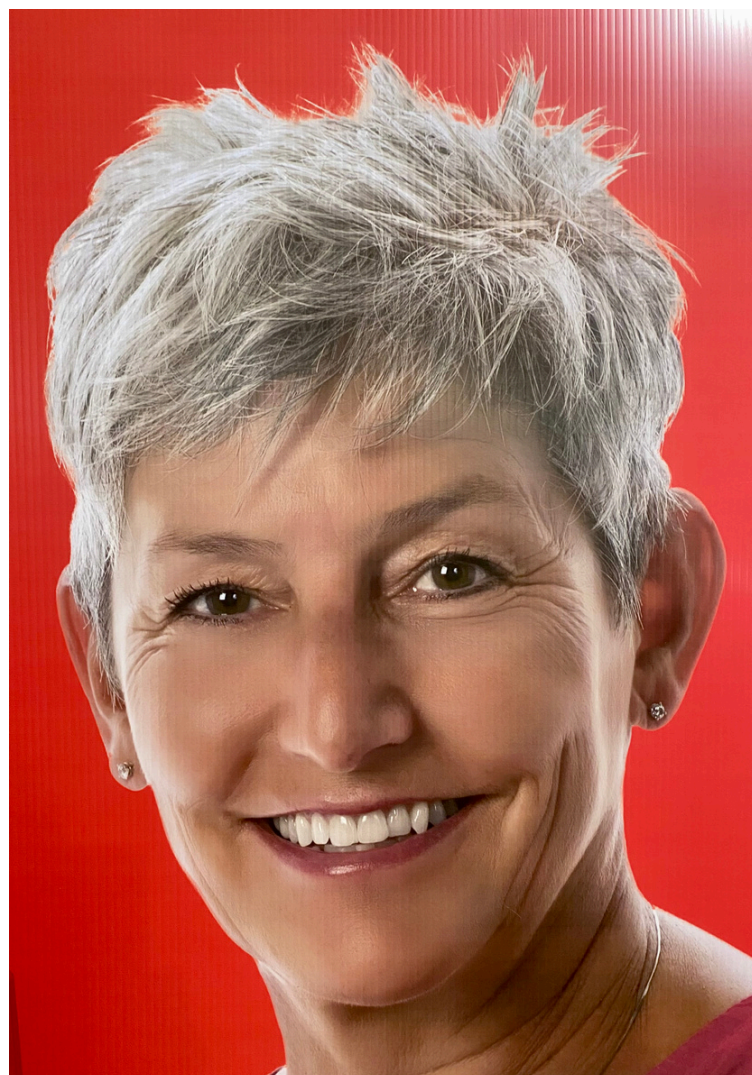
**"And all I've done for want of wit
To mem'ry now I can't recall
So fill to me the parting glass
Good night and joy be to you all."**

Message from Chair, Board of Governors Nicole Picot

**Welcome to Theatre New Brunswick's
production of "O'Brien."**

On behalf of the Board of Governors of TNB, I thank you for supporting live theatre in our province. As New Brunswickers and Canadians, we are witnessing a resurgence in pride in our nation, our heritage and our culture. Sharing our stories from the stage with you is an important part of building that pride of place.

As a supporter of the arts in our province you have made a choice to "buy local" at a crucial time. We appreciate your choice and hope you will enjoy the performance.





Natasha MacLellan - Director

Natasha MacLellan's love of new scripts was fostered through Playwrights Atlantic Resource Centre where she mentored with Jenny Munday. When she was young and foolish, she started Forerunner Playwrights Theatre, and produced new works in Halifax for a decade. She went on to spend six seasons as the Artistic Producer of Ship's Company Theatre. For the last six years, she has been the Artistic & Executive Director of TNB, where she has been reinvigorating their new play output. Before she became a full time producer, Natasha worked as an actor, director, teacher and dramaturge, had time to herself and knew a lot less about plumbing and building code and labour law.



Mélanie LeBlanc - Kate O'Brien

Mélanie is a versatile performer who has played many well-loved characters over the years, such as Marry Poppins, Pierrette Guérin, The Wicked Witch of the West, Lady Macbeth, Patsy Cline, Anne of Green Gables, and the notorious pirate Ann Bonny. For seven years, she crooned in Vietnam, Japan, the Maldives and India, and has toured her one-woman show *Hommage aux femmes de la guerre* (Women in Wartime) across Canada and in France. Mélanie is a recipient of the Robert Merritt award. During the summer, you can catch her performing at *Le Pays de la Sagouine* in Buctouche, NB. Mélanie is grateful to be part of the telling of this New Brunswick story and in the words of the playwright, Thomas Hodd, "the offering of a simple message: even the powerless have agency."



Theofani Pitsiavas - Charles Campbell

Theofani is making his TNB debut. Roles Elsewhere: *Company Store* (Theatre Baddeck), *Noises Off* (Neptune Theatre), *Pugwash* (Ships Company Theatre), *Speaking in Tongues* (DMV Theatre), *Hardboiled: A Sal Dali Crime Tale* (LoHiFi Productions), *Ibsen Bites* (Lunasea Theatre) *The Pillowman* (Fuller Terrace 5), *Burnwater* (LohiFi/HearHere Productions), *Dr. Diagnosis; Anxiety* (Theatre Yes/LoHiFi), *Chess with the Doomsday Machine* (Onelight Theatre), *Father's and Son's* (Neptune Theatre), *Masked* (Neptune Theatre), *Bouffe* (Irondale Ensemble Project).



Jake Martin - Hugh O'Brien

Jake Martin is an actor, writer and comedian from the Kingston Peninsula, NB. He is excited to be back onstage with TNB after previously performing in *Wood Buffalo* and *The Net - A Tragedy of the Sea*. He is an alum of St. Thomas and the Second City Conservatory, and he was previously the Artistic Director of the Next Folding Theatre company as well as a member of Canadian Comedy award-winning troupe, *The Sketchersons*. Previously, he performed two summers as *Hamlet* with *Bard in the Barracks* and countless other shows around New Brunswick. Most recently, he performed his solo sketch comedy show, *Snakes Are Cool* at the Notable Acts Theatre Festival and as Tom Thomson in *10 Tom Thomsons* with Non-Stop Theatrics.



Lucas Gutiérrez-Robert - Jimmy O'Brien

Lucas Gutiérrez-Robert (they/them) is an Argentinian-Canadian theatre artist raised in the Fredericton theatre community. When they can, they tend to focus their work around the perspectives of immigrants, people of colour and queer and trans stories. In recent years, they have been workshopping their musical “Mi Casa” and performing with Rogue Productions on a variety of revue shows and “Rock Of Ages”.



Patrick Jeffrey - Fergus O'Brien

Patrick is an actor and writer from Epekwitk / Prince Edward Island. He trained at the National Theatre School of Canada. Recent performances include Waiting For Godot, The Woman in Black, The Glass Menagerie, No Man Is An Island (Atlantic Repertory Company); The Wickhams: Christmas at Pemberley (TNB); Twelfth Night, Romeo and Juliet, Alice in Wonderland, Pinocchio (Shakespeare by the Sea); Lauchie, Liza & Rory (Theatre Baddeck); Shadows in the Cove (Mulgrave Road), and Still Buffering (Connection Dance Works). Pat is delighted to be back onstage with Theatre New Brunswick. Enjoy the show!



Pamela Halstead - Maggie Sheehan

Pamela Halstead is an actor, director, dramaturge, educator and arts administrator based in Kijipuktuk, colonially known as Halifax. She served for six years as Artistic Director of Playwrights Atlantic Resource Centre, assisting and supporting playwrights from across Atlantic Canada and beyond. Pamela has served as Artistic Director for Lunchbox Theatre (Calgary, AB) and Ship's Company Theatre (Parrsboro, NS). In the 10 years between these two companies, she dramaturged, directed and/or produced over 60 productions, primarily premieres of new works. Most recently, Pamela served as the Interim Artistic Producer of Theatre Newfoundland Labrador, leading the organization through a time of significant change. Pamela is the recipient of the inaugural Evans Award (2013 Calgary Critics' Awards) for her contribution to the vibrancy of Calgary's theatre community, the 2019 PGC Bra d'Or Award winner for her support and promotion of Canadian women playwrights, and the 2024 Robert Merritt Legacy Award for outstanding contribution to the professional theatre in Nova Scotia. Pamela hails from St Stephen, NB and is a former Associate Artistic Director of TNB. She is thrilled to be back on stage and again be touring NB in the dead of winter. For Rob.



Pasha Ebrahimi - Hap O'Brien

Pasha Ebrahimi is a film and theatre professional with roots in the Maritime provinces. Most recently he played the part of Hamlet in Neptune's diverse production of "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead" directed by Jeremy Webb.

He is best known for diverse roles in The Haunting of Bly Manor, The Good Doctor, Salvation, Supergirl, Supernatural, iZombie, and Midnight Mass, Hobo with a Shotgun, Charlie Zone, The Healer, and 8:37 Rebirth, for which he was awarded Best Actor at the Montreal Independent Film Festival.

Pasha has earned numerous film festival nominations, including three ACTRA Award nominations: once for Best Actor in the film Lord of Chaos and twice for Best Supporting Actor in the television series Sex and Violence.

Selected theatre credits include: THE VEIL(Neptune/One Light), THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA (Theatre New Brunswick), THE DRAWER BOY (The Atlantic Theatre Festival), THE TRIUMPH OF JOE T. (Irondale), THE UNDERPANTS (Lions Den), EDWARD THE SECOND (Villains), WASHED AWAY (Dell'Arte International)

A very special thank you to the team at Theatre New Brunswick, our talented cast and Natasha MacLellan for the warm welcome!



Stephanie MacDonald - Stage Manager

Stephanie is a multiple award winning actor who makes her home in Halifax Nova Scotia, and is branching out to Stage Management. Previous Stage Management credits include the world premiere of The Outside Inn (Festival Antigonish), Resident Aliens, Wood Buffalo (Theatre New Brunswick), Rain on the Parade (Villains Theatre), Watch Over Me (Mulgrave Road Theatre), Dance Nation (Keep Good Theatre), and Bryden MacDonald's Whale Riding Weather at The Halifax Fringe Festival.



Alex Rioux - Apprentice Stage Manager

Alex Rioux (they/them) is a non-binary theatre artist, improviser, and educator based in Fredericton, New Brunswick. Alex's work primarily uses devised creation and physical theatre to tell traditional stories in updated ways. Their debut piece Fruit Machine chronicles Canada's gay military purge and uses physical theatre as the form to examine this oppressive chapter in Canadian history. They are currently developing their new award-winning improv-theatre hybrid show TILT in collaboration with Solo Chicken Productions. Alex also continues to spearhead The Braver Stages Festival, New Brunswick's first and only queer-centered theatre festival. This festival provides emerging artists and students the chance to have their scripts developed and mentored by established queer artists. Select directing and acting credits include: Twelfth Night (Director - Bard in the Barracks), Carl in The Baltimore Waltz (Smugglers Theatre), Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberly (Assistant Director - Theatre New Brunswick), I Hope You Can See the Birds (Director - Notable Acts Theatre Festival)



Stewart Legere - Sound Designer

Stewart Legere is a multidisciplinary artist situated between K'jipuktuk/Halifax and Tkaronto/Toronto. He is the Co-Artistic Director of Live Art company The Accidental Mechanics Group and Associate Artistic Director of ZUPPA. His performances have been presented at theatres and festivals across Canada and the internationally. He is a vocalist with orchestral pop outfit The Heavy Blinkers, and a solo singer/songwriter ("Quiet the Station" - 2017, "To the Bone" - 2020). He composes music and sound for theatre and film. An avid and passionate collaborator, his work is fascinated with vulnerability, intimacy, the destruction of persona and the celebration of performance. He is currently an artist-in-residence at The Theatre Centre in Toronto.



Andrea Ritchie - Costume Designer

Andrea was born and lives in K'jipuktuk (Halifax). Her foundation in theatre is costume design and producing. In theatre, dance and performance art she has worked with a wide range companies, including The Irondale Ensemble Project, Ship's Company Theatre, One Light Theatre, Zuppa Theatre, Hear Here Productions/Mocean Dance, San Family Productions, Forerunner Playwrights Co-op, Theatre New Brunswick, Neptune Theatre and Keep Good Company Theatre.

All of Andrea's work involves making and holding space for creation, for connection, for nourishment, building community through art education and art making.



Andrea Evans - Set Designer

Andrea Evans proudly holds a BFA with Honours from York University where she studied Theatre Production and Design. With nearly 20 years' experience, she has worked as a set designer, scenic painter, and props builder for numerous theatres throughout Ontario and the Atlantic provinces. Andrea has worked for theatre companies such as the National Ballet of Canada, Saint John Theatre Company, the Chester Playhouse, Tarragon Theatre, and many others. For two seasons, Andrea worked as an assistant designer at the Stratford Festival. She has also been a guest artist / instructor at numerous high schools teaching stagecraft and design. Andrea has been nominated two times for Toronto's Dora Awards and the proud recipient of a Dora Award for Outstanding Set Design.



Emily Soussana - Lighting / Projection Designer

Emily Soussana is an award winning artist, integrator and designer based out of Tiohtià:ke (Montreal). They are one of the co-founders of potatoCakes_digital, a design and digital dramaturgy company whose work has unfolded across Canada over the past six years and which has been the lead on several national projects centered around digital dramaturgy, story focused design and knowledge sharing. As an artist, their passion lies in the integration of arts and technology - using any and all tools at their disposal to sculpt worlds that are both dramaturgically sound and visually heightened.

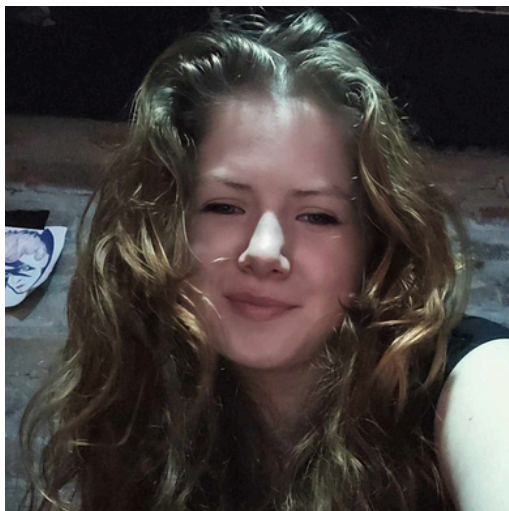
www.potatocakesdigital.ca



Jean-Michel Cliche - Fight Director

Jean-Michel Cliche (he/him) is a theatre artist of Lebanese and French-settler descent living and working on the banks of Wolastoq (Fredericton, NB). He has trained with Fight Directors Canada in Toronto, ON and Saskatchewan, SK and is now New Brunswick's most active Fight Director and Violence Designer. Select fight/violence credits include: Misery (Saint John Theatre Co.), Macbeth (Loyalist City Shakespeare), The Hobbit (Festival Antigonish) and The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe (Theatre New Brunswick). Jean-Michel is also the Associate Artistic Director of Solo Chicken Productions, a company dedicated to creating new works of physical theatre, meaningful community arts projects and accessible performance training. To learn more, go to

www.solochickenproductions.com



Bea Crowther - Show & Tour Technician

Originally from the Eastern Townships of Quebec, Bea is a non-binary, interdisciplinary artist whose love for both Lighting Design and Technical Direction informs their passion for live performance. Bea is driven by a love of people, telling stories, and a desire to make magic.

Theatre: The Company Store, The Fly Fisher's Companion (Theatre Baddeck); Taking Care of Maman (Black Theatre Workshop); J'ai jamais (Youtheatre); Phosphène (ENT-NTS); Debark Festival, Vedgeville, Sunday Night Improv (Theatre St. Catherine's); Macbeth, Antigonick, Trojan Girls, The Outhouse of Atreus, Metamorphoses (NTS, student); War of the Worlds (University of Guelph)

Education: Production Design and Technical Arts at NTS

Theatre New Brunswick is a cultural jewel, bringing stories to the stage that entertain and inspire.

Live theatre connects us to a story in a very intimate way that cannot be replicated on a screen.

Thanks to TNB and their wonderful cast and crew for bringing this engaging story to so many New Brunswickers this year.

David Coon
MLA Fredericton-Lincoln



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THANK YOU

This production wouldn't have been possible without the help of so many people. Big thanks to Madeline Costello, Onkit Saha, Sadie Sullivan, Abd Alaziz Jaber, Brenda McLeese, Cat Candow, the University of New Brunswick, the Fredericton Playhouse, St. Thomas University, and our many other friends & supporters all across the maritimes.

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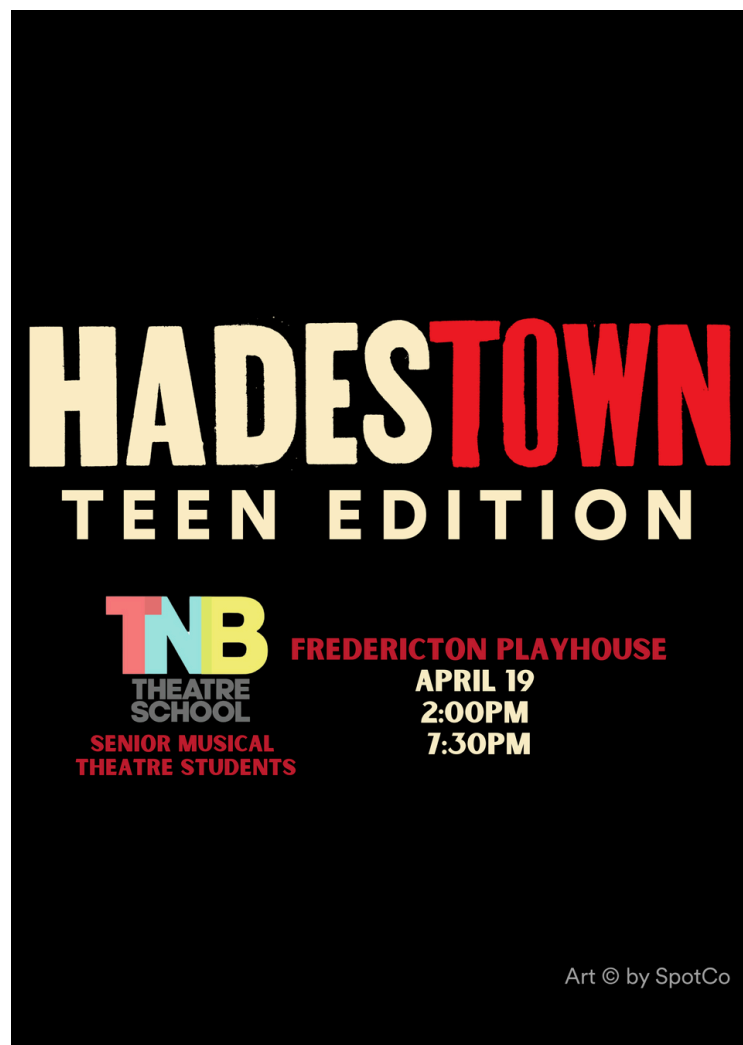
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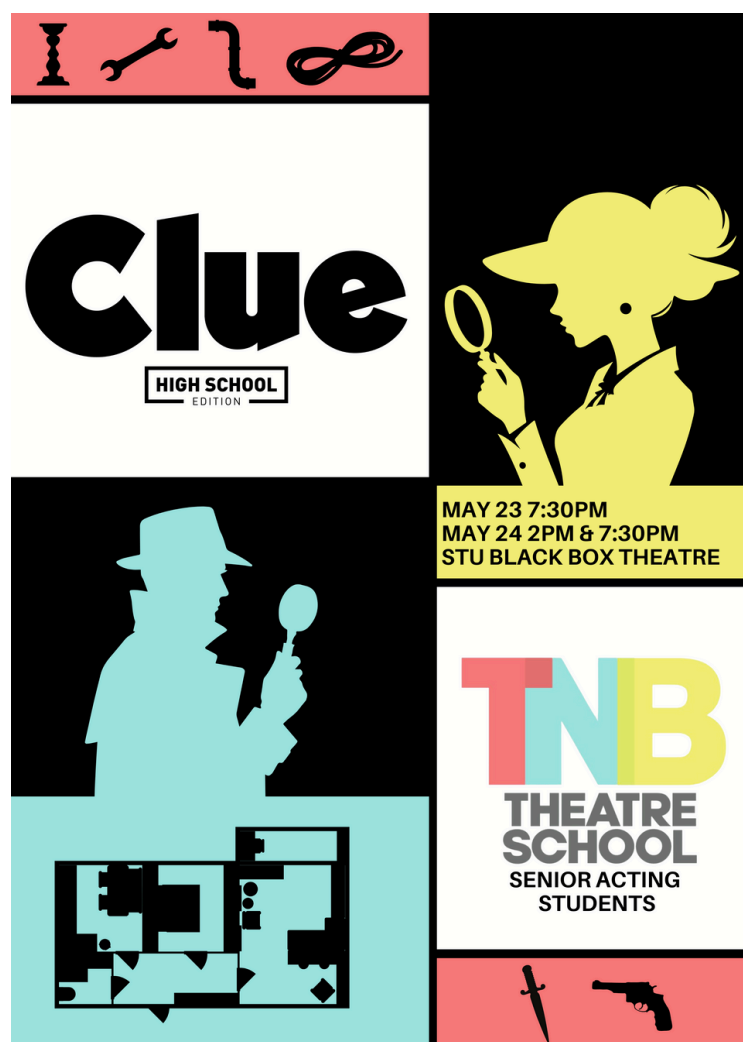
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Following two intertwining love stories – that of young dreamers Orpheus and Eurydice, and that of immortal King Hades and lady Persephone – Hadestown invites audiences on a hell-raising journey to the underworld and back. Inspired by traditions of classic American folk music and vintage New Orleans jazz, Mitchell's beguiling sung-through musical pits industry against nature, doubt against faith, and fear against love. This intriguing and beautiful folk opera delivers a deeply resonant and defiantly hopeful theatrical experience.

***Recommended for ages 10+**

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