

The Incredible 25th Year of Mitzi Bearclaw

Synopsis

As MITZI BEARCLAW turns 25 years-old, she is faced with a tragic decision – stay in the big city to pursue her dream of designing hats or leave her boyfriend and return home to her isolated reserve to help care for her sick mother. Loyal to her family, Mitzi reluctantly returns to Owl Island to find that not much has changed. Her confidence and modern style clash with the sleepy, slow-paced island; the bullies are the same; the handsome HONEYBOY is still running the water taxi; and ANNABELLE, Mitzi's mother is still as bitter and unloving as ever. She's also reunited with her spiritual friends, FAITH, HOPE, and CHARITY who guide her as she navigates a year of anger, loss and love. Mitzi is soon surprised to find comfort in being home and starts to question her destiny.

The Incredible 25th Year of Mitzi Bearclaw stars Morningstar Angeline (*Drunktown's Finest, Longmire*) as MITZI BEARCLAW; Andrew Martin (*Fire Song*) as CHARLIE B.; Gail Maurice (*Johnny Greyeyes, Assini*) as ANNABELLE BEARCLAW; Billy Merasty (*Indian Horse, Shinaab*) as WILLIAM BEARCLAW; Gary Farmer (*Deadman, Ghost Dog: The Way of the Samuri*) as OLIVER YELLOWDOG; Vance Banzo (*Indian Horse*) as RINGO-LEAVES-NO-SHADOW; Ajuawak Kapashesit (*Indian Horse, Shinaab*) as HONEYBOY YELLOWDOG; and Roseanne Supernault (*Rhymes For Young Ghouls, Blackstone*) as SIMONE MUSKRAT. *The Incredible 25th Year of Mitzi Bearclaw* is produced by Turtle Night Productions, Freddie Films and Circle Blue Entertainment with the participation of Telefilm Canada, the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) and Ontario Creates. levelFilm is the Canadian distributor.

About Shelley Niro:

Shelley, a renown multi-disciplinary artist, is a member of the Six Nations Reserve, Mohawk, Turtle Clan. Recently Shelley screened her first feature film, *Kissed By Lightning*, at the National Portrait Gallery in London England in conjunction with the George Catlin Exhibition. Shelley's film productions include: *Niagara* (2011), *Robert's Paintings* (2011), *Kissed By Lightning* (2009), *Hunger* (2008), *The Flying Head* (2008), *Tree* (2007), *Rechargin'* (2007), *Suite: Indian* (2005), *The Shirt* (2003), *Mid-Winter Dreams* (2002), *Pelaroso* (2001), *Overweight With Crooked Teeth* (1997), *Honey Moccasin* (1998), and *It Starts With A Whisper* (1993). Shelley has many accolades and awards including: Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts (2017), Ontario Arts Council Aboriginal Arts Award, Laureate (2012), Milagro Award, *Kissed By Lightning*, Santa Fe Film Festival (2009), Best Director, Best Actress, *Honey Moccasin*, Red Earth Film Festival (1998), Best Film, *Honey Moccasin*, Dreamspeaker's Film Festival (1998).

About Circle Blue Entertainment:

Established by award-winning producer Amos Adetuyi in 2011, Circle Blue Entertainment is a television and film production company based in Toronto and Los Angeles that produces content across a range of genres, from drama to non-scripted, for television, theatrical and digital markets in North America, and internationally. Recent productions include: *Angelique's Isle* (Level Film/CBC), an Indigenous thriller set in the 1800's; *Beat the World* (Sony Pictures/ Wild Bunch/eOne), the first dance movie to blend hip-hop and parkour; *Across the Line*, starring Stephan James, directed by the renowned music video director, "Director X"; the critically acclaimed comedy film, *Jean of the Joneses*, which premiered at SXSW and TIFF; and the upcoming dramatic series, *Diggstown* (CBC).

About Freddie Films Inc.:

Freddie Films Inc. creates, develops, writes and produces one-hour drama and theatrical feature films. It was founded in 2010 by lawyer Floyd Kane who has won numerous awards and critical acclaim for his debut feature, *Across the Line* about the destructive nature of racism. He has also served as Production Executive on numerous award-winning projects for both theatrical release and broadcast television and is currently the creator/showrunner of the upcoming dramatic series, *Diggstown*, for CBC.

About Turtle Night Productions:

Turtle Night Productions has been producing films since 1993. *Starts With A Whisper* (1993), *Honey Moccasin* (1998), *Suite: Indian* (2005), *The Shirt* (2003), *Tree* (2007), *Kissed By Lightning* (2010), *Robert's Paintings* (2011), *Niagara* (2015) are a few films by Turtle Night Productions. The Indigenous content of this work strives to make positive, easy to enjoy dramas. The current production *The Incredible 25th Year of Mitzi Bearclaw* provides all the elements in its mandate.

Biographies

Cast Bios

MorningStar Angeline – “MITZI BEARCLAW”

MorningStar Angeline was born in Santa Fe, NM and is Navajo, Chippewa Cree, Blackfeet, and Latina. She participated in local theatre programs growing up and went on to study acting while attending college in California.

MorningStar has an eclectic body of work ranging from camera operative to actress. Her work has been recognized by the American Indian Film Festival, Institute of American Indian Arts and the New Mexico Film and Television Hall of Fame. She is a Sundance 2018 Indigenous Lab Fellow for her short film 'Yá'át'ééh Abíní' and currently resides in Albuquerque, NM.

Vance Banzo – “RINGO LEAVES-NO-SHADOW”

Vance Banzo is a Saulteaux/Cree comedian, actor, and writer born and raised in Edmonton, Alberta. Currently residing in Toronto, Ontario, Vance is a proud member of Canadian sketch comedy troupe, Tallboyz ii Men, who were recently recognized as “Comedians to Watch in 2019.”

Andrew Martin – “CHARLIE B.”/”CHARITY”

Andrew is of the Mohawk Nation, and grew up on the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory. He has appeared in the films *Fire Song* and *The Guide*.

Ajuawak Kapashesit – “HONEYBOY YELLOWDOG”

White Earth Ojibwe Descendant and Cree, Ajuawak Kapashesit is a relative newcomer to the world of acting, performing in film, television and theatre since 2015.

In early 2017, Ajuawak starred in the award-winning short, *Shinaab*, directed by Lyle Mitchell Corbine, which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival. He stars in the highly-acclaimed feature film *Indian Horse* (based on the book by the late Richard Wagamese) which premiered at TIFF, and winning the

Audience Award at Vancouver Film Festival in the fall of 2017. Recent independent features include: *Indian Road Trip*, *Ahockalypse* and *Once Upon a River*.

Ajuawak is a trained linguist who focuses on language revitalization and documentation. He is conversational in Ojibwe and has an academic familiarity with Hidatsa, Arikara, Dakota, Chumash and Menominee. He currently resides in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Billy Merasty – “WILLIAM BEARCLAW”/”HOPE”

Billy Merasty (Metis/Cree from Northern Manitoba), is celebrating 35 years in the Performing Arts, and has recently become a member of D.O.T: Dance - with Kaha:wi Dance Theatre's production of *Transmigration*; Opera - with the Canadian Opera Company's production of *Louis Riel*; and, Theatre - with a long list of credits including, Kevin Loring's *Where the Blood Mixes*, Tomson Highway's *Dry Lips Oughtta Move to Kapuskasing*, Daniel David Moses' *Indian Medicine Show*, Omari Newton's *Sal Capone*, and many others. Some of his recent television credits include: *Murdoch Mysteries* (CBC), *Cardinal* (Global TV), *Elijah* (CTV), The Canadian Heritage Minute - *Queenstown Heights*, and currently *Frontier* (Discovery & Netflix) - on which he is also the Cree Consultant/Translator.

Gail Maurice – “ANNABELLE BEARCLAW”/”FAITH”

Gail Maurice is a fluent Cree/Michif speaking actor, and an award-winning independent filmmaker and Arts Laureate. She's passionate both in front of and behind the camera. She was awarded the Hnatyshyn Foundation Reveal Indigenous Award for Excellence in the Arts and the Chalmers Arts Fellowship. Gail portrayed “Dorothy Pine” in the hit CTV series *Cardinal*, “Sarah” in the award-winning detective web series, *Cold* and “Inez” in *Falls Around Her*. Soon, you'll see her as “Rita Colchak” in the new *Twilight Zone*. She'll be directing her first bilingual feature film, *Rosie*, this summer.

Creative Bios

Shelley Niro – Director/Writer/Producer

Shelley Niro is a multi-disciplinary artist, and a member of the Six Nations Reserve, Turtle Clan, Bay of Quinte Mohawk. She has worked in a variety of media, including beadwork, painting, photography and film. Her work challenges stereotypical images of Aboriginal peoples. Though her work delves into serious issues and is rich with poignant imagery, Niro inserts humour into her practice. Niro has received considerable attention for her work in film, including her short film *The Shirt*, which was presented at the 2003 Venice Biennial as well as at the 2004 Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah and *Kissed By Lightning*, about a Mohawk painter in a state of grief which premiered at the imagineNATIVE Film and won the Santa Fe Film Festival's “Milagro Award for Best Indigenous Film”.

Amos Adetuyi - Producer

Amos' TV producer credits include two internationally awarded TV series: *Jozi H*, a medical drama (CBC/SABC) and the dramatic serial *Ekhaya: A Family Chronicle* (CBC/SABC). He also co-produced the dramatic Halifax-based serial *North/South* (CBC), created/produced 100+ episodes of the internationally sold reality series *Skin Deep* (SLICE/Oxygen), wrote and produced the feature performance documentary *It Ain't All Jazz* (Bravo!) and executive produced the feature documentary, *Ganesh, Boy Wonder*. He has

just wrapped production on the CBC series *Diggstown*, starring Vinessa Antoine, which he executive produced and is set to air in early 2019.

Amos has also recently produced several feature films, including: *Angelique's Isle* (Level Film/CBC), an Indigenous thriller set in the 1800's; *Beat The World* (Sony Pictures/ Wild Bunch/eOne), the first dance movie to blend hip-hop and parkour; *Across The Line*, starring Stephan James, directed by the renowned music video director, "Director X"; the critically acclaimed comedy film, *Jean of the Joneses*, starring Taylour Paige and Sherri Sheppard. Amos' most recent production is the fantasy comedy, *The Incredible 25TH Year of Mitzi Bearclaw*, written and directed by well-known Indigenous artist/filmmaker, Shelley Niro. He was also executive producer of *High Chicago* (eOne), starring Colin Salmon.

Floyd Kane – Producer

Floyd Kane is a graduate of Dalhousie Law School. After spending years working as a lawyer and senior executive within the entertainment industry, including a lengthy stint within Salter Street Films where he served as a production executive on numerous projects, including the Academy Award-winning *Bowling for Columbine*, *Shattered City: The Halifax Explosion*, *Poko* (Cycles I and II) and *Lexx* (Cycle IV), Floyd began a career as a writer and producer.

In 2005, Floyd created, wrote and produced the drama series, *North/South* for the CBC. He was also one of the co-producers on the feature film *Shake Hands with the Devil* (DHX MEDIA). He went on to write and executive produce *Soul* and to write on shows such as *Continuum* (Syfy), *Backstage* (Disney), *Slasher* (Netflix) and the acclaimed feature film, *Across the Line*, which he also produced. Floyd's recent producing credits include, *Jean of the Joneses*, which debuted at SXSW and screened at the Toronto International Film Festival, *Brown Girl Begins* based on the renowned novel, "Brown Girl in the Ring," *Angelique's Isle*, an indigenous thriller, and *The Incredible 25th Year of Mitzi Bearclaw*, a comedy-drama, written and directed by renowned indigenous artist Shelley Niro.

Michael Caterina - Director of Photography

With a sophisticated eye for dramatic cinema and realistic lighting, Toronto-based cinematographer Michael Caterina employs a skilled approach to cinema that compliments a director's vision no matter how subtle or stylized. Michael's work is comprised of music videos, commercials, television, and feature films.

Michael began working in television more than 10 years ago as a videographer and DOP for CHUM, CTV, and Bell Media Studios. Film was always his true passion, so driven by his desire to tell story through camera work and lighting he dove head first into the industry. Since then, Michael has completed multiple feature films, most recently *Extracurricular* (Official TAD selection) and *Trouble in the Garden* (WFF 2018 and Cinefest 2018).

Justin Reu - Production Designer

Beginning his career in the music industry, Justin Reu made his way into film through art department work on music videos. Discovering a greater overall passion for film than music, he moved to British Columbia where he attended and graduated from Vancouver Film School before returning to his home in Hamilton, Ontario. His first job out of school was as Production Designer of Black Fawn Films full feature horror *Bed of the Dead* (2016). Since then he has been an Art Department key in multiple full

feature films, music videos and television shows. His work has been featured at Stiges Film Festival and Cannes Film Festival, and can be seen on channels like CBC and Discovery ID.

Adriana Fulop - Costume Designer

Adriana Fulop is a Slovakian-born costume and fashion designer. In 1999 she moved from her hometown Bratislava to Toronto to pursue a career in fashion and costuming.

In 2001 she started her own fashion label Plastik Wrap. Adriana's main passion is creating. She embraces the challenge of designing any style required for the job at hand. She believes that a good design is not just a sketch or a picture, but a marriage between script, character research and communication with the director and cast. In the last decade, Adriana has created costumes for many video and film productions, dancers, musicians, as well as; independent theaters and artists. Her client list includes Space Channel, APTN, Global TV, Kaha:wi Dance Theatre, musicians Tanya Tagaq, Stoik and many others.

Her latest credits feature movies like *Fire Song*, *Angelique's Isle*, *The Incredible 25th year of Mitzi Bearclaw* and four seasons of APTN's *Guilt Free Zone*.

She is a proud member of Caftcad (The Canadian Alliance of Film & Television costume arts and Design) And her work has been exhibited at Caftcads exhibition "*From Concept to Creation*" as a part of 2018 TIFF event.