



ELEPHANT WAKE

BY JOEY TREMBLAY

DIRECTED BY BRETTE GERECKE



“THIS IS A MEMORABLE
AND REMARKABLE
PIECE OF CHARACTER
DRIVEN VISUAL
THEATRE WHICH
YOU WILL FEEL
PRIVILEGED TO HAVE
EXPERIENCED.”

THE STAGE, LONDON ENGLAND

On the surface, this is a story of two Saskatchewan towns – Ste. Vierge, a defunct Francophone town and the prosperous nearby English town of Welby.

Jean Claude, the last member of a Catholic family who remains in Ste. Vierge tells the tale of how at one time, before the Ice Age, elephants were the size of gophers. Their insignificance is what allowed them to survive. Now he contends, his own marginalized existence will allow his town, his culture, and his family to thrive. This heroic and touching script tells the story of Jean Claude's life as he reminisces about growing up in the small town of Ste. Vierge. Seen from the eyes of a child, he recounts stories of growing up as the youngest member of a large family, his adventures as a choirboy and as a French student in an English school, in a rival town with his friends.



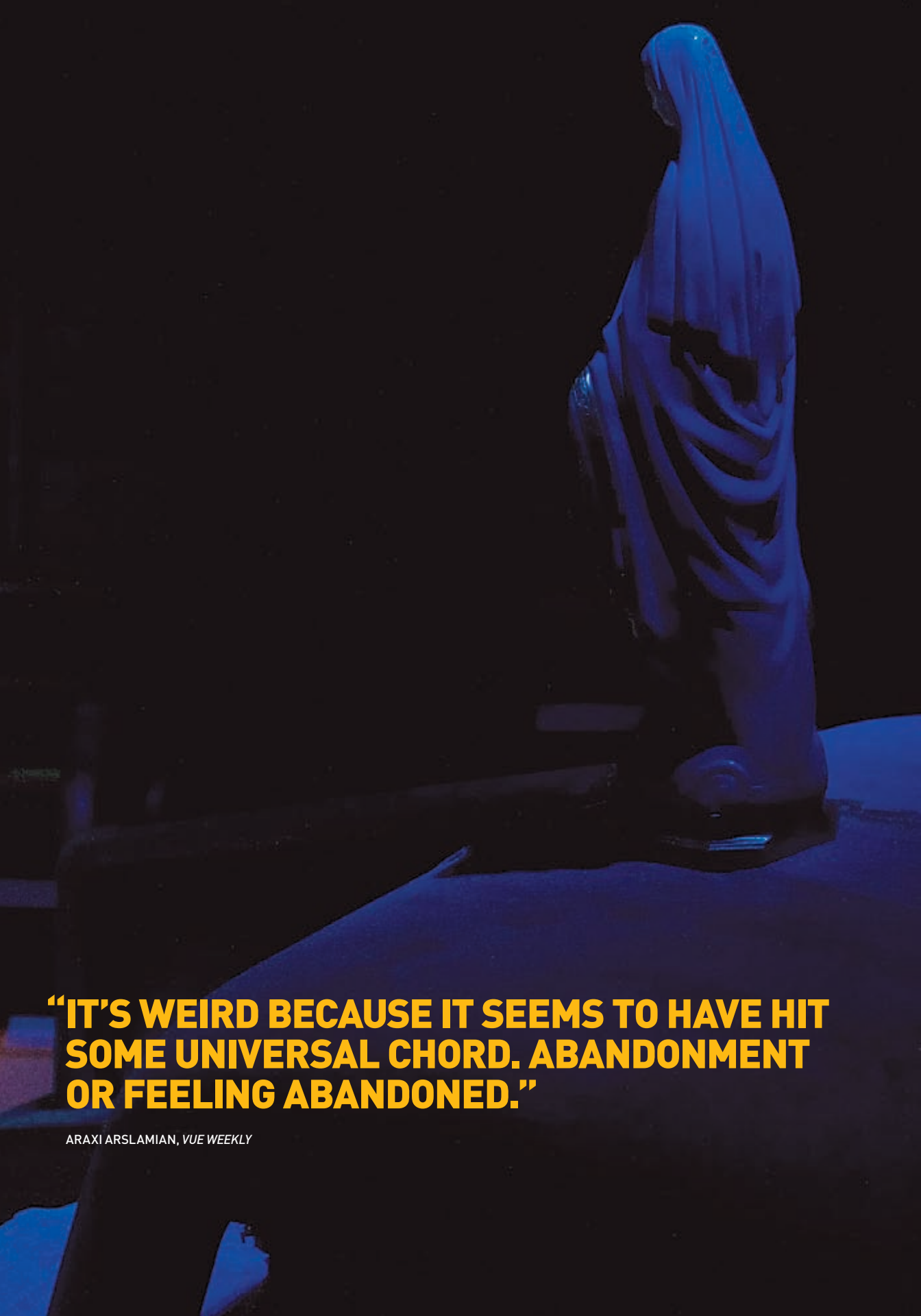
**“JEAN CLAUDE IS AN EMOTIONALLY
CHARGED INDIVIDUAL WHO CELEBRATES
THE JOY AND ENDURES THE PAIN.”**

NICK MILIOKAS, *THE LEADER POST*









“IT’S WEIRD BECAUSE IT SEEMS TO HAVE HIT SOME UNIVERSAL CHORD. ABANDONMENT OR FEELING ABANDONED.”

ARAXI ARSLAMIAN, VUE WEEKLY



“Tremblay’s performance captures both his rage and frustration in the face of a town’s decline and his Quixotic determination to save it.”

THE STAGE, LONDON ENGLAND

ON THE SURFACE, THIS IS A STORY ABOUT TWO SASKATCHEWAN TOWNS



BRETTA GERECKE | Director, Lighting, Set and Costume Designer

Bretta grew up in Winnipeg and has resided in Edmonton for the past 13 years. She graduated from the University of Manitoba with a Bachelor of Interior Design (1992) and from the University of Alberta with a Master of Fine Arts in Theatre Design (1996). Bretta is the resident designer at Catalyst Theatre, where she has designed world premieres which have toured internationally to Great Britain, Australia, the U.S. and Canada. Bretta also works at The Citadel Theatre, Edmonton Opera, Theatre Calgary, Canadian Stage, Calgary Opera and Globe Theatre. She is the recipient of 13 Elizabeth Sterling Hayes Awards for Outstanding Achievement in Set, Lighting and Costume Design, The Enbridge Award for Best Emerging Artist, and was shortlisted for The Siminovitch Prize. Bretta designed a summer home on Devil's Lake, Alberta and continues her work as an archaeological illustrator.

JOEY TREMBLAY | Jean Claude

Joey grew up in a very small hamlet called Ste. Marthe in Southeast Saskatchewan. He received a B.F.A. in Drama from the University of Regina (1987) and a diploma from the Vancouver Playhouse Acting School (1989). After working several years as a freelance actor, Joey co-founded Noises in the Attic, a theatre company mandated to produce and create new Canadian plays on the fringe festival circuit across Canada. From 1996 to 2002, Joey became Artistic Co-director of Catalyst Theatre in Edmonton where he wrote, directed and produced (and sometimes performed in) the following plays: *Electra*, *The Abundance Trilogy*, *My Perfect Heaven*, *Elephant Wake*, *Songs for Sinners*, *The House of Pootsie Plunket*, *The Blue Orphan* and *Carmen Angel*, which, combined, have garnered over 30 awards and nominations for outstanding work: including two Scotsman Fringe First awards for outstanding writing. Currently Joey is living in Regina and is pursuing his career as a freelance actor/director/writer/teacher. For Globe Theatre, Joey has written and directed, *The Alice Nocturne* and *George Dandin*. He devised and directed Fusion I, II and III. He performed in the plays *Man for all Seasons*, *Twelfth Night*, *Just So* and *Sylvia*.

Elephant Wake – Technical Information Summary

Running time: 2 hours including interval

Size of Company: 4; actor, stage manager, technician, tour manager

Production Notes: Tour Ready. Adaptable set, flexible for various venues including proscenium and thrust. Requires minimum 20' x 20' playing area. Minimal set, props and sound cues. Requires lighting pre-hang. Needs 1.5 days for load-in, cueing and rehearsal. Ready for performance the evening of the second day.

Fee Range: \$10,000-20,000

Some strong language.

For more technical details, please visit www.globetheatretive.com/tours/elephantwake.html

JEAN CLAUDE TELLS THE TALE OF HOW AT ONE TIME, ELEPHANTS WERE THE SIZE OF GOPHERS

WRITER'S NOTES

I have to admit that even in its initial form as a short-story called *An Elephant Memory*, I was never interested in retelling the somewhat overwrought narrative of Canada's conflicting two solitudes. In my opinion too much emphasis on the age old conflict between the English and the French would detract from the real heart of the play and, frankly make the piece less thematically universal. I wanted the audience to share a visceral experience of the conflict between memory and reality, between nostalgia and progress, between stasis and change, between cultural preservation and cultural Darwinism. In the end I wanted to examine the questions of what is truly worth holding on to and what is necessary to let go? Or furthermore how does nostalgia impede progress and how does progress eliminate our connection with the past?

On a very personal level, *Elephant Wake* is my coming of age story. It grew out of a moment when I realized I was no longer a boy and that myself and the place I grew up in was rapidly evolving into something different. This self-reflective epiphany, where I balanced precariously between the future and the past, was very profound for me, as it was a complex moment of beauty, fear, sadness, and joy. It is precisely the essence of this moment that spawned the character of Jean Claude. With his child-like simplicity, he is able to live forever in a space where the past, the present and the future are one and the same. He has not grown up. So despite the incredible amount of loss and solitude that defines his world, he is still able to defy despair by populating his community with wonderful old memories and cling to an unbreakable sense of hope. This quality becomes both an admirable feat of innocence and a sorrowful tragic flaw.

In post-colonial Canada, I think we can all identify with Jean Claude's condition. All of us have experienced loss of some kind, whether that is a loss of our power and privilege, a loss of our cultural identity, a loss of our language, or a loss of our way of life. We all know what it means to stand in awe before change and progress, and feel both incredibly excited and horribly frightened. What will be lost? What will be gained? What do we carry with us, and what do we discard? Who will win? And who will lose? Will we all experience progress equally and if not how will we treat those left behind?

It is these questions which compelled me to revisit and rework this ten year old script. Intuitively, I felt that deep within the central metaphor lived a theme that felt so applicable to the modern Canadian experience: a theme that went far beyond the old conflict between two ancient European cultures; a theme that spoke directly to what we are now and what we are becoming.

For more information on this production and the tour, please contact the *Elephant Wake*
Tour Manager: Connie Renwick | 306.924.2824 | connier@globetheatrelive.com
For further information, please visit www.globetheatrelive.com/tours/elephantwake.html





“Once in a rare while, when the moon waxes blue, the planets line up and the lion lies down with the lamb, a play like *Elephant Wake* comes to the stages of Edmonton to transport us to a place of awe.”

SEE MAGAZINE, EDMONTON, ALBERTA



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