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History Theatre 2026-27 Season Begins with Fancy Dancer by Larrisa FastHorse

49th Season marks the debut of the new Executive Director and Artistic Director

SAINT PAUL, MN — History Theatre is excited to kick off its 49th season with the regional premiere of **FANCY DANCER**, an autobiographical solo play by acclaimed playwright Larissa FastHorse (**THE THANKSGIVING PLAY**, **THE DEMOCRACY PROJECT**). **FANCY DANCER**, based on the playwright's own story, is a rich, joyful experience about the power of storytelling and the beauty of finding your own community. Tickets are on sale now at historytheatre.com, with performances September 12-October 4, 2026.

The season kick-off also marks the first season for History Theatre's Executive Director Rob Thomas and Artistic Director Laura Leffler.

"This History Theatre is a place where all are welcome and where all stories can, and should, be told. I'm ecstatic to host this story about an amazing Native woman - FastHorse herself (Sicangu Lakota) - who was inspired by another amazing Native woman - America's first prima ballerina, Maria Tallchief (Osage)," Leffler said.

Leffler shares that audiences will fall in love with this beautiful "underdog makes good" story by the award-winning playwright. Lara/Larissa feels like a misfit in rural South Dakota—Half-Native, Half-White, weighed down by physical limitations—until a photo of prima ballerina Maria Tallchief introduces her to dance, which cracks her world wide open.

"I hope everyone comes to this play. It's really for the misfits, the ones that felt like they didn't know who they were or how they fit. Those that knew what they wanted but not how to get it. For anyone who has dreamed and had it crushed. It's for anyone who has kept trying when everyone said no. It's for people who love ballet. And people who hate ballet," said FastHorse, who will be performing it at 55. "It's for folks who want to do something, and they think they're too late. And of course, it's for young folks to know that the road rarely looks like you thought it would, but it can still get you there."

Years ago, Leffler fell in love with FastHorse's dark comedy, **THE THANKSGIVING PLAY**. It was no surprise to Leffler to hear that it moved to Broadway in 2023. "Her writing is always clever, direct, and open. This piece is laced with such hope and love. I can't wait for audiences here to experience it."

FastHorse has been a groundbreaking force in American theater – an award-winning playwright, choreographer, and performer who has spent her career re-imagining the stories we tell, and who gets to tell them. Her modern classic **THE THANKSGIVING PLAY** has had more than 300 productions around the world (including a Broadway run) since its 2018 premiere, and her plays **FAKE IT UNTIL YOU MAKE IT**, **WHAT WOULD CRAZY HORSE DO?**, and a new adaptation of the musical **PETER PAN** have been seen at leading

theaters around the country. Her distinct writing voice is often funny, highly theatrical, provocative, and urgently necessary, always ensuring that Indigenous characters are centered and celebrated.

"I'm very happy to be writing a play that grandparents can enjoy with their grandchildren and teens at every age in between. I love to see families walk out of the theater talking about their different perspectives on life. And, I love seeing the little ones in their ballet best at the show. It gives me life on stage. But the older folks, the ones crying or still with their own memories, those folks mean everything to me," FastHorse said.

The cast of **FANCY DANCER** features **Larissa FastHorse** as Lara/Larissa. The creative team includes **Larissa FastHorse** (Playwright), **Chay Yew** (Director, also directed FANCY DANCER Seattle Rep world premiere, 2025), **Junghyun Georgia Lee** (Scenic Designer), **Sadie Ward** (Scenic Design Associate), **Caite Hevner** (Projection Designer), **Leslie Ritenour** (Projection Designer Associate), **Mary Kelsay** (Costume Designer), **Geoff Korf** (Lighting Designer), **Lily McLeod** (Lighting Designer Associate), **Rob Witmer** (Sound Designer), **Bailey Fenn** (Sound Designer Associate), **Jess Yates** (Associate Director), and **Tree O'Halloran** (Stage Manager).

FANCY DANCER received its world premiere at Seattle Rep in 2025 with great press reviews:

- *MPX*: "FastHorse threads humor, heartbreak, and triumph into a coming-of-age tale that lands across generations."
- *BroadwayWorld*: "A feast for the eyes as well as the soul."
- *The Seattle Times*: "...what a story it is, of a loner finding safety and purpose in art, truly incredible acts of perseverance and a young person's magical thinking about what will fix all their problems."
- *The Seattle Times*: "...magically, at the end, I just felt ... better. More hopeful about the world."

Fancy Dancer Photos (Seattle Rep, 2025)

Link to photos, <https://bit.ly/Fancy25>

- Print/High Resolution photos
- Web/Low Resolution photos
- Larissa FastHorse photos

Contact In-Fin Tuan (pr@historytheatre.com or 402-332-7186) with any requests for interviews, additional bios, or past production photos.

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Fancy Dancer

- Opens: Saturday, September 12, 2026
- Through: Sunday, October 4, 2026
- Previews September 10-11, 2026

Thursdays 10 am; Thursdays, Fridays & Saturdays 7:30 pm; Saturdays & Sundays 2 pm

Performing at History Theatre, 30 East Tenth Street, St. Paul, MN 55101

Ticket Information

- Tiers 1-5: \$25-66
- Students: \$15
- Additional discounts are available for seniors (available online), patrons under 30, and veterans (must call to purchase). Call 651-292-4323 or visit historytheatre.com.
- Discount rates for groups of 10 or more. Call 651-292-4320 or email groups@historytheatre.com.

Accessibility at History Theatre

History Theatre strives to make all events accessible to all patrons. When purchasing tickets, please alert the box office of any accommodation or assistance needed. Accessibility offerings include hearing enhancement receivers, seating for patrons with wheelchairs and their companions, accessible restrooms, an entrance on Cedar St., and an elevator right to the theater level for easy access. Contact the box office at 651-292-4323 for more information, visit www.historytheatre.com/box-office/accessibility

- **Audio Description/ASL:** Saturday, September 26, 2 pm
- **Open Caption:** Saturday, October 3, 2 pm, and Sunday, October 4, 2 pm

Afterthoughts (Post-Show Discussion)

Sundays following performance; *FREE* to ticketed patrons

History Theatre will host a discussion following every Sunday matinee featuring special guests.

Visit historytheatre.com for updates

- Sundays, September 13, 20, 27, October 4

About History Theatre

History Theatre entertains, educates, and engages through creating, developing, and producing new and existing works that explore Minnesota's past and the diverse American experience. Its work provides a unique lens which links our past to the present, explores our common heritage, and illuminates our understanding of what it means to be American. www.historytheatre.com

Land Acknowledgement: History Theatre sits on the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary land of the Dakota people, for whom the land holds historical, spiritual, and political significance. We recognize and honor the Dakota people, ancestors, and descendants, as well as the land itself, and all the sovereign Native nations in Minnesota and beyond. We recognize that this acknowledgement itself is not enough, and only serves as a first step towards decolonization.

About the Playwright/Performer: Larissa FastHorse

Larissa FastHorse (Sicangu Lakota Nation) is a 2025 Guggenheim Fellow, 2020 MacArthur Fellow (Genius Grant), professor of practice (literature) at Arizona State University's Department of English, award winning writer/choreographer, and co-founder of Indigenous Direction, the nation's leading consulting company for Indigenous arts and audiences. Larissa's revised book of the beloved Jerome Robbins Broadway musical, *Peter Pan*, toured nationally and internationally. She made her Broadway debut in the 2022-2023 season with her satirical comedy, *The Thanksgiving Play*, making her the first known female, Native playwright to be produced on Broadway. *The Thanksgiving Play* is one of the most produced plays in America and abroad with over 300 separate productions. In fall of 2025, Larissa performed her autobiographical solo show, *Fancy Dancer*, in collaboration with Seattle Children's Theatre and Seattle Rep.

In 2019 Larissa entered film and television with a series at Freeform, a movie for Disney Channel, and a series for NBC. Since then she has been in development for projects with AppleTV, Taylor Made Productions, Echo Lake, Dreamworks, Fox, Teen Nick, and Netflix. Larissa began her writer training as a Sundance Native Feature Fellow, Fox Diversity Fellow, ABC Native American Fellow, and an intern at Universal Pictures before writing for theater.

Additional produced plays include *Fake it Until You Make It* (Center Theatre Group/Arena Stage), *For The People* (Guthrie), *The Democracy Project*, *What Would Crazy Horse Do?* (KCRep), *Landless* and *Cow Pie Bingo* (AlterTheater), *Average Family* (Children's Theater Company of Minneapolis), *Teaching Disco Squaredancing to Our Elders: a Class Presentation* (Native Voices at the Autry), *Vanishing Point* (Eagle Project), and *Cherokee Family Reunion* (Mountainside Theater). She develops work with the top theaters including Center Theatre Group, The Public, Second Stage, Yale Rep, Cornerstone, and Arena Stage.

Over the past several years, Larissa has created a nationally recognized trilogy of community engaged plays with Michael John Garcés and Cornerstone Theater Company— *Urban Rez*, *Native Nation*, and *Wicoun*. The trilogy is coming out as a book, *Native Nation Project* (TCG Books 2025). The second play, *Native Nation*, was the largest Indigenous theater production in the history of American theater with over 400 Native artists involved in the production in association with ASU Gammage. Larissa's radical inclusion process with Indigenous tribes has been honored with the most prestigious national arts funding from MacArthur, Creative Capital, MAP Fund, NEFA, First People's Fund, the NEA Our Town Grant, Mellon Foundation, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and others. Larissa's company, Indigenous Direction, recently produced the first land acknowledgement on national television for the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade on NBC. Along with partner Ty Defoe, their groundbreaking work is redefining Indigenous art representation and education in America.

Larissa's other awards include the PEN/Laura Pels Theater Award for an American Playwright, NEA Distinguished New Play Development Grant, Joe Dowling Annamaghkerrig Fellowship, AATE Distinguished Play Award, Inge Residency, Sundance/Ford Foundation Fellowship, Aurand Harris Fellowship, and the UCLA Native American Program Woman of the Year. She is vice chair of the board of directors of Playwrights Horizons and represented by Jonathan Mills at Paradigm NY. She lives in Santa Monica with her husband, the sculptor Edd Hogan.