



## **CULTURE STORM**

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### **CULTURE STORM STATEMENT ABOUT THE PRODUCTION OF *STITCH*:**

I first saw Cliff Cardinal's work at SummerWorks where he premiered *Stitch* in 2011. I remember when I walked out of the play I was awe struck by the power, sensitivity and honesty of what Cliff had created. I knew at that moment that Cliff was easily going to be one of the strongest emerging talents to rise out of Canada and he has since proved that with his more recent productions *Huff* and *Maria Gets a New Life* both of which premiered at SummerWorks.

I have always wanted to work with Cliff and was honoured when he entrusted me to produce *Stitch* and the production of the upcoming Canadian tour. Since 2013, Culture Storm has been working in collaboration with Cliff to develop this production. Through numerous grants our goal of raising \$39,000 in funding finally became a reality through the belief and support of Toronto Arts Council, Ontario Arts Council Aboriginal Arts, the Canada Council for the Arts and the Theatre Engaging Communities Grant. When we began to shop the production around, we were deeply grateful when Native Earth Performing Arts offered their contribution in venue, box office, tech and marketing to help bring this production to the stage of Aki Studio Theatre, becoming the Presenter of the Culture Storm production of *Stitch* opening June 4<sup>th</sup>.

Culture Storm is privileged to work with Cliff Cardinal and support his artistic freedom in storytelling. It has been an honour to work with *Stitch*'s cast and crew tour de force featuring Jessie-Award Winner for Outstanding Performance **Georgina Beaty**, whose fierce audition in the winter of 2014 captivated all of us. This production is grateful to have such an extraordinary performer on board. **Director Jovanni Sy** who has been with the story from the early drafts as Dramaturge and eventually as Director. **Andy Moro, Production Designer**, whose vast experience creating profoundly affecting minimalist stage designs for solo shows with artists such as Daniel McIvor and Waawaate Fobister made him the ideal designer. With his vision of black box design he traps Kylie Grandview in a setting fraught with danger. **Stage Manager, Jen Stobart** who has been stage managing large and small shows for over twenty-five years. A potent facilitator of art, Jen builds a rehearsal hall alive with creative synergy. We are also very excited to welcome **Luca Caruso-Moro** who will be making his debut as Composer for *Stitch*.

During the production process Culture Storm created and funded two paid mentorship positions to help support and foster the careers of emerging female talents. With the addition of the generous contribution from Centre for Indigenous Theatre and Native Earth Performing Arts we were able to increase our mentorship funding. We are thrilled to be working with **Laura-Lee Lewis** who is mentored in the role as Assistant Stage Manager and **Kitsuné Soleil** who is mentored in the role as Production Designer.

From the beginning of our production process, we also put into place two funded observation roles with the intention to provide a space for actresses to gain more familiarity with Cliff's work and process. We are deeply grateful for the participation of two stunning and outstandingly talented actresses **Darla Contois** and **Sera-Lys McArthur** who have participated in this process.

The whole cast and crew is amazing and each new day in rehearsal is more inspiring and exciting. We invite you to come and see the work and celebrate everyone's talent!

**Special thanks to our funders:** Toronto Arts Council, Ontario Arts Council Aboriginal Arts, the Canada Council for the Arts and the Theatre Engaging in Communities Grant for their support in this production. Thanks to the Centre for Indigenous Theatre for their contribution to the mentorship roles and for providing an amazing rehearsal space and thanks to Native Earth Performing Arts for presenting this Culture Storm production of *Stitch* and for their contribution to the mentorship roles.

-Heather Haynes, Culture Storm  
Thursday, May 21, 2015