

Harvest Justice TWICE THE SPEED OF LIGHTNING

We all think about the cost of food. But do we think about the human cost? What is it like for the people working on Ontario's farms?



Written By
Catherine Frid



Directed and
Facilitated By
Simon Malbogat

Interactive Forum Theatre

The story will be performed once for our audience. Then we will perform it a second time and audience members will be invited to step onstage as **spect-actors** to replace the actors and change the story.



COLLABORATIVE NETWORK
TO END EXPLOITATION



MIXED
COMPANY
THEATRE
40+ years



cnee.ca/harvestjustice

Show Credits

Cast

James.....	Troy Crossfield*
Diego.....	Manuel Chaves
Customs Officer/Supervisor/Bill.....	Robert Bellissimo*
Liaison Officer/Sammy/ Service Canada Representative.....	Iza Rincón

Production Team

Playwright.....	Catherine Frid
Director and Facilitator.....	Simon Malbogat*
Stage Manager.....	Sabrina Weinstein*
Set Designer	Marysia Bucholc
Costume Designer.....	Angela Thomas
Lighting Designer.....	Stevie Baker
Sound Designer.....	Maranda Tippins
Sound Design Assistant.....	Gabriela Chanen

** The participation of these Artists is arranged by permission of Canadian Actors' Equity Association under the provisions of the Dance Opera Theatre Policy (DOT).*

About Forum Theatre

Forum Theatre is an interactive approach that involves the audience in developing real-time strategies for dealing with social issues. In a Mixed Company production, a story representing an issue is created, rehearsed and performed. The story is then presented again—only this second time, audience members can intervene in the story, as “spect-actors,” to create a positive alternative ending. A trained Forum Theatre facilitator (the Joker) prepares and encourages participants to replace the actors on stage and to change the story in a constructive way.

About *Harvest Justice: Twice the Speed of Lightning*

Getting approved to work in Canada as a migrant farm worker seems like the opportunity of a lifetime for Diego, a new father from Mexico. However, this dream quickly becomes a nightmare upon arrival as he is forced into dangerous work, unsanitary and cramped living conditions, and is economically exploited.

James, a long-time worker in the program from Jamaica, works hard and takes Diego under his wing as he tries to advocate for changes to make the farm and program a safer place for workers.

As the injustices pile up against these workers, and the system provides little opportunity for recourse, the play asks: can anything be done to better support workers in Canada's Temporary Foreign Worker program? How can we as Canadian citizens work to ensure fair and safe working conditions for those doing essential work for Canada's economy and ensure a sustainable food system?

Harvest Justice: Twice the Speed of Lightning, written by Catherine Frid, is an interactive Forum Theatre presentation that was created through interviews and conversations with 15 current and former migrant workers who shared their experiences.

After seeing the play, audiences will be invited to discuss the issues, direct the actors, or roleplay their ideas to discover how we can all create positive change.

Advisory

This production depicts the exploitation of migrant workers on Ontario farms, performing jobs that make them vulnerable to unsafe working conditions, harassment, and exploitation. Triggers include depictions of racism, insulting gestures, and physical and emotional harm.



About the Cast

Troy Crossfield

Troy is the CEO of Crossfield House Productions (CHP), celebrated for curating soul-stirring narratives in both theatre and film. Since 2016, CHP has consistently delivered sold-out shows, earning esteemed recognition like the 2018 People's Choice Award for Stage Production of the Year.



Troy, a multi-hyphenated talent as an actor and songwriter signed with OAZ acting agency, has graced major films like *Sisterly Christmas*, and holds a significant songwriting deal with Sony ATV. He recently won the 2023 People's Choice By Blacks Award for Director of the Year. His accolades include being among the 2022 Outstanding Black Men in Canada (*SHIFT Magazine*) and winning the 2021 Best Actor title at the Canadian Diversity Film Festival. He has directed and produced content for Sony ATV and TD Bank, and his films *SOAP DISH* and *Out of Order* have garnered acclaim at prestigious festivals, including the Montreal Black Film Festival. In addition to his creative pursuits, Troy fosters a safe space for Black men through his impactful initiative, Iron Sharpens Iron.

Manuel Chaves

Manuel is a multi-award-winning actor born in Bogotá, Colombia, with extensive experience in theatre, film, and television. He first gained recognition in the show *De Pies a Cabeza*, winning the India Catalina and TV y Novelas awards for Breakthrough Performance of the Year.



Following this success, he travelled to Paris to perform in Augusto Boal's *Théâtre de l'Opprimé*. His television career continued with notable roles in shows such as *Francisco el Matemático*, *Pura Sangre*, *El Capo*, and *La Saga*. In 2004, Manuel received a nomination for a Colombian acting award for his portrayal of *Ernesto Manrique*.

His filmography includes over 13 features, including *Soñar No Cuesta Nada*, *Como el Gato y el Ratón*, *Edipo Alcalde*, and *Afuera del Tiempo*. His performance in *La Luciérnaga* was nominated for Best Supporting Actor at the Macondo Awards, Colombia's prestigious film awards, in 2016. His work is also featured in *Bolívar*, co-produced by Netflix. Manuel was the guest star in the international tour of *Betty La Fea*. *Twice the Speed of Lightning* is his Canadian debut.

Robert Bellissimo

Robert has appeared in numerous plays, television shows, commercials and feature films, such as TV's *Private Eyes* (with Jason Priestley), the Canadian feature film *Robbery* (Amazon Prime), and *Moose on the Loose* (produced at Magnus Theatre in Thunder Bay, Ontario). Robert teaches scene study classes at Talent INC Canada, as well as privately. *Twice The Speed of Lightning* is Robert's second time in a Mixed Company production after first appearing in *Push* (2022).



Iza Rincón

Iza is an actor and singer born and raised in Tijuana, Mexico. She moved to Toronto in 2022 to realize her dream to perform and create art across borders. She is a recent graduate from George Brown Theatre School. She has worked with some of Canada's distinguished theatre professionals such as Stewart Arnott, Jeannette Lambergmont-Morey, Matt Pilipiak, and Nicole Wilson in her time at George Brown.



Notable credits include: the title role in *Anna Karenina*, Ms. Gomez in *Carnival of Munsch* (George Brown), Conspirator 9 in *The Ensemble* (Perchance Productions), Mads in *The Last Mammoth* (Good Old Neon), and Bruja in *Velum* (Short Film, Fugitiva Productions). Iza is passionate about using magical realism to bridge the border between Mexican and Canadian theatre in order to blend the depth of the former with the richness of the latter.

About the Creative Team

Marysia Bucholc, Set Designer

Marysia has been designing and building sets for over 25 years, twice nominated for a Dora Mavor Moore Award, for *Treasure Island* (Solar Stage, 2018) and *Kafka and Son* (Theaturtle, 2006). Recent sets include: *The Green House* (Alumnae Fireworks Festival, 2025), *Mary's Daughters* at The Space, London UK (BiLLO Studio) and more.



Angela Thomas, Costume Designer

Angela's career spans 25 years, designing costumes for theatre, opera, dance and more, working with directors Ida Carnevalli, Jim Millan, Ed Roy, Robert Winslow, Valerie Buhaghiar, Keira Loghran, Jacquie Thomas/ Michael Spence and Soheil Parsa. She won the 2015 Dora Mavor Moore Award for costumes in *Blood Wedding*. She has been assistant designer and BG Coordinator for TV's *Coroner*, *The Next Step*, and *The Strain* and many other shows.



Stevie Baker, Lighting Designer

Stevie is a director, producer and designer based in Severn, Ontario. She is President of the Mariposa Arts Theatre Foundation (MAT), General Manager of Mixed Company, and a director on the board of Arts Orillia. Recent lighting design credits: *A Streetcar Named Desire* (MAT, 2025), Mafa Thomas' *Umsamo – A Philosophy of African Self-Emancipation* (2025), *Gypsy: A Musical Fable* (MAT, 2024) and others.



Simon Malbogat, Director & Facilitator

Simon co-founded Mixed Company Theatre in 1983. He has over 30 years' experience as a director, dramaturg, teacher, actor, and workshop facilitator. Teaching highlights include University of Toronto, Concordia, York,



Humber, Brock and Simon has facilitated hundreds of workshops for youths and adults in Europe, South America, USA and Canada, and has facilitated over 1,000 Forum Theatre presentations. He has led workshops in Turkey, Brazil, Finland, and Ukraine. In Toronto, he has been involved in developing the arts in the community with programs for families, women, seniors, youth, homeless adults and youth and persons with disabilities.

Sabrina Weinstein, Stage Manager

Sabrina is a stage manager, producer, and multidisciplinary theatre artist. She is a graduate of the UofT's Centre for Drama Theatre and Performance Studies and Theatre by the Bay's Indie Producer Co-Op program. Stage management credits include *Grease* (Drayton Entertainment), *Bad Roads* (Crow's Theatre), *Maanomaa*; *My Brother* (Canadian Stage/Bluebird Theatre Collective), *Fertility* (Light Echo Theatre) and many more.



Maranda Tippins, Sound Designer

Maranda graduated from York University in 2019 with a Bachelor's Degree in Theatre, specializing in Devised Theatre and Playwriting. She has completed a post-graduate certificate in Arts Administration and Cultural Management at Humber College. She has worked with Mixed Company Theatre for five years. She previously taught children's classes at the Visual Arts Centre of Clarington, and completed internships with The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery and the Lakeshore Grounds Interpretive Centre.



Catherine Frid, Playwright

Catherine is a Guelph-based playwright whose work and community-engaged co-creations have been produced by Mixed Company Theatre, Toronto Fringe, SummerWorks, Guelph Museums, Kitchener's Unhinged Festival, Alumnae Theatre and others. She has taught dramaturgy at TMU's Chang School, and has been Playwright in Residence at Mixed Company Theatre and Artist in Residence at Osgoode Hall Law School. catherinefrid.com



A Snapshot of Migrant Worker Exploitation in Canada

*Our Collaborative Network to End Exploitation
definition of who migrant workers are:*

Migrant workers come to Canada from all around the world to harvest produce, care for families, construct houses, cook meals, and live in communities across Canada.



Migrant workers can stay in Canada only for short periods of time and cannot bring their families with them. They are restricted from accessing many of the protections and services that are in place for Canadian workers.

Systemic shortfalls in Canadian immigration and labour laws expose many migrant workers coming to Canada to labour trafficking and exploitation. This is due to their precarious immigration status, and lack of viable pathways to permanent residency among others, creating conditions for widespread exploitation.



Learn more at

www.cnee.ca/exploitation

COLLABORATIVE NETWORK
TO END EXPLOITATION

The Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP)

1973

TFWP introduced to help Canadian businesses fill job vacancies.



2-Stream Program



1. High-Wage Stream - managerial positions with a pathway to permanent residency.
2. Low-Wage Stream - no pathway to permanent residency with minor exceptions.

Categories of Low-Wage Jobs

Careworkers, food service, hospitality, construction, agriculture among others.



SAWP

The Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP) is a specific series of contracts Canada has with many Global South countries, including Mexico and Jamaica. Workers need an invitation from a Canadian employer to come, and only for job shortages in the agricultural sector.



Closed Work Permits

Work permits preventing migrant workers from changing employers is only one example of a policy within Canada's immigration system enabling exploitation of migrants.



Denied Labour Protection

Labour legislation in Ontario offers weak or no protection to migrant workers. They are denied minimum wage, overtime pay, and collective bargaining rights, among others.



Take Action

Talk with your MP, join a migrant workers' group or coalition, participate in campaigns. Learn more at: www.cnee.ca





The Cycle of **EXPLOITATION**

1. Recruitment

Workers are recruited within their country of origin to participate in temporary foreign work programs. Typically, there is income insecurity: loss of land or livelihood, unemployment, disaster, familial debt, etc.



2. Arrival & Containment

Once workers arrive in Canada, there are specific challenges: Their employment is tied to one employer who arranges transport & accommodation, limiting contact between workers and other agencies.



3. Uninformed Agreement

Workers may be required to sign contracts they do not understand without interpreters, translations or literacy support. These contracts may include deductions from pay, costs of accommodation, waivers from risks, often signed without informed consent.





The Cycle of EXPLOITATION

4. Remote Restriction

Seasonal agricultural workers are often in rural and remote areas without access to support services or resources.



5. Value Diminished

This labour stream is categorized as low-skilled labour, despite the essential work and skillsets, with no regard for years of experience. Workers are used seasonally and sent back to their country of origin.



6. Suppression

Wages for this work are kept artificially low, yet are essential to our agricultural industry and food production systems. This distorts the value of the labour provided and the economic structure of the industry.





The Cycle of **EXPLOITATION**

7. Permanently Temporary

This keeps workers caught in a cycle of temporary employment, artificially low wages and recurring loans. The split nature of the program also severely limits civic participation and advocacy in both Canada and their country of origin.



8. Options Curtailed

As workers often take out loans to pay program fees and often come from situations of insecurity, leaving harmful employers is not a viable option. With no access to protections, the cycle of insecurity and exploitation is able to continue.



9. Isolated & Alone

Workers spend the majority of each year on a farm in Ontario, away from their families, their culture, and their networks of support.





The Cycle of **EXPLOITATION**

10. Departure & Return

They return home for a brief period and then must return to Canada for the next growing season, keeping up this cycle of labour for artificially low wages, sending what money they can home.



11. Payment Without Access

They work year after year for as long as their health can endure it. They do not have access to retirement savings despite paying into CPP and other federal tax programs.



12. Cyclical & Generational

Workers are unable to stop working or earn enough to establish other livelihoods. Other family members, and adult offspring must then incur recruitment costs to join similar programs...





The Cycle of **EXPLOITATION**

1. The Cycle Repeats with Recruitment

Workers are recruited within their country of origin to participate in temporary foreign work programs. Typically, there is income insecurity: loss of land or livelihood, unemployment, disaster, familial debt...

The Need for a Canadian Food System

With tariffs, climate change and inflation, Canada will increase dependence its own agriculture. "Business as usual" will lead to ongoing, abusive, unsafe working conditions for workers; further instability of food prices; inadequate wages; and reduced access to food.

While many farms and farm owners treat their workers fairly, exploitation of any scale is an affront to Canada's reputation as a country with strong human and labour rights.

Migrant worker groups consistently ask for:

**Access to pathways for permanent residency, if
they wish**

Open work permits

**Employers found to have exploited workers to be
barred from hiring migrant workers.**

For a future where Canadians can continue to reliably access food, the Temporary Foreign Worker Program must be fair, equitable, and safe for all.

Support Amnesty International Canada's

Campaign for Open Work Permits Petition



cnee.ca/aic



About the Collaborative Network to End Exploitation (CNEE)

CNEE is a collaboration of faith-based organizations, community groups, and individuals working to raise awareness about the spectrum of human exploitation to inspire action for structural and societal changes. It is administered by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto and supported by a core working group which consists of representatives from AMIGRAR Immigration Consulting Inc.; FCJ Refugee Centre; Office of Justice and Peace, Catholic Diocese of Hamilton; Mary Ward Centre, Loretto Sisters; The United Church of Canada; and KAIROS. cnee.ca



About Mixed Company Theatre (MCT)

Founded as an artist-run collective in 1983, this nationally recognized not-for-profit today uses Forum Theatre and interactive arts to Educate, Engage and Empower audiences in schools, communities and workplaces. Working in educational, workplace, and community settings, MCT's process of creating theatre invites people to rehearse for real-life situations of oppression, thereby empowering communities to address these issues and make strides towards a better world for everyone. mixedcompanytheatre.com

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**CATHERINE
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FOUNDATION**

And Also...

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Leah Watkiss

Acknowledgements – Labour

We acknowledge the labour and sacrifices of poor and racialized workers on the lands known as Canada. This nation's settler colonial history includes, among others, the exploited labour of:

- Over 200 years of enslaved African and Indigenous peoples.
- Chinese workers forced to pay a head tax, and performing work considered too dangerous for Canadian workers.
- Agricultural and other migrant workers indentured to their employers with closed-work permits.

These and other violent practices allowed Canada to accumulate wealth and power. Canada continues to profit from the historic and ongoing exploitation of poor and racialized people. Through our work in the Collaborative Network to End Exploitation, we are committed to redressing this legacy.

Acknowledgements – Land and Waters

Harvest Justice: Twice the Speed of Lightning is being presented across treaty lands with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.

The lands & waters around the Grand River, including Guelph, have served as traditional homes, and places of refuge, for many peoples over time, including the Attiwoonderonk and the Haudenosaunee. The Guelph British Methodist Episcopal Church has stood at 83 Essex Street since 1880. It was built by formerly enslaved Black individuals and their descendants who arrived in the area via the Underground Railroad.

The lands & waters that flow through Tkaronto/Toronto are part of the traditional territory of many nations, including the Anishinaabe, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Huron-Wendat. Native Earth Performing Arts has championed Indigenous artistic expression for over 42 years, and it strives to uphold Indigenous values in all its work.

