

ALBERTA THEATRE PROJECTS

ALBERTA KITCHEN PARTY

EDUCATOR RESOURCES



Written and Designed by Vicki Trask, Youth Engagement & Artist Liaison at Alberta Theatre Projects, for the purposes of enhancing the learning experience of the Student Matinee Series

ALBERTA KITCHEN PARTY

CO-CREATED BY JEREMY CARVER-JAMES, ALIXANDRA COWMAN, ANNA DALGLEISH, DARCY EVANS, DANIEL FONG, MIEKO OUCHI, KODIE ROLLAN, AND JOE SLABE

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ALBERTA KITCHEN PARTY

Co-Created by: Jeremy Carver-James, Alixandra Cowman, Anna Dalgleish, Darcy Evans, Daniel Fong, Mieko Ouchi, Kodie Rollan, and Joe Slabe with contributions from Zach Running Coyote and Tenaj Williams

DIRECTION BY MIEKO OUCHI

MUSICAL DIRECTION BY JOE SLABE

STUDENT MATINEE: 11:30AM; MARCH 9TH 2022

Running Time: 75 Minutes

Recommended for Grades: 8+

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YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AT ALBERTA THEATRE PROJECTS

Our Youth Engagement Programming aims to deepen the theatre experience for young audiences and emerging artists through our plays, varied practical learning opportunities, and professional mentorship. These programs foster community, engage the inquisitive mind, and bring young audiences and artists together in an exchange around our work.

We believe that early exposure to theatre is essential to learning and development, and positively impacts the creativity and overall performance of the young people in our community. It is this belief that fuels our dedication to making ATP, and the contemporary live theatre we create, accessible to ALL youth – no matter their economic status, race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religious beliefs, gender, disability or sexual orientation. The plays on our stage include a wide range of stories and perspectives, reflecting our community in all its diversity and are in sync with what it means to be alive right now.

Driven by an attitude of curiosity in all we do, we encourage a sense of discovery in the young people who engage with us. We delight in seeing young minds and hearts opened through the life-changing experience of theatre.

YOUth belong here at ATP!

Alberta Theatre Projects takes great pride in fostering young and emerging artists in the community, particularly our playwrights and new works creators. We do this through a number of programs:

Backstage Tours: Go behind the scenes to meet the makers and marvellous technicians who bring the plays on our stage to life. Alberta Theatre Projects provides information-packed, interactive guided tours of our entire theatre facility.

Job Shadowing: Spend some time with us at ATP shadowing professional artists. Job shadows are set up on a show by show basis pending production schedules and artist availability. Job Shadowing opportunities include: Artistic Direction, Play Development, Directing, Acting, Design, and much more.

For More Information about all of our Youth Engagement Programs Contact:

Vicki Trask vtrask@atplive.com
Youth Engagement & Artist Liaison

ALBERTATHEATREPROJECTS.COM

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CAST

Alixandra Cowman
Anna Dalglish
Daniel Fong
Jeremy Carver-James
Kodie Rollan

CREATIVE TEAM

Director – Mieko Ouchi
Musical Director – Joe Slabe
Set & Lighting Design – Scott Reid
Stage Manager – Ashley Rees
Assistant Stage Manager – Emma Slunt

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SYNOPSIS

The group of artists welcome home their friend, Jeremy, who has been working in Toronto, with a good old fashioned kitchen party. They take turns sharing stories of their life and experiences through songs – both original and familiar – which demonstrate their journeys as artists and humans in Alberta.

Some were born and raised in Calgary, whereas others have only been living in the city for a few short years but already call it home (while others struggle to decide where to call home at all). There are songs sung as solos, duets, and groups in a multitude of genres and arrangements including:

I's the B'y

Life is a Highway

Hand in My Pocket

Hey Look Ma I Made It

The Last Saskatchewan Pirate

As artists living and working across Canada, they share stories of their first auditions, their favourite shows, and how it feels to love and let go of every contract they take on.

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WHAT IS A KITCHEN PARTY?

In Canada, Kitchen Parties are a Maritime tradition of gathering in the kitchen to celebrate life with music and dancing. It is considered a staple of Newfoundland culture but there is no geographical limit to where these parties can be held.

The tradition dates back to early colonialists who settled on the island and gathered around the kitchen to tell stories and play music while they worked. It quickly became a place for the community to gather together and share their experiences.

The music played was less of a performance and more about creating the atmosphere for camaraderie. The songs were typically sea shanties and work songs – lyrics that everyone knew – and the dancing was unstructured but jovial. The concept of “chin music” – improvised in a spoken-tone – originated in these gatherings.

Kitchen Parties remain a common way to introduce new songs as well. Young and established musicians alike are able to share the space and experiment with different genres. Early musicians who printed their broadsides (single page sheet of lyrics) garnered more popularity in the early 1900s because they were more easily sharable among the community. These local songs would then spread to the public, played in other homes, on the radio, and eventually on television in shows such as “All Around the Circle” which were designed to preserve Irish and Newfoundland traditional music.

The launch of the East Coast Music Awards in 1991 stimulated the industry and saw the rise of many nationally recognized musicians such as: Harry Hibbs, Tom Power, Kim Stockwood, Amelia Curran, and Great Big Sea. Much of the folk music and ideas around “east-coast hospitality” are inspired by kitchen parties which invite neighbours and friends to share in an oral tradition which is as old as the commonwealth of Canada.

CREATING CANADIAN CONTENT

In 1932, the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission (CRBC) was established, tasked with regulating all television and radio distribution as it falls under federal government purview. The Canadian Radio Broadcasting Act (which first formed the CRBC) would be amended to become the Broadcasting Act which passed in 1991, with the intent to “serve to safeguard, enrich and strengthen the cultural, political, social and economic fabric of Canada”.

The Broadcasting Act also established the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) in 1976 which is responsible for defining and upholding the requirements for Canadian Content (CanCon). Radio and Television broadcasting in Canada is required to air a certain percentage of Canadian content every year – 40% and 50% respectively.

For radio and music, the definition of “CanCon” is laid out in the MAPL system:

- Music
- Artist
- Performance
- Lyrics

At least 2 of the categories must be created by Canadians in order for the piece to qualify.

For television, shows must be produced by Canadian companies (American series filmed in Canada, for example, would not meet the requirements) and aired during a certain time period. Many broadcasting companies (ex. CTV, Global) rely on news and daytime talk shows to fulfill their obligation for CanCon. Conversely, the Canadian Broadcasting Company (CBC) is required to produce 60%, the remaining typically being filled by British television.

Examples of Canadian Content include:

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| ➤ Alanis Morissette | ➤ Are You Afraid of the Dark? |
| ➤ Avril Lavigne | ➤ Caillou |
| ➤ Celine Dion | ➤ Degrassi |
| ➤ Gordon Lightfoot | ➤ Kim’s Convenience |
| ➤ Heart | ➤ Letterkenny |
| ➤ iskw? | ➤ Murdoch Mysteries |
| ➤ Joni Mitchell | ➤ Orphan Black |
| ➤ Leonard Cohen | ➤ Rookie Blue |
| ➤ Shawn Mendes | ➤ Schitt’s Creek |
| ➤ The Weeknd | ➤ Stargate SG-1 |

COLLECTIVE CREATION

Beginning in the late 1960s, Collective Creation (also known as “Devised Theatre”) became a way for artists to collaborate on a project as a group. Instead of one individual writing a show, everyone would work together and act as both writer and performer (at least). This method of playwriting developed in Canada as a way of exploring Canadian culture and history allowing artists to tell local stories with a quicker turnover on creation. Examples of Collective Creations include:

- The Farm Show (Theatre Passe Muraille)
- Ten Lost Years (Toronto Workshop Productions)
- Anna (Nightwood Theatre)
- The Great Divide (Theatre Kingston)
- The Addiction Project (Magnus Theatre)

Though it’s not used as commonly now, it is still a viable option for writing and developing stories that are relevant to the political or socio-economic issues of the time. Alberta Kitchen Party, for example, is a collaboration between all of the artists, sharing their personal experiences of being an artist in Alberta – the struggles they face in uncertain times.

There are many advantages to working in a group to complete a project (like writing a show). The feedback on your ideas is immediate and you can bounce off other people to build on it. The time it takes to completely a project is also shortened because there are more people working towards the same goal.

The first thing to do when creatively collaborating is to set out each person’s role. For example:

- Mieko is the Director. She is in charge of deciding the blocking and pacing of the show (who stands where and when).
- Ashley is the Stage Manager. She is in charge of making sure everyone has what they need and that they’re saying the right lines.
- Daniel is a Co-writer. He has a hand in deciding what songs and words are performed – including choosing the song he will sing for his solo.
- Alixandra is a Co-Writer and Musician. She not only decides the songs but she also writes some of them.
- Kate is the Head of Props. She will gather any props – things that the actors hold and interact with – and make sure that they look the way they’ve been designed to look.

Everyone has a role to play and each person has a set of skills they can use to contribute to the project. Everyone is treated as equals. It’s important to understand that feedback is not the same as criticism and criticism without a solution is useless. Collaboration is not a competition and every individual skill has the same value.

Working together to finish a project (like writing a show) requires a lot of hard work and a lot of patience. It is sometimes easy to want to take control of a situation but listening to others and compromising will ultimately create a stronger product.

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LEARNING NEW SKILLS

Alberta Kitchen Party is a mix of new and familiar songs but not all of the music was intended for a single piano. Many of the artists will be playing instruments as well as singing and acting. Though some have been playing for many years, others will be learning these instruments for the first time.

Because of the limited time, they will be utilizing all of their senses when memorizing the music, including sight-singing and playing-by-ear.

Sheet music can give the artist clues, however, for where to start. Take a look at the opening line of this song:

The image shows a musical score for the opening line of 'Alberta Kitchen Party'. It consists of three staves. The top staff is a single treble clef staff in 4/4 time, with guitar chords C, C/E, and F indicated above it. The middle staff is a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with a piano accompaniment. The bottom staff is a single bass clef staff. The music is in 4/4 time and the key signature is C major. The piano part starts with a forte (sf) dynamic and then moves to mezzo-forte (mf). There is a thick black barred area between the top and middle staves, likely indicating a video or audio recording.

There's a lot you can learn about a song before you even look at the notes. For example:

These connected lines on the "grand staff" indicate that they are played by one instrument while the singular line above is played by another (in this case, it is voice on top and piano on the bottom).

If there are no sharps or flats to indicate the key signature, it is in the key of "C" which means no modifications are made to the notes.

4/4 time means you are counting 4 "quarter note" beats per bar. This is the most common time signature.

Guitar Chords will appear above the staff (and if the composer is generous, they'll include the fingering as well).

This image shows the same musical score as above, but with annotations. A box on the left points to the grand staff with the text: "These connected lines on the 'grand staff' indicate that they are played by one instrument while the singular line above is played by another (in this case, it is voice on top and piano on the bottom)." A box at the top points to the key signature with the text: "If there are no sharps or flats to indicate the key signature, it is in the key of 'C' which means no modifications are made to the notes." A box in the middle points to the time signature with the text: "4/4 time means you are counting 4 'quarter note' beats per bar. This is the most common time signature." A box on the right points to the guitar chords with the text: "Guitar Chords will appear above the staff (and if the composer is generous, they'll include the fingering as well)." The guitar chords C, C/E, and F are shown above the top staff.

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DESIGN

Set and Lighting Design by Scott Reid



The Alberta Kitchen Party Set is meant to represent a practical house with working taps and lights and even a back porch for when you need a bit of fresh air. It is also on an angle, allowing all rooms to be seen at all times and make the audience feel like they are a part of the experience.

TOPICS AND ACTIVITIES

<p>What defines a Canadian/Albertan? Present a song that most represents your life. List all of the media you consume in a week: how much of it is Canadian? Find a song that everyone knows and sing it together (no looking up the lyrics!)</p>
<p>Finish the lyrics to these Canadian songs:</p> <p>Baby - Justin Bieber "Said "there's another," and looked right in my eyes / My first love..."</p> <p>Call Me Maybe - Carly Rae Jepsen "I beg and borrow and steal / At first sight, and it's real / I didn't know I would feel it..."</p> <p>Everything Is Awesome! - Tegan & Sara "Everything is better when we stick together / Side by side you and I..."</p> <p>Girlfriend - Avril Lavigne "I can see the way, I see the way you look at me / And even when you look away..."</p> <p>It's All Coming Back To Me Now - Celine Dion "There were days when the sun was so cruel / That all the tears turned to dust / And I just knew..."</p> <p>Man I Feel Like A Woman - Shania Twain "The girls need a break, tonight we're gonna take / The chance to get out..."</p> <p>Raise a Little Hell - Trooper "If you don't like what you see, why don't you fight it? / If you know there's something wrong..."</p> <p>Rockin' in the Free World - Neil Young "Don't feel like Satan, / but I am to them / So I try to forget it..."</p> <p>Safety Dance - Men Without Hats "Say, we can act if we want to / If we don't nobody will / And you can act real rude and totally removed..."</p> <p>Sunglasses at Night - Corey Hart "Forget my name while you collect your claim / And..."</p>

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SOURCES

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<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/all-hands-together-chris-andrews-1.5851691>