

SEATTLE
REP

Seattle Rep Presents
the Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company
Production of

SEPTEMBER 9 - OCTOBER 9, 2022



**WHERE WE
BELONG**

by Madeline Sayet

DIRECTED BY MEI ANN TEO

In Association with Folger Shakespeare Library

Play Guide

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A Note from Youth Engagement

Dear Theatergoer,

Where We Belong is a beautiful and complex play with which to start Seattle Rep's season. Beautiful in its content and in beginning our season with a play by an Indigenous writer and performer. And complex in the way that it, and any other art piece by a Native artist, interacts with and comments on the place where it is being performed. Seattle Rep sits on land that was stolen by colonizers from the Duwamish people. Staging a Native play with a Native performer pushes the institution to self-reflect and think deeply about its role in colonization.

With this Play Guide, we invite you to learn and reflect. By learning about the past and present of Native people of the United States, you learn a crucial part of world history which is often mischaracterized, misinformed, and harmful. When learning this history and culture, I invite you to reflect on how you have or have not interacted with the land and the Native people of your hometown, and how their history intersects with the history of your family.

As a mixed-race person, the question of intersecting histories is especially complicated. On my father's side, I come from a group of relatively recent European colonizers and immigrants who were persecuted in their own right as Mormons, but still actively complicit in the displacement and genocide of Native Americans. On my mother's side I am indigenous Fadija Nubian from the south of Egypt, an ethnic group that has been displaced and colonized themselves in recent years. Yet because I am indigenous to another country, I am still a colonizer in this country. Through self-education, I have learned to reflect on these complex identities, which I believe has made me a better neighbor and advocate. It has taught me to appreciate the ways that I am able to interact with this land, and pushes me to fight actively for justice for those whose land has been taken away from them. It also teaches me how to be a better advocate for my own indigenous community on the other side of the world.

I invite you to dive deeply into the resources in this Play Guide, and never to forget that these histories are very recent, and that these cultures are still very alive and present. Learn about the Native lands you are on, and learn about the tribes of those lands. And if you are Native yourself, I invite you to find yourself in this play, and I hope that Seattle Rep continues to be a place that you can find stories that represent you and showcase the diversity of indigenous cultures in the U.S.



Nabra Nelson
Director of Arts Engagement



A Note from the Playwright

In Mohegan culture, we have a symbol, the Trail of Life, that depicts the ups and downs of life, and the people you meet along the way. This symbol is embedded in much of the design of *Where We Belong*, because what you are about to encounter is a journey along the trail, no more no less. I hope that you embrace this story as a journey. That is what it is for me each night, as I learn different things about myself, my ancestors, and the world around me, each time I move through it. I don't want listeners to worry about the history they may not know, or try to absorb all of the information, but rather to just let whatever resonates resonate, and hopefully to laugh a little. It's not intended for you to remember everything. It would be too much, given how little most people are taught about Native nations.

My hope is rather that you will dig into the questions that come up for me, and how they may relate to your own life. You see, this was never meant to be a play. I wrote it in 2018, to try to figure out some things about the lines drawn between people, and to piece myself back together. Since then, it keeps evolving, as the world around us continues to move. This play is like the river. The sky. The earth. It holds the stories that came before but also those of this moment, which is ever changing.

If after listening, you want to know more about some of the ancestors who come up along my journey, I will name some of them here – Uncas. Mahomet Weyonomon. Samson Occom. Fidelity Fielding. Gladys Tantaquidgeon.

And please remember: this is only one Mohegan story. Only my story. And even beyond that – only a part of my story. A small and finite thing in the spectrum of our world. I am from a Native nation on the opposite side of the continent, with different experiences than the Native nations here.

Here, in the region around the City of Seattle, we are on the lands of the Muckleshoot, Suquamish, Duwamish, Snoqualmie, and people of the Tulalip community, along the waterways of the Salish Sea. These nations have their own struggles, history, language, and creativity that I hope you leave wanting to learn more about. I feel so lucky to be performing this show today in a city with such a vibrant Native arts scene, and places like Red Eagle Soaring: Native Youth Theatre – where Native youth can gather, create, and celebrate their cultures together.

Kutápatôtamawush to the incredible team of artists, producers, crew, staff, and family that have made sharing this story with you possible. Something I could never have imagined as a kid. I hope coming along with me and sitting in my mind for a while, might help you see the world a bit differently. And for every Indigenous person in the audience, know that your story is powerful and has as much right or more to be told on this stage.

MARK GARVIN AT PHILADELPHIA THEATRE COMPANY

**Madeline Sayet in *Where We Belong*
at Philadelphia Theatre Company,
directed by Mei Ann Teo.**

Native Resources

Seattle Rep acknowledges that we are on the traditional land of the Coast Salish people, including the Duwamish People past and present. We honor with gratitude the land itself and the Duwamish Tribe. This acknowledgement does not take the place of authentic relationships with Indigenous communities, but serves as a first step in honoring the land we are on. Read more about our land acknowledgement at seattlerep.org/land

Support and get involved with our growing resource list of action items, Native-led organizations, and educational materials. We will continue to update this list and engage our community with action in this urgent and vital work.

Seattle Rep is starting open dialogues with local Native communities to find ways that we can support and highlight in authentic and non-colonial ways. If you would be willing to share your insight or open up a dialogue with us, please contact Nabra Nelson at nabra.nelson@seattlerep.org

DONATE & GET INVOLVED

LOCAL TRIBES

Duwamish Tribe

Muckleshoot Indian Tribe

Tulalip Tribes

The Puyallup Tribe of Indians

Snoqualmie Tribe

Chinook Nation

The Snohomish Tribe of Indians

NATIVE-LED CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

IllumiNative

Real Rent Duwamish

Chief Seattle Club

Red Eagle Soaring

United Indians of All Tribes Foundation

Daybreak Star Indian Cultural Center Daybreak Star Center

Duwamish Longhouse and Cultural Center

wəłəbʔaltx^w Intellectual House

Urban Native Education Alliance

Na'Illehee Fund

The Children of the Setting Sun Productions

Native Works by Chief Seattle Club

LEARN & TAKE ACTION

A List of Native Theaters and Theatermakers

Honor Native Land: A Guide and Call to Acknowledgement

Interactive map of Native lands

Since Time Immemorial: Tribal Sovereignty in Washington State (curriculum)

National Congress of American Indians: COVID-19 Resources for Indian Country

Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women

Seattle Public Library (Re)Imagine Indigenous Theater Panel Reading List

indigenizing arts education

SUPPORT NATIVE-OWNED BUSINESSES

Eighth Generation

Heritage Distilling

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS RESOURCES

One Sky Center

Strong Hearts Native Helpline

Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board

SOCIAL MEDIA RESOURCES

IllumiNative: Read Books by Indigenous LGBTQ2S Writers

So Informed: BIPOC Mental Health Month

So Informed: BIPOC Mental Health Month, Part 2

The Indigenous Foundation:

How to be an Ally to Indigenous Peoples

The Indigenous Foundation: Indigenous LGBTQ2S+ Community

Check out these resources and more here or scan the QR code

seattlerep.org/native-resources



Where We Belong Resource Guide

From Folger Shakespeare Library and Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company

Talkback with Madeline Sayet and Michael Witmore



Madeline Sayet and Folger Shakespeare Library Director Michael Witmore explore questions surrounding language raised in *Where We Belong*, including origins, development, influence, and preservation of language in the written and spoken forms. This conversation was recorded live in July 2021.

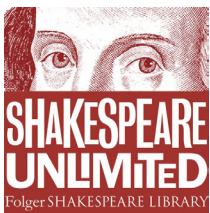
Furthering the Conversation: Connecting the Personal and Legal Perspectives on Repatriation



This recorded panel discussion, inspired by *Where We Belong*, speaks to the current state of museum repatriation, both internationally and domestically. Featuring experts in the field,

Jacquetta "Jackie" Swift (National Museum of the American Indian) and Alexander Herman (Institute of Art and Law) with guest moderator Alina Scott (Ph.D. Candidate at the University of Texas at Austin) the conversation was recorded live in July 2021.

Shakespeare Unlimited: Episode 170



In her play *Where We Belong*, Mohegan director, playwright, and performer Madeline Sayet recalls her 2015 journey to the UK to pursue the PhD in Shakespeare that she never ended up getting. The play, now on tour produced by Woolly Mammoth Theater Company in association with the Folger Shakespeare Library, explains why she left the degree behind and explores what it means to belong in a complicated world. Sayet talks about growing up Mohegan in Connecticut and her evolving relationship with Shakespeare today.

Shakespeare Lightning Round



Madeline Sayet joins Folger Social Media and Communications Manager Ben Lauer in this Instagram Shakespeare Lightning Round where

Madeline answers 30 lightning-fast questions about her favorite—and least favorite—things about Shakespeare.

Returning Heritage Online News Database

Returning Heritage is a database providing news and information on returning cultural heritage to their places of origin. Cultural Restitution is defined in this database as returning an object of historical or cultural value to its place of origin. The purpose of this is for both the act of returning, but also as an acknowledgment to the history of injustice that had been committed.

RELATED

- Shakespeare and Indigeneity: A Dialogue with Natalie Diaz, Scott M Stevens, and Madeline Sayet
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ieJWMBbiSxg>
- Anti-Racist Shakespeare: *The Tempest* Shakespeare's Globe, Madeline Sayet and Scott M Stevens
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rh8XKqgaSOc>
- [Indigenous London: Native Travellers at the Heart of Empire](#) by Coll Thrush
- [Dawnland Voices: An Anthology of Indigenous Writing from New England](#), Edited by Siobhan Senior
- [Medicine Trail: The Life and Lessons of Gladys Tantaquidgeon](#) by Melissa Jayne Fawcett
- [Savage Kin: Indigenous Informants and American Anthropologists](#) by Margaret M. Bruchac
- [Returning Heritage Online News Database](#)
- [Shakespeare Unlimited: Shakespeare in Swahiland](#) Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o and Edward Wilson-Lee discuss Shakespeare and colonialism in East Africa.
- [The Tempest](#)
Read Shakespeare's play with The Folger Shakespeare.
- [Strange Shakespeare: Transforming The Tempest, classifying Caliban](#)
Shakespeare and Beyond blog, Kristina Straub writes about 17th- and 18th-century ideas about Caliban.
- [Restitution](#) by Alexander Herman

Where We Belong Resource Glossary

Brexit referendum – A 2016 meeting in which the United Kingdom voted to withdraw from the European Union by a very slim margin (51.9%).

Canon – A list of works considered to be permanently established as being of the highest quality. (i.e. the Shakespeare canon; or the Classical Theater canon)

Indigenous – The earliest known inhabitants of a land, place, or area; originating in a particular place; native.

Ancestors – The family or people we are descended from, our families before us.

Mohegan Hill – A mountain in New York state, in the town that is now called Springfield.

Tantaquidgeon Indian Museum – Founded in 1931 by Medicine Woman Gladys Tantaquidgeon, this museum in Connecticut is operated by the Mohegan Tribe and showcases objects from a Native American perspective. It is the oldest Native-American owned and operated museum in the U.S.

Manifest Destiny – The belief held by the United States of being destined to spread their government and religion throughout North America.

Wounded Knee – The site of a large massacre of Indigenous Americans (Lakota People) in 1890 led by U.S. Troops.

Mahomet Weyonomon – A member of the Mohegan family who traveled to England in 1735, seeking justice against the unfair treatment of his people.

Colonialism – When a native or foreign body takes over an existing land or people, and forces political and religious practices onto these pre-existing areas and cultures.

Colonization – The process of action leading to colonialism, taking the inhabited land, forcing beliefs and practices.

Samson Occom – The first Native writer to have his words published in English. He became a minister as he believed educating the Native people would help.

Māori – The indigenous Polynesian people of mainland New Zealand.

Repatriation – The act of returning something or someone to their country of origin.

Panel Discussion – A formal public conversation with a group of people, a “panel.”

Mohegan – An indigenous Southeastern Tribe in Connecticut.

The Tempest – A play by William Shakespeare with controversial themes and race relations. The race relation themes include an enslaved Indigenous person, Caliban, trying to rid himself of his new “master.”