

The Heart Stays



AMERINDA INC. PRESENTS AN AMERINDA PRODUCTION OF 'THE HEART STAYS' NATHALIE STANDINGCLOUD SIERRA SPIRIT KIHEGA IRENE BEDARD JON PROUDSTAR DELANNA STUDI
NAOMI CASTELLANO LISA KAMINIR CASEY CAMP-HORINEK WHITE ROBERTSON BRIAN YOUNG MUSIC BY JEROD IMPICHCHAACHAANA TATE DIRECTORS OF PHOTOGRAPHY DEJAN GEORGEVICH, ASC ROGER GRANGE
EDITED BY GARY SHARFIN EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS DIANE FRAHER JAIME SCOTT WEBBER GARY SHARFIN JON PROUDSTAR PRODUCERS GARY SHARFIN DIANE FRAHER WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY DIANE FRAHER

THE HEART STAYS IS MADE POSSIBLE BY THE NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR AND THE NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE AND WITH SUPPORT FROM THE MADE IN NY WOMEN'S FILM, TV & THEATER FUND BY THE CITY OF NEW YORK MAYOR'S OFFICE OF MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE NEW YORK FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS. THE HEART STAYS IS SUPPORTED BY THE ROBERT BAUSCHENBERG FOUNDATION. AN AMERINDA PICTURE





The Heart Stays film is the story of two sisters from the Osage Native American Nation of which Diane Fraher, the Writer and Director is a proud member. The many traditional values reflected in the characters and story are Osage and not derived from generic or pan-Indian stereotypes.






PRODUCED BY AMERICAN INDIAN ARTISTS INC. (AMERINDA)

THE HEART STAYS IS A UNIVERSAL COMING-OF-AGE STORY TOLD THROUGH THE PRISM OF AUTHENTIC OSAGE NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURE.

WHAT MAKES THIS STORY UNIQUELY NATIVE:

- 1) IT IS TOLD BY NATIVE PEOPLE ABOUT THEMSELVES.**
 - 2) IT IS NOT 'PAN-INDIAN.' IT IS CULTURALLY SPECIFIC ABOUT TRADITIONAL OSAGE PEOPLE STRUGGLING TO IDENTIFY WITH THEIR OWN ANCIENT TRADITIONAL VALUES IN CONTEMPORARY TIMES.**
 - 3) IT IS 'TRADITIONAL' CULTURE NOT 'POP' CULTURE. TRADITIONAL CULTURE MEANS IT IS EVERLASTING AND IT'S NOT SUPERFICIAL OR MONETIZED.**
 - 4) THE EMPHASIS IS ON THE EXTENDED FAMILY WHICH IN NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURE MEANS THE WHOLE TRIBAL NATION.**
 - 5) OVERALL, THE STORY IS THE STAR, NOT THE PLAYERS.**
 - 6) NATIVE WOMEN ARE THE HEARTBEAT OF THE NATION. IF YOU LIFT WOMEN UP, YOU LIFT UP THE NATION.**
 - 7) THE LAND IS A CHARACTER IN THE FILM BECAUSE NATIVE PEOPLE HAVE A 'RELATIONSHIP' WITH THE LAND.**
 - 8) THE PRESENCE OF THE SEEN AND THE UNSEEN IN THE STORY.**
 - 9) NATIVE PEOPLE SEE THE INTERCONNECTEDNESS OF EVERYTHING.**
 - 10) THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF NATIVE ART IS TO TRANSFER KNOWLEDGE.**
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THE HEART STAYS

Running Time: 2.14.04

Genre: Drama

Year of Release: 2023

Language: English

Country of Origin: United States of America

Shooting Format: Visual Specifications:

Apple ProRes (HQ) 4:2:2 QuickTime file,
1920x1080p, 23.98 progressive in its original
aspect ratio (native format) of 16:9

Audio Specifications:

48kHz and 24-bit in WAV

Links:

IMDB -

Facebook -

Instagram -

Twitter -

TikTok -





CREDITS

Director: Diane Fraher

Screenplay: Diane Fraher

Editor: Gary Sharfin

Producers: Diane Fraher, Gary Sharfin

Director of Photography: Dejan Georgevich ASC
(Oklahoma), Roger Grange (New York)

Executive Producers: Jaime Scott Webber,
Diane Fraher, Gary Sharfin, Jon Proudstar

CAST

Nathalie Standingcloud

Sierra Spirit Kihega

Irene Bedard

Jon Proudstar

DeLanna Studi

Casey Camp-Horinek

Naomi Castellano

Lisa Kaminir

White Robertson

Brian Young

Muriel Miguel

Tanis Parenteau

William S. Yellow Robe, Jr. (1960-2021)

Sales/Distribution: Indican Pictures-Lionsgate





Logline


THE HEART STAYS tells the story of two Native American sisters who leave the traditions and safety of the reservation to follow their own long held dreams.

Tagline

If you follow your dream, you will find your heart.

Short Synopsis

Two Native American sisters leave the traditions and safety of their Native nation to follow their own long-held dreams—the older one to attend a distinguished college and the younger one to become a rock star. Soon after leaving their beloved land and community their life journeys collide with racism, drugs, and violence, forcing the older teen to choose between her own life's work and saving her sister's life.






The Heart Stays tells the story of two Native American sisters who leave the traditions and safety of their Native nation to follow their own long-held dreams – the older one to attend a distinguished college and the younger one to become a rock star. Shannon Kihe-kah-zhi (17) with the help of the women in the family, overcomes her father’s deep skepticism and eventually receives the blessings of her family to travel thousands of miles away to attend a distinguished college in the east. Erin Ki-he-kah-zhi (16) is distraught at Shannon’s departure and begins to fail in school. Shannon has a difficult time adjusting to college as she confronts and must learn to negotiate deep racial divides among both students and faculty. She also faces an age old Native plague – alcohol. A mysterious old Native woman gives her sound advice one day on campus, but will she follow it? Back on the Native nation, Erin fed up with her parents’ disapproval, sneaks away from home and falls under the influence of an unscrupulous band member. That band member forces Erin to cross the Native nation’s border and pick up money. Erin steals thousands of dollars in drug money and takes off. At college, Shannon rejects alcohol and together with Liz, her non-Native roommate and newfound friend, and Glen, a fellow Native student and friend, fights an academic battle to save the Native American literature program and her full scholarship. Suddenly in the midst of Shannon’s struggle, Erin arrives on campus begging for help to escape to Canada, where a Native nation will protect her from dangerous drug dealers. Will Shannon stop everything to help save her sister’s life? Reluctantly, Shannon calls on Glen, who is street-wise and knowledgeable about border crossings in the east, to help. Erin insists to Shannon that she can make it on her own with Glen’s help and his connections to Native nations in Canada. Can the healing power of Osage ritual allow Shannon to overcome her obstacles and come into her own as a writer? The Heart Stays will illuminate how the choices each sister makes are intertwined with their acceptance or denial of Osage traditions and the embrace of family and friends.





Director's Statement

The Heart Stays reveals what our lives are like as Native people and where I believe, we must arrive in order to sustain our ancient and wonderful cultures. I feel called to tell our stories because I believe in them very much. I believe in the ancient magic they weave in our lives and their power to heal us. Through sharing a hopeful spirit of who we are, we find common ground between all of us. When I was growing up, the old men and women used to say, "It's good to be an Indian". Things were harder for Native people then so it took me a while to understand what they meant. Now I am glad I have lived long enough to bear witness to things they told me. It is good to be an Indian—the heart stays. In the American imagination, we have come to be seen as figures of the past who spent their final days forsaken on a 'reservation' wasteland. On the contrary, our Nations are a place where people know who you are and they're glad to see you when you come home; where our parents and grandparents are buried; and where we have a relationship with the land that birthed our entire culture—art, language, religion, food, and clothing. The Heart Stays exemplifies the reality that we have a living culture. As a storyteller, I believe that if you watch this film, you will learn more about who we are.



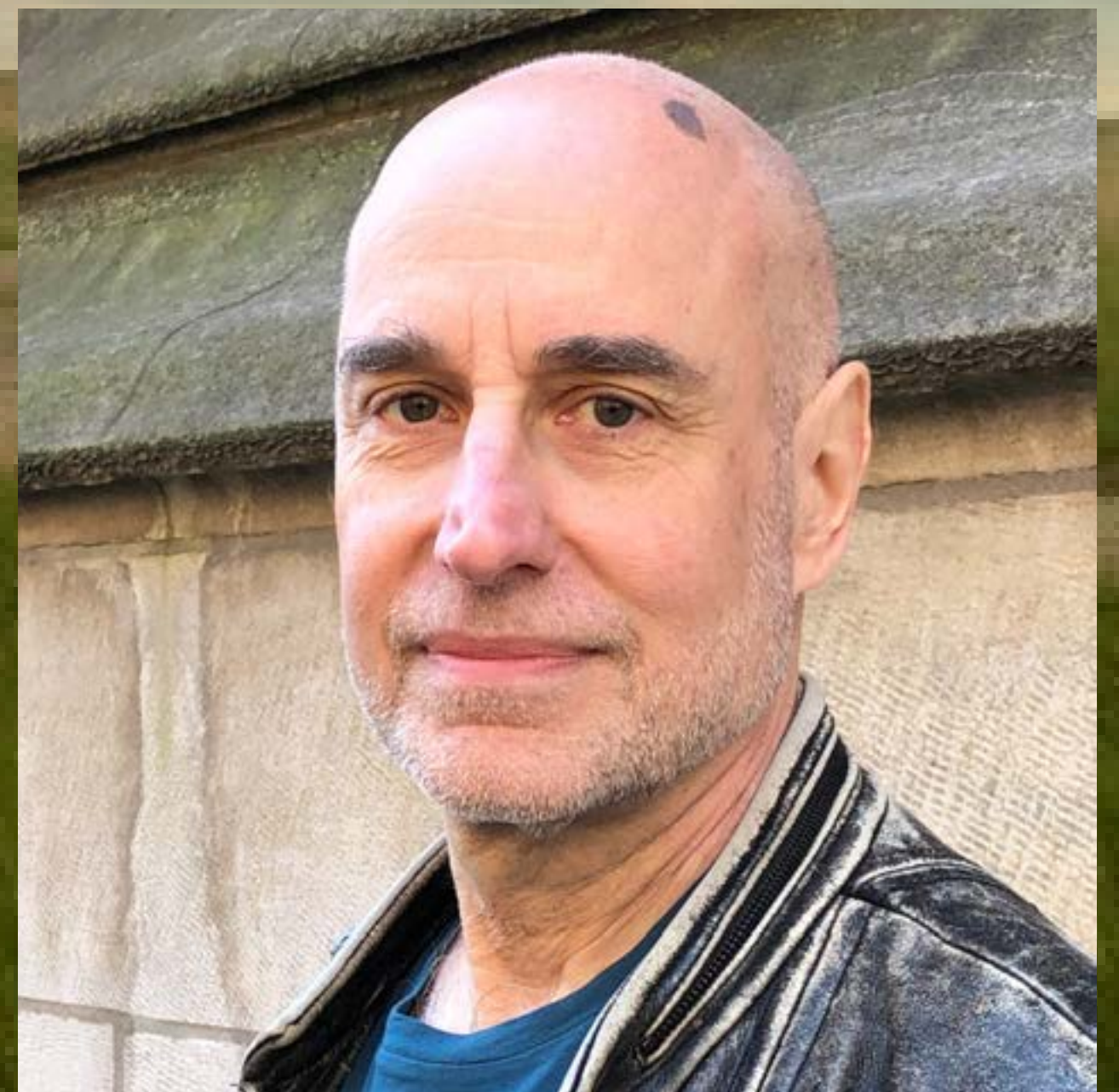


WRITER & DIRECTOR BIO

Diane Fraher is an enrolled member of the Osage Nation with documented Cherokee heritage and is one of the principal artists who formed the New York Movement in Contemporary Native Arts, the only such documented Native American art movement in the United States outside of Santa Fe, NM. Her first feature-length narrative film, *The Reawakening*, received Best Feature from the First Americans in the Arts (Los Angeles) and Best Picture-Native Category at the Fargo Film Festival (North Dakota). Ms. Fraher was a contributing author to *Creation's Journey-Native American Identity and Belief*, published by Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian; *Genocide of the Mind: New Native American Writing and Sovereign Bones* published by Perseus/Hachette; and *Art in America Magazine* October 2017, "Remembering Lloyd Oxendine." Fraher founded American Indian Artists Inc. (AMERINDA), located in New York City, which is the only Native multi-arts organization of its kind in the United States. She is frequently called upon by the philanthropic establishment to serve in an advisory capacity for efforts to catalyze new philanthropic investment in contemporary Native American arts, among these, the Native Arts and Culture Foundation and the Mosaic Network & Fund. Ms. Fraher has received fellowships and individual artist grant support for her films from the Jerome Foundation, the National Geographic All Roads Film Project, the New York State Council on the Arts-Individual Artist Program, the Paul Robeson Fund for Independent Media, the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, and the Osage Nation Foundation. Diane Fraher is a New York Foundation for the Arts 2013 Fellow in Screenwriting and a 2019 'Made in NY' Women's Film, TV and Theater Fund awardwinner. She is a member of NYWIFT and Film Fatales NY (Narrative).




Gary Sharfin is a producer, editor, director, and owner of Line5Media. He began his career launching Donna Karan with an award-winning fashion video which led him to edit award-winning ad campaigns for Burger King, Lite Beer, and Budweiser, among others. His feature film work includes editing Sony Picture Classics' Denise Calls Up (Liev Schreiber, Tim Daly, and Alanna Ubach) which received Honorable Mention for the Caméra d'Or at Cannes; His and Hers (Liev Schreiber, Michael Rispoli) shown at Sundance; and Mo (Margo Martindale, Adam LeFevre), the story of a boy with Marfan's Syndrome which premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival's Drive-In series. Sharfin co-produced the short Sangam, shown at Sundance, PBS, and MOMA, and was an executive producer of the feature, Evergreen, also shown at Sundance. He also edited the first digital HD programming (Rhythmstick featuring Dizzy Gillespie and Tito Puente) which led him to direct and edit a series of one-hour jazz shows in Brazil, Tokyo, and New York. For HBO, Sharfin edited (and directed the opening of) the comedy series Snaps (Mo'Nique and Tracy Morgan) and Blaze Battle. His documentaries include Fire, Risk & Rhythm (arts programs helping at-risk youth); Diamonds are a Girl's Best Friend (one of baseball's first female-head groundskeepers); First Run Features' Into the Fire: American Women in the Spanish Civil War shown on PBS and internationally; and Still a Revolutionary: Albert Einstein.




TV/feature film productions. Georgevich has helmed the visuals from a distinguished list of network TV series: *The Enemy Within*, *The Family*, *Blacklist*, *3lbs.*, *Elementary*, *Mercy*, *Gossip Girl*, *Cupid*, *Book of Daniel*, and high-profile documentaries including *Ordinary Miracles: The Photo League's New York*; PBS Special *A Wayfarer's Journey: Listening to Mahler*; and HBO's *Arthur Ashe: Citizen of the World*. A partial listing of his theatrical films includes *The Virtuoso* (Anthony Hopkins), *Crossing Fields* (JK Simmons), *The Beatle Fan* (Peter Stormare), *Mirrors* (Keifer Sutherland), *The Emperor's Club* (Kevin Kline), *Woo* (Jada Pinkett Smith), and Universal Pictures' *Satan's Little Helper* (Amanda Plummer). Georgevich's cinematography credits also represent a diverse range of genres of over 500 commercials including the Tony Award-winning Broadway musical "Wicked" and a Live TV teleplay broadcast, PBS Hollywood Presents: *Copshop* (Richard Dreyfuss, Rita Moreno, Rosie Perez) emulating the "50's Golden Age of TV." A respected professor of cinematography at SVA (School of Visual Arts), Georgevich is the former National Vice President of the International Cinematographers Guild, Local 600, I.A.T.S.E., and a member of the American Society of Cinematographers (ASC) and the Directors Guild of America. He is a recipient of the Deluxe Bud Stone Award for Outstanding Educational Contributions to the Art and Craft of Cinematography from the International Cinematographers Guild. He has an MFA from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts Graduate Institute of Film and a BA from the University of Denver (Mass Communications and International Relations). He is a frequent lecturer and panelist at colleges, universities, and industry professional symposiums.





Roger Grange is an award-winning director of photography and camera operator with over 30 years of DP and camera operating experience. Grange recently shot two short films to support the production of new narrative features. *Kiwakw*, a name from an Indigenous American legend, is a story about the conflict between Abenaki native communities and English settlers in the late 17th Century. *Final Curtain Call* is about the life of a legendary organist for Radio City Music Hall. Another recent short narrative film, *The Blind Date*, about a young woman who must seek an illegal abortion, collected numerous awards at several short-film festivals. Throughout his career, Grange has filmed many documentaries. Recent feature documentaries include *Radioactive: The Women of Three Mile Island*; *American River*, a natural history journey down the Passaic River; and *The Annie Mae Aquash Story*, a work in progress about a Native American activist who was murdered. He shot much of *The Anthropologist*, about evidence of climate change in underserved communities, which premiered at the 2015 DOC NYC documentary film festival where Indiewire dubbed it one of "ten films not to be missed." An earlier Mahler documentary, *Everywhere & Forever: Mahler's Song of the Earth*, was praised by the Whitehead International Film Festival for its "profound cinematography." In 2016, he photographed and co-produced the feature documentary *Backpack Full of Cash*, about changes to public education in the US. Grange's work was honored with an Earthwatch Film Award in 1994 for the "Kerala" episode of *The Quiet Revolution* series for PBS, which he photographed and co-directed.




Nathalie Standingcloud is an enrolled citizen of the Cherokee Nation, representing her matrilineal Salish and Wenatchi tribes and her patrilineal Cherokee and Creek tribes. She is an artist and actor who likes to challenge her creativity in different mediums. While pursuing her dreams of being an actress and model, Standingcloud has performed across the country in numerous theatre productions including “Crossing Mnisose” (Portland Center Stage 2019), “Return to Niobrara” (Rose Theater 2019), and “Reclaiming One Star” (Denver Center 2020). She has walked in several fashion shows including the Teton Trade Cloth Fashion Summit at the FAM museum, appeared on billboards and print ads for her tribe, and was on the cover of Native Max Magazine in its November Native American Heritage Issue, Storytelling in Ink (2020). She was given the Rising Phoenix Award for Outstanding Performance for her role in Totsu (Redbird) (LA Skins Fest 2020) and recently made her debut as a series guest star in the Indigenous American teen comedy-drama television series Reservation Dogs (2021). In Season 7, Episode 4 of Osiyo Voices of The Cherokee People (2022) she is described as "a storyteller, although not in the usual sense of the word. Her stories are told in ink and on the screen as she showcases her talent as both an emerging tattoo artist and actress."






Sierra Spirit Kihega is a member of the Otoe-Missouri tribe and the Keetoowah Band of Cherokees. With a background in high fashion editorial and runway modeling, and graphic design, as well as years of acting experience—The Heart Stays is Kihega’s first feature film. An Oklahoma native, after the filming of The Heart Stays, Kihega relocated to New England to pursue a career in graphic design.





Irene Bedard is an Alaska Native actress enrolled in the Native Village of Koyuk. A seasoned performer in television and film, she received a Golden Globe nomination for Best Actress for her debut role as Mary Crow Dog in the television production of *Lakota Woman: Siege at Wounded Knee* (1994). She is perhaps best known for her voice role as the titular character in Disney's 1995 animated feature *Pocahontas*, becoming the first woman of color to voice a Disney princess. In addition, Bedard was a model for some of the animated character's onscreen appearances. Her acting resumé also features acclaimed movies such as *Smoke Signals* (1998), *The New World* (2005), and *Songs My Brothers Taught Me* (2015). Her television projects include *Into the West*, *The Stand*, and *Alaska Daily*. In 2017, Bedard portrayed a future co-president in the Ava DuVernay-directed video for Jay-Z's "Family Feud." Bedard's decades of creative work include singing, theater, spoken word, producing television and movies, speaking, and teaching. She was inducted into the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in 2018 and has served on the American Indian Enterprise and Business Council to the United Nations. She is a vocal activist who advocates for environmental, Indigenous, and women's issues.





Jon Proudstar was born and raised in Tucson, AZ, and is a member of the Pascua Yaqui tribe. A film-making veteran of more than 25 years, Proudstar has acted in over 34 motion pictures and television shows. He marked his early career with roles in the comedy Madhouse (1990), the action flick Young Guns II (1990), and Walker, Texas Ranger (CBS, 1992-2001). He most recently appears in the FX television series Reservation Dogs (2021-2023). In 1996, Proudstar created the comic book “Tribal Force,” which was hailed as the first all-Native Superhero comic book in the history of the United States. In 1998, he was one of ten Native Americans chosen for the Sundance Film Institute’s Writer’s Lab. Then in 2005, he was selected for the prestigious Sundance Film Institute’s Director’s Lab where he participated as an actor. That same year, Proudstar wrote, directed, produced, and starred in the award-winning short, Dude Vision, which won Best Comedy at the Arizona International Film Festival (2005) and Best Short Subject at the Native Voice Film Festival (2005). In the same year, he won the Tribeca Film Festival’s Screenwriters Competition for co-writing the screenplay, Up the River. Proudstar has appeared in several independently produced films that have been selected for The Sundance Film Festival. In 2009, he released his first feature film So Close to Perfect.



DeLanna Studi has over 25 years of experience as a performer, storyteller, educator, facilitator, advocate, and activist. Originally from Liberty, Oklahoma, she is a proud citizen of the Cherokee Nation. Her theater credits include the first national Broadway tour of Tony Award- and Pulitzer Prize-winning play “August: Osage County;” OffBroadway’s “Gloria: A Life” at The Daryl Roth Theatre; “Informed Consent” at The Duke Theater On 42nd Street; and regional credits at Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Portland Center Stage at The Armory, Cornerstone in Los Angeles, and the Indiana Repertory Theater. Studi has originated roles in twenty-plus world-premiere plays, including fourteen Native productions. A pivotal moment in her career was writing and performing “And So We Walked: An Artist’s Journey Along the Trail of Tears,” for which she retraced with her father her family’s footsteps along the Trail of Tears. “And So We Walked” has been produced throughout the country and was the first American play chosen for the Journées Théâtrales de Carthage in Tunisia. It recently made its offBroadway debut at Minetta Lane Theatre, where it was recorded for Audible. As a playwright, Studi has been commissioned by The Theatre Company, Theatre for One (New York and Chicago), and the Period Piece series. She stars in the Peabody Award-winning film Edge of America, Hallmark’s DreamKeeper, and the TV series Goliath, Shameless, and General Hospital. She is a recipient of the Butcher Scholar Award, MAP Fund grant, and a grant from the Cherokee Preservation Foundation. Since 2007, she has served as the chair of the SAG-AFTRA Native Americans Committee. Studi is the artistic director of Native Voices at the Autry.



Naomi Castellano is a classically trained actor, vocalist, and writer. She is originally from Huntington Beach, CA, and was partially raised in the Cleveland, OH area. Castellano is a graduate of the oldest conservatory acting school in the Englishspeaking world, The American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York City. She is a versatile performer known for bringing immense emotional depth to her roles with a focus on raw and immersive storytelling. She has been a part of numerous stage productions as well as television including working for networks such as NBC, HBO, and Discovery. The Heart Stays is Castellano's feature film debut.




Lisa Kaminir is a veteran of stage, film, and television. TV audiences will recognize her from her recurring roles on the David E. Kelley shows, Boston Public, Boston Legal, and The Practice. Her many other guest-starring TV roles include appearances on How to Get Away with Murder, NCIS, NCIS LA, Hawaii 5-0, Major Crimes, Scorpion, Code Black, Blue Bloods, Castle, Criminal Minds, The Mentalist, and most recently, ABC's Stumptown. Kaminir is also an avid storyteller, who has performed many of her autobiographical stories on Los Angeles stages.





Casey Camp-Horinek is a long-time Native rights activist, environmentalist, and actress. Her love for acting began in the early 1980s when she worked with the American Indian Theatre Company of Tulsa, OK. Camp-Horinek played the role of Irene in *Barking Water* (d. Sterlin Harjo), which premiered in 2009 at the Sundance Film Festival and was selected for the New Directors/New Films Festival in New York City. She has served as a mentor and advisor for aspiring Native American filmmakers, actors, and actresses in many venues, including the Sundance Film Institute and local summer programs. As a traditional Drumkeeper for the Ponca Pa-tha-ta, Woman's Scalp Dance Society, Camp-Horinek helps maintain the cultural identity of the Ponca Nation of Oklahoma for herself, her family, and her community. She has been at the forefront of grassroots community efforts to educate and empower both Native and non-Native community members on environmental and civil rights issues. As a delegate of the Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN), in April of 2008, Camp-Horinek was chosen to speak to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and present IEN's global platform regarding the environment and Native rights.





White Robertson is a self-taught actor and filmmaker from the Tahlequah, Oklahoma area. He is known for his comedy skits on YouTube. *The Heart Stays* is Robertson's feature film debut.

Brian Young is an author and filmmaker with a Bachelor's degree in Film Studies from Yale University and a Master's degree in Creative Writing Fiction from Columbia University. An enrolled member of the Navajo Nation, Young grew up on the Navajo Reservation but currently resides in Brooklyn, New York. As an undergraduate, he won a fellowship from the prestigious Sundance Ford Foundation for one of his featurelength scripts. He has worked on several short films including *Tsídii Nááts'ílid – Rainbow Bird* and *A Conversation on Race with Native Americans* for the short documentary series produced by the New York Times. Young was a participant in the 6th Annual Native American TV Writer's Lab with the Native American Media Alliance where he learned to write television scripts. His debut novel, *Healer of the Water Monster*, has garnered several starred reviews and won the 2022 American Indian Youth Literature Award for Middle Grade.





The Heart Stays soundtrack is composed exclusively of Native American music.


Jerod Impichchaachaaha' Tate is a classical composer, a citizen of the Chickasaw Nation in Oklahoma, and is dedicated to the development of American Indian classical composition. The Washington Post selected him as one of “22 for '22: Composers and performers to watch this year” and raved about his rare ability to “effectively infused classical music with American Indian nationalism.” His commissioned works have been performed by the National Symphony Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Dallas Symphony, Detroit Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, Buffalo Philharmonic, Oklahoma City Philharmonic, Colorado Ballet, and many more.

Tate was appointed a 2022 Chickasaw Hall of Fame inductee, 2021 Cultural Ambassador for the U.S. Department of State, and is a governor-appointed Creativity Ambassador for the State of Oklahoma. He won an Emmy for his work on the Oklahoma Educational Television Authority documentary, The Science of Composing, and his music was featured on the HBO series Westworld. Tate served as Guest Composer, conductor, and pianist for San Francisco Symphony’s CURRENTS video series, and was a Guest Composer for the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s program Home with ETHEL and Friends. Tate’s middle name, Impichchaachaaha', means “his high corncrib” and is his inherited traditional Chickasaw house name.



From recording her first song at the age of two years old to charting in the top 10 on the iTunes and Billboard charts, Brooke Simpson is no stranger to music. She is a powerhouse vocalist who is passionate about music, people, and her culture. Simpson is a full-blooded Native American and is a member of the Haliwa-Saponi Tribe of North Carolina. She has had the opportunity to work with artists such as Miley Cyrus, Sia, Taboo (of The Black Eyed Peas), Bishop Briggs, Allen Stone, and more. She also was a top 3 finalist on season 13 of The Voice and was a top 4 finalist on season 16 of America's Got Talent where Simon Cowell compared her to legendary singers Kelly Clarkson and Fantasia! While touring, writing, and recording her upcoming album, Simpson has released multiple singles including "Little Bit Crazy," "Stick Like Honey," and her newest release, "Haliwa." Simpson, as well as her new single, were featured in a global Nike campaign for their Native American brand N7. She was on billboards in Time Square, New York, and in Los Angeles, California. Recently, Simpson made her Broadway debut in the revival of the Tony Award-winning musical "1776" in New York City, directed by Diane Paulus and Jeffrey Page






Jimmy Wolf is an award-winning singer-songwriter-guitarist who brings a new and exciting energy to the world of blues and rock. He takes the Delta-Chicago blues, 50s rock, and R&B, and mixes these genres with chainsaw guitar and over-driven voice to create a soulful music experience.

Wolf has toured with many of the great names in blues over the years, including Jimmy "Fast Fingers" Dawkins, Bill Doggett, and Larry "Texas Flood" Davis. He has shared the stage with a number of blues legends—Buddy Guy, Jr. Wells, Albert King, Albert Collins, Johnny Copeland, Millie Jackson, and Little Johnny Taylor. On the rock side, Wolf has opened or shared the stage with The Ramones, James Montgomery, Dickey Betts, Mark Farner of Grand Funk Railroad, Blood, Sweat and Tears, Dixie All-stars, Blackfoot, Jeff Healy, Ian Hunter, and Mick Ronson. Wolf lived in Memphis for several years and was a regular on Beale St. playing the clubs and at Handy Park with bands consisting of Big-T, Jimmy Ellis, Fred Sanders, Jerome Miller, Ringo Jukes, Harry Bridgewater, Big Jerry, and Levi Williams.

Wolf is a Turtle Clan Mohawk from upstate New York. In 2008, he was awarded a First Nations Composer & American Composers Forum Grant for Outstanding Performance and Lasting Contribution and was honored with the Best Blues Release award at the 10th annual Native American Music Awards for his CD Deep Downtown, which contains the single "LIFE" that is featured in the Native Indie film The Heart Stays. In November 2014, Wolf was awarded Best Male Artist of the year at the 15th annual Native American Music Awards for his CD Tribute to Little Johnny Taylor. On May 3rd, 2015, he was inducted into the New York State Blues Hall of Fame at a ceremony held in Oneida, NY.





Rex Lyons is the founding guitarist, vocalist, and band leader of The Ripcords.

Recently inducted into the Blues Archive Hall of Fame, he is a respected veteran of the Syracuse music community. Lyon's musical style is equal parts country, blues, rockabilly, and swing. He has a rich history of playing live music as a member of several bands in Syracuse, New York. Along with Dugan Henhawk, he founded and toured with Whiteboy and the Wagonburners as they rose to local and national acclaim. He joined Henhawk again in the early 2000s with The Roustabouts along with fellow Ripcords members Phil Regan and Jay Gould. Never one to rest on his laurels, Lyons sits on the board of The New York State Blues Festival among many others and remains a tireless leader booking gigs and producing studio sessions and albums for the band.





Native folk and blues rocker, Keith Secola is an accomplished artist: award-winning musician, guitarist, and Native flute player; singer, songwriter, and producer. His music is familiar to thousands of fans across North America and Europe. Secola's most popular song, "NDN Cars," featured in the Native Indie film *The Heart Stays*, is considered the contemporary Native American anthem and is the most requested song on Native radio in the US and Canada. Secola is Anishinabe (Ojibwa) and originally from the Mesabi Iron Range country of northern Minnesota, now residing in Arizona. He is a member of the Anishinabe Nation of northern Minnesota and southern Ontario, Canada.

An icon and ambassador of Native music, Secola has performed at the Olympic Games in Atlanta 1996 and Salt Lake City 2002, graced the stages of the Rockslide Festival in Denmark, the Grand Opening Gala of the Smithsonian Museum of the American Indian, The Kennedy Center, and the SXSW in Austin, TX, and toured Europe on several occasions. A seven-time Native American Music Awards winner, his accomplishments include Artist of the Year, Best Producer, Best Folk/Country Recording, Best Blues/Jazz Recording, Best Independent Recording, Best Linguistic Recording, and Best Instrumental Recording. A well-respected musician, he has worked with music legends such as Mickey Hart of the Grateful Dead and teamed with academics like author Dr. Tom Venum of the Smithsonian Folklife Institute to collaborate on the CD *American Warriors: Songs for Indian Veterans*. In 2011, Secola joined the ranks of Jimmy Hendrix, Hank Williams, Crystal Gayle, and Richie Valens and was inducted into the Native American Music Awards Hall of Fame.





















- WE ARE INTRODUCING A NEW AND UNIQUE NATIVE METHODOLOGY ARTISTICALLY AND IN TERMS OF THE APPROACH TO PRODUCTION.

WHAT MAKES IT A NEW METHODOLOGY ARTISTICALLY?

- TO START, THE PLOT IS ABOUT A LIVING CULTURE, NOT NATIVES AS FIGURES OF THE PAST OR ABOUT THE DEATH OF ALL NATIVE PEOPLES.**
- IT IS A STORY ABOUT TRADITIONAL OSAGE NATIVE PEOPLE STRUGGLING TO IDENTIFY WITH THEIR OWN TRADITIONAL VALUES. IT IS NOT 'PAN-INDIAN.'**
- WE EMPLOY NATIVE REALISM IN THE DIALOGUE AND IN THE PACING OF THE SPEECH AND PERFORMANCE AS WELL AS THE CASTING.**
- THE EMPHASIS IS ON THE EXTENDED FAMILY, WHICH IN NATIVE CULTURE MEANS THE WHOLE TRIBAL NATION.**
- THE LAND IS A CHARACTER IN THE FILM AS WELL.**
- ALL THE NATIVE ASPECTS OF THE PRODUCTION WERE REAL AND AUTHENTIC.**
- OVERALL, THE STORY IS THE STAR, NOT THE PLAYERS.**

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A TRADITIONAL NATIVE AMERICAN?

- IT HAS TO BEGIN WITH WHAT THE NATIVE PEOPLE THEMSELVES SAY IT IS, WHICH CAN BE DIFFERENT FOR EACH NATION. IT IS NOT A POP CULTURE BUT TRADITIONAL CULTURE THAT IS ROOTED IN THEIR SOVEREIGNTY AS A PEOPLE.**

WHAT ABOUT THE DIALOGUE AND PACING OF THE SPEECH IS DIFFERENT?

- ON THE NATIONS, NATIVE PEOPLE'S SPEECH PATTERNS HAVE BEEN DIRECTLY INFLUENCED BY ELDERS BORN BEFORE 1900 WHO SPOKE THEIR OWN LANGUAGE. THE ACTORS HAVE CARRIED THESE SPEECH PATTERNS FROM THEIR ELDERS INTO HOW THEY SPEAK ENGLISH TODAY, WHICH RESULTS IN A VERY DIFFERENT DELIVERY THAN LEARNING FROM A LINGUIST.**





WHAT ABOUT THE PACING OF THE ACTION IS DIFFERENT?

- THERE IS NO CONCESSION MADE TO HAVING SOMETHING HAPPEN IN A FILM SCHOOL FORMULAIC WAY IN ORDER TO KEEP CAPTURING THE AUDIENCE'S ATTENTION. RATHER, THE STORY UNFOLDS AT THE PACE OF THE PEOPLE IT IS ABOUT. AS OSAGE PEOPLE LIVING ON THE PRAIRIE, OUR WAY OF LIFE IS MORE THOUGHTFUL AND CONTEMPLATIVE THAN WHAT MAINSTREAM AUDIENCES ARE USED TO.


WHAT ABOUT THE CASTING IS DIFFERENT?

- WE SEARCHED DIRECTLY IN THE COMMUNITY FOR PEOPLE RATHER THAN RELY ON A NON-NATIVE CASTING DIRECTOR. WE REJECTED THEIR VIEW OF AN ASSIMILATED NATIVE WHO REFLECTS MORE QUALITIES OF 'EUROPEAN' BEAUTY AND BEHAVIOR. RATHER, WE SOUGHT TO PORTRAY WHO WE ARE IN OUR OWN BEAUTY.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR THE LAND TO BE A CHARACTER?

- WE STILL HAVE A 'RELATIONSHIP' WITH A PLACE ON THIS EARTH THAT IS ANCESTRAL. NATIVE PEOPLES GET EVERYTHING FROM THEIR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT – THEIR ART, LANGUAGE, RELIGION, PHILOSOPHY, SYSTEMS OF JUSTICE, CLOTHING, EVERYTHING.

- WHEN THE LEAD CHARACTER IS HOMESICK, SHE CLOSES HER EYES AND SEES THE CLOUDS AND THE LIGHT ON THE TALL GRASS PRAIRIE. ALSO, THE WILD HORSE HERDS ARE ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT FOR THE OSAGES BECAUSE THEY REPRESENT RENEWAL. IN THE 1870S WHEN WE WALKED DOWN FROM KANSAS TO WHERE WE ARE NOW IN OKLAHOMA, WE HAD AT LEAST 35,000 HEAD OF HORSES THAT WALKED WITH US. AND NOW, ONCE AGAIN, THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF HORSES IN SMALL WILD HERDS LIVING ON THE NATION.





DESPITE THE TRAGEDY IN THE FILM, THE FILM ALSO GIVES YOU HOPEFULNESS THROUGH THE POWER OF THE ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF LOVE SHARED WITHIN THE EXTENDED FAMILY.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HAVE A NEW METHODOLOGY IN TERMS OF THE APPROACH TO PRODUCTION?

- WE DIDN'T USE A MAINSTREAM BUSINESS MODEL OR FOLLOW A FILM SCHOOL APPROACH TO PRODUCTION. THOSE MODELS WERE CREATED BY PEOPLE WITH PRIVILEGE AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THEMSELVES- NOT FOR NATIVE PEOPLE. WE MADE A NATIVE COMMUNITY-BASED FILM.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A COMMUNITY-BASED FILM?

- TO MAKE A NATIVE FILM WE MUST HAVE A NATIVE METHODOLOGY. IT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE TO HAVE A NEW APPROACH ARTISTICALLY – TO TELL THIS STORY – WITHOUT A NEW APPROACH TO PRODUCTION.

- THE STORY HAS TO EMERGE FROM THE COMMUNITY. WE ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY FOR EVERYTHING – LOCATION, MEALS, PROPS; EVERYTHING IS AUTHENTIC. THE PEOPLE ARE PART OF THE FILM. WE DON'T EXPLOIT THE PEOPLE; IT IS ALL OF US TOGETHER TELLING OUR STORIES. THROUGH THIS METHODOLOGY, WE CREATED NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR NATIVE PEOPLES IN FRONT OF AND BEHIND THE CAMERA.

- FURTHERMORE, THERE IS NO EQUITY FINANCING IN THIS FILM. IT WAS PRODUCED WITH LIMITED FUNDS FROM GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS THAT I RECEIVED AS AN INDIVIDUAL ARTIST. OUR GREATEST RESOURCE WAS THE PEOPLE, BOTH THE NATIVE COMMUNITY AND THE NON-NATIVE PEOPLE THAT JOINED US. WE HAD THE POWER OF THE PEOPLE THAT WERE DETERMINED TO GET THE STORY TOLD.





WHAT MAKES THE NATIVE ASPECTS OF THE FILM AUTHENTIC?

- ALL THE NATIVE ASPECTS WERE REAL. THE LOCATIONS WERE FILMED IN EXISTING REAL PLACES. NONE OF THE SETS, PROPS, OR WARDROBES WERE DRESSED – THEY WERE REAL PEOPLE IN A REAL ENVIRONMENT. ALL THE MUSIC WAS MADE BY NATIVE ARTISTS.

WHAT'S THE ROLE OF NATIVE WOMEN?

- IT FELT NATURAL FOR WOMEN TO BE ASSERTIVE BECAUSE THEY ARE THE HEARTBEAT OF THE NATION. IF YOU LIFT THEM UP, YOU'RE GOING TO LIFT UP THE WHOLE NATION. IN A NATIVE COMMUNITY, WOMEN ARE NOT MONETIZED, OBJECTIFIED, SEXUALIZED, OR THE FOCUS OF ANGER AND RESENTMENT. IN A NATIVE COMMUNITY, THEY ARE LOVED AND RESPECTED. VIOLENCE AGAINST NATIVE WOMEN IS PREDOMINANTLY COMMITTED BY NON-NATIVES.- YOU SEE IN THE FILM HOW EXTENDED FAMILY CREATES SAFETY BETWEEN A YOUNG WOMAN AND OLDER MEN. THERE IS BUILT-IN TRUST AND SAFETY. THE FOUNDATION BETWEEN NATIVE MEN AND WOMEN IS THAT WE ARE RELATED. THIS LEADS TO WOMEN FEELING SAFE AND FREE TO ASSERT THEMSELVES.

DO YOU WORRY ABOUT CRITICISM OF YOUR WORK?

- THE ART AND INDUSTRIALIZATION OF FILMMAKING WERE CREATED BY NON-NATIVE PEOPLE FOR THEMSELVES. AS A RESULT, CULTURAL CRITICISM FROM NON-NATIVES IS OFTEN A PILLAR OF SUSTAINING STRUCTURAL AND SYSTEMIC RACISM. UNCONSCIOUS BIAS AND A SENSE OF ENTITLEMENT LEAD PEOPLE TO MAKE HARSH JUDGMENTS ABOUT WHAT THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND BECAUSE IT MAKES THEM UNCOMFORTABLE. WE HOPE THAT PEOPLE WILL EMBRACE THE STORY AND OPEN THEIR HEARTS TO US AND THE UNIVERSAL APPEAL OF THE FILM.





HOW IS THE EMPHASIS ON THE EXTENDED FAMILY?

- THE 'EXTENDED' FAMILY TO NATIVE PEOPLE MEANS THE ENTIRE TRIBE. ALL NATIVE PEOPLE SEE THEMSELVES AS BEING RELATED TO ONE ANOTHER. THIS WAY OF LIVING ALLOWS FOR WOMEN TO HAVE MORE FREEDOM AND SAFETY BECAUSE THEY ARE RESPECTED AND CARED FOR BY THEIR PEOPLE. THE LEAD CHARACTER SEEKS AND FINDS OTHER NATIVE PEOPLE AS SHE COURAGEOUSLY FOLLOWS HER DREAM AND CONFRONTS HER PROBLEMS. SHE AND HER NON-NATIVE ROOMMATE ALSO FORM A SISTERHOOD.

“...everybody’s stories are important. Very important...We have to tell our own stories.”

