**FIRE SONG**
**World Premiere TIFF 2015**
**GAT PR Press Summary**

**Interviews Completed**

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|---|---|
| Wednesday, August 5 | **The Canadian Press**<br>Adam Garnet Jones<br>Jennifer Podemski<br><br>**eTalk**<br>Jennifer Podemski<br><br>**The Mind Reels**<br>Andrew Martin<br>Brendt Diabo<br>Ma Nee Chacaby<br><br>**CHCH The Watchlist**<br>Adam Garnet Jones<br>Brendt Diabo |
| Thursday, August 20 | **First Nations Drum Magazine**<br>Andrew Martin<br>Harley LeGarde<br>Jennifer Podemski<br>Mary Galloway |

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| | **Dryden Observer**<br>Adam Garnet Jones |
| | **Way Too Indie**<br>Adam Garnet Jones |
| Thursday, August 27 | **CIUT**<br>Adam Garnet Jones |
| | **Toronto Film Scene**<br>Adam Garnet Jones |
| Thursday, September 3 | **Muskrat Magazine**<br>Adam Garnet Jones |
| Friday, September 4 | **CBC Unreserved**<br>Andrew Martin |
| | **IndieWire**<br>Adam Garnet Jones |
| | **The Globe and Mail**<br>Jennifer Podemski |

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| Friday, September 4 | **CBC Radio Thunder Bay**<br>Harley Legarde<br>Adam Garnet Jones |
| Tuesday, September 8 | **CanCulture**<br>Andrew Martin<br>Mary Galloway<br>Adam Garnet Jones |
| Wednesday, September 9 | **Daily Xtra**<br>Adam Garnet Jones |
| Thursday, September 10 | **CP24**<br>Jennifer Podemski |
| | **Toronto Star**<br>Jennifer Podemski |
| | **Studio 12 News/ Monsters and Critics**<br>Jennifer Podemski |
| Friday, September 11 | **eTalk**<br>Jennifer Podemski |

**What She Said**
Jennifer Podemski
Mary Galloway

**Your World This Week**
Jennifer Podemski

**CBC**
Jennifer Podemski

**CBC Arts Online**
Jennifer Podemski

**CityTV**
Jennifer Podemski
Adam Garnet Jones

Saturday, September 12

**Your World This Week**
Adam Garnet Jones
Mary Galloway
Harley Legarde
Andrew Martin

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|---|---|
| | **CBC**<br>Adam Garnet Jones |
| | **Getty Images**<br>Adam Garnet Jones<br>Mary Galloway<br>Harley Legarde<br>Andrew Martin |
| | **Tribute.ca**<br>Adam Garnet Jones<br>Andrew Martin<br>Harley Legarde<br>Andrew Martin |
| Monday September 14 | **Canada AM**<br>Andrew Martin<br>Adam Garnet Jones |
| Thursday, September 17 | **CBC Metro Morning**<br>Adam Garnet Jones |

# FIRE SONG PRESS BREAKS at TIFF 2015 (MENTIONS)

**CBC.ca—August 5, 2015—TIFF 2015 for Canadian lineup**
http://www.cbc.ca/news/arts/tiff-2015-taps-ellen-page-ethan-hawke-films-for-canadian-lineup-1.3180129

Canadian films headed to the Toronto International Film Festival this year include a survival tale from Patricia Rozema starring Ellen Page, a political satire from Philippe Falardeau, a horror film from Bruce McDonald, and a reimagining of jazz trumpeter Chet Baker's life, starring Ethan Hawke.

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Fire Song, directed by Adam Garnet Jones, about a young man who moves back to a remote aboriginal community when his sister commits suicide.

Homegrown films compete for the best Canadian feature prize and best Canadian first feature prize.

Festival organizers also announced this year's rising stars, a program meant to shine the spotlight on emerging actors: Deragh Campbell, Stephan James, Aliocha Schneider and Karelle Tremblay are featured.

The Toronto International Film Festival runs Sept. 10 to 20.

**The Kingston Whig-Standard—August 5, 2015—TIFF 2015 for Canadian lineup**
http://www.thewhig.com/2015/08/05/tiffs-canuck-lineup-highlighted-by-films-from-rozema-falardeau-mcdonald-maddin

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**PLAY BACK—August 24, 2015—CMPA reveals shortlist for Feature Film Producer's Award**
http://playbackonline.ca/2015/08/24/cmpa-reveals-shortlist-for-feature-film-producers-award/

PLAYBACK

The Canadian Media Production Association has announced the five producers that have been shortlisted for the organization's Feature Film Producer's Award.

The WINNER of the $10,000 cash prize will be revealed at a special reception to be held on Sept. 10 to mark the opening of the 2015 edition of the Toronto International Film Festival. The award, created in partnership with TIFF, recognizes the entrepreneurship and vision of a Canadian producer whose work shows a commitment and passion to producing Canadian features.

This year's shortlisted producers are: David Hamilton (Beeba Boys) of Hamilton Mehta Productions, Robert Lantos (Remember) of Serendipity Point Films, Kim McCraw (Endorphine, My Internship in Canada) of micro_scope, Sylvain Corbeil (Our Loved Ones) of metafilms and Laura J. Milliken (Fire Song) of Big Soul Productions.

**89.5 The Lake FM — August 29, 2015 — Fire Song Premiering At TIFF**
http://www.895thelake.ca/news/1152705609/fire-song-premiering-tiff?page=1

A Fort William First Nation actor is going to be walking the red carpet at the Toronto International Film Festival.

Harley Legarde-Beacham has the second lead role in the movie "Fire Song" as the character David Thomas who is the secret boyfriend of a young First Nation man named Shane.

Beacham hopes the movie creates awareness.

The movie was filmed in the Fort William First Nation and Wabigoon last year.

**IndieWire—September 8, 2015—EXCLUSIVE: The Poster For TIFF Premiere 'Fire Song,' One of the First Features About Two-Spirited People**
http://blogs.indiewire.com/bent/exclusive-the-poster-for-tiff-premiere-fire-song-one-of-the-first-features-about-two-spirited-people-20150908

Indiewire

The Toronto International Film Festival is just a few days away, and one of the queer highlights is definitely Adam Garnet Jones' "Fire Song," one of the first films by a First Nations director to focus on two-spirited people.

Here's the festival's synopsis of the film:

The thoughtful and moving debut feature by Adam Garnet Jones focuses on Shane (Andrew Martin), a young Anishinaabe man at a crossroads.

Even as his family is still reeling from a recent tragedy, Shane is forced to decide whether he will leave the reservation to go to school — and he's also faced with the prospect of raising tuition money fast, not an easy thing to do in a depressed area. (Not legally, anyway.)

Then there's the complicated matter of his love life. While his girlfriend, Tara (Mary Galloway), would love to come with him to the city, Shane would prefer to make the trip with David (Harley Legarde-Beacham), the grandson of the community's leader. But David is deeply committed to learning the tribe's traditions, and believes that leaving the reservation would be a cop-out. As Shane struggles with his own problems, he fails to realize that neglecting those he loves may have disastrous consequences.

With sensitivity and intelligence, Fire Song confronts some of the most pressing questions facing First Nations communities. What is it that makes a community — and is a person's actual physical presence in that community a necessary part of it? Would Shane really be turning his back on those he cares for by leaving, or does the pressure on him to stay prohibit opportunity? Can a two-spirited person be truly accepted by a tradition-bound culture, or do exclusionary interpretations of that culture's traditions condemn them to make a life for themselves elsewhere?

Tough yet compassionate, subtle and affecting, Fire Song announces the arrival of a powerful new voice in Canadian cinema.

"I know that this story is going to resonate deeply with some Two-Spirited people, but I also know that for others it won't feel true to their experience," Jones told /bent. "But like anyone who is telling a story about an underrepresented community, all I could do was try to be true to who these characters are. No story is going to be able to tell the experience of an entire community. That's not a problem with the story - it just means that there are more stories from that community waiting to be told."

We'll have a full interview with the filmmaker running Thursday, but until then enjoy this exclusive poster:

**931 The Border—August 29, 2015—Fire Song Premiering At TIFF**
http://www.931theborder.ca/news/1152705609/fire-song-premiering-tiff

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**Country 105 FM—August 29, 2015—Fire Song Premiering At TIFF**
http://country1053.ca/news/1152705609/fire-song-premiering-tiff

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**CKDR — August 29 , 2015 — Fire Song Premiering At TIFF**
http://ckdr.net/news/1152705609/fire-song-premiering-tiff

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**PLAYBACK—September 8, 2015—TIFF '15: Jones burns the candle at both ends on Fire Song. Adam Garnet Jones talks to Playback about casting first-time screen actors and his goal to get Fire Song in front of the communities represented in the film.**

http://playbackonline.ca/2015/09/08/tiff-15-jones-burns-the-candle-at-both-ends-on-fire-song/

PLAYBACK

With a casting call memo for any age, union or non-union and no acting experience required, Fire Song didn't exactly have the hallmarks of a TIFF classic. But with his debut feature, Adam Garnet Jones was defiantly singing from his own song sheet.

Many would have said the writer/director was setting himself a tall order when more than 200 aboriginal actors answered the call – many with absolutely no previous screen experience – but the aboriginal filmmaker doesn't necessarily see it that way.

After securing the remaining funding through Telefilm's Micro Budget Aboriginal Component last summer, Jones – who had been working and reworking Fire Song's script for about six years – was able to lock down the participation of Toronto-based Big Soul Productions (Moccasin Flats) and Thunderstone Pictures.

Once all the pieces were in place, Jones shifted his focus to telling his story in the most authentic way possible. The project's producers held extensive auditions in Toronto, Dryden, Thunder Bay and the film's production locations, Wabigoon Lake First Nation and Fort William First Nation, for the approximately 10 roles available.

Jones' vision of how he wanted the $250,000 film to look was very specific, and the casting criteria prized the authentic approach of the people auditioning over their résumés or previous acting experience – he was looking to cast people as close to his characters as possible.

"The thing about working with people that have never been on screen before is that they bring aspects of their own life to [the part] and they behave in ways that maybe you wouldn't have thought of or wouldn't have expected."

Filming was done over the course of three weeks, with 15 intense production days in between.

As a first-time feature filmmaker, Jones said the difference between that and his shorts projects were mighty. "The speed of everything is the thing that surprised me the most," he noted. "With short film, there's so much more opportunity to polish the themes and get a little bit precious about so many aspects of production. But with a feature, and a shooting schedule as tight as it was, there was no room to be precious about any of it," he added.

Jones credits the on-camera success of the film's stars to an intensive, week-long casting session, held in the lead-up to production. Though not all those involved in the sessions were eventually cast, it allowed the group to get to know each other and this paid dividends when the cameras started to roll, said Jones.

There are currently no distributors attached to Fire Song, but Jones says of equal importance to him is finding a way to get Fire Song seen by the communities represented in the film.

"There's such a huge aboriginal audience in Canada that really hasn't been tapped. I'd like to find ways to work with distributors and find non-traditional ways to get the film out to the communities, because I think that's where it'll have the greatest impact."Laura J. Milliken and Michelle Derosier serve as executive producers alongside Jones. Marina Cordoni Entertainment is the international sales agent for the film.

**Daily Xtra—September 9, 2015—TIFF 2015 Gay Guide**

http://www.dailyxtra.com/arts-and-entertainment/tiff-2015-gay-guide-134120?m=0sites/all/themes/dailyxtra/images/dailyxtra_header_logo.pngsites/all/themes/dailyxtra/images/dailyxtra_header_logo.pngsites/all/themes/dailyxtra/images/dailyxtra_header_logo.pngsites/all/themes/

By CHRIS DUPUIS

Now in its 40th year, the Toronto International Film Festival shows no signs of slowing down. Considered by many as the most important public festival on the planet, the mammoth 10-day event is brimming with queer stories — Daily Xtra has perused the program to find you the fest's gay best.

Fire Song

Much of our recent national dialogue around Aboriginal issues has focused on missing and murdered women. But Adam Garnet Jones's debut feature tackles another of his community's pressing subjects — suicide.

In the wake of his sister's death, Shane (Andrew Martin) finds himself at an existential crossroads. A smart kid with good grades, he wants to leave the rez for Toronto and attend university. But his boyfriend David (Harley Legarde-Beacham) begs him to remain, dedicated to understanding their cultural history and ancestral traditions. At the same time, he's also fooling around with Tara (Mary Galloway), who's blind to his gay tendencies and hopes to depart for Hogtown with him. From the razor scars on Martin's upper arms to the two real-life suicides that took place on the Ontario reserve while they were shooting, the film serves as a stark reminder of Aboriginal communities' self-harm crisis. But it's really about much more than that.

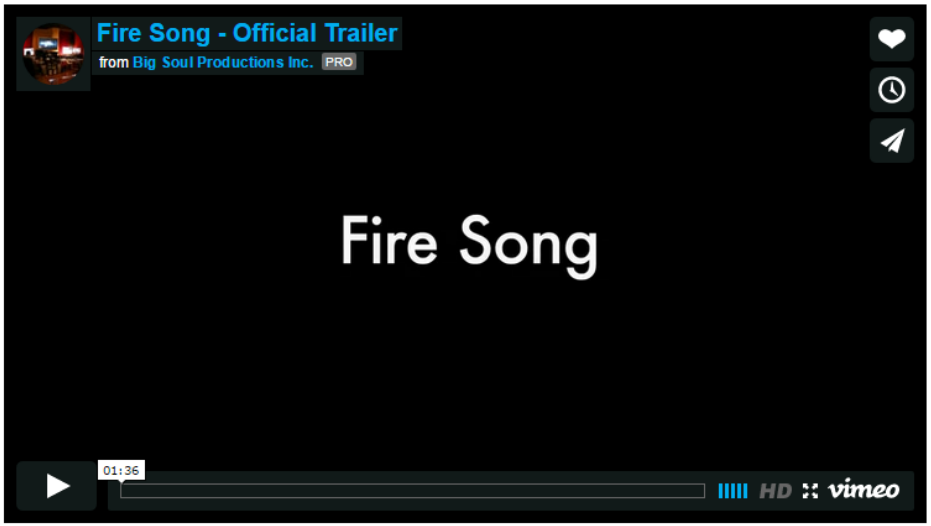
Torn between the city and the country, formal education and embracing tradition, a straight life and being true to his desires, Jones has rendered a character pulled in all directions at once. And while it's set in an Aboriginal community, Fire Song will resonate deeply with anyone queer from a small town.

Toronto International Film Festival
Thursday, Sept 10 - Sunday, Sept 20, 2015
Various locations
tiff.net

**MUSKRAT MAGAZINE—September 13, 2015—FIRST NATIONS FILM 'FIRE SONG' TO BE SCREENED AT TIFF – VIEW TRAILER**
http://muskratmagazine.com/first-nations-film-fire-song-to-be-screened-at-tiff-view-trailer/

About Fire Song

One of the first films by a First Nations director to deal with two-spirited people, the thoughtful and moving debut feature by Adam Garnet Jones focuses on a young Anishinaabe man who is forced to choose between staying in his community or EXPLORING the expanded possibilities of the world outside.



**TORONTO SUN—September 4, 2015—TIFF 2015: From Sicario to Spotlight to The Lobster, an early look at what's playing at the filmfest**
http://www.torontosun.com/2015/09/04/tiff-2015-from-sicario-to-spotlight-to-the-lobster-an-early-look-at-whats-playing-at-the-filmfest

FIRE SONG
DISCOVERY
CANADA
3 (out of 5)
With his friends committing suicide with numbing regularity, a young man in a Northern Ontario Anishnabe reserve has more than a few reasons to plan to leave. Though he has a girlfriend, he has a secret affair with the son of the reserve elder and dreams of them living together in Toronto. The debut feature by acclaimed indigenous filmmaker Adam Garnet Jones is more tragic teen soap opera than social mirror. But the actual Northwestern Ontario reserve location lends verisimilitude to the tale of aimless teens with easy access to drugs and booze and no easy way out. – Slotek
Plays: Sept. 13, 15, 20.

**Magic 99.9—September 11, 2015—Fire Song Premiering At TIFF**
http://www.magic999.ca/news/437185628/fire-song-premiering-tiff

A Dryden resident will gain worldwide recognition this weekend, as she attends the Toronto International Film Festival.

Shirley McLean plays a feature role in the Adam Garnet Jones film 'Fire Song', which debuts Saturday at the Festival.

McLean stresses she had no acting experience and was just providing moral support for a couple of her friends during auditions.

The drama was shot in Wabigoon and Fort William First Nation.

Fort William First Nation's Harley Legarde-Beacham has the second lead role in the movie 'Fire Song,' as the character David Thomas who is the secret boyfriend of a young First Nation man named Shane.

**CBC.ca—September 11, 2015—Deepa Mehta, Avi Lewis and more choose their favourite frames**
http://www.cbc.ca/beta/arts/deepa-mehta-avi-lewis-and-more-choose-their-favourite-frames-1.3224461

"I chose this image because, even though it's a small moment in the film, it highlights so much of what is really special about Wabigoon Lake First nation, where we shot much of the exteriors for Fire Song. The characters in the film are dealing with a lot of hard stuff in their lives, but they are surrounded by this incredible place. It really gets at the heart of Shane's conflict in the film — whether to leave the place he loves, or give up on his dreams of the FUTURE."

— Adam Garnet Jones, director of Fire Song, a film about a young Anishinaabe man who is forced to choose between staying in his community or EXPLORING the world outside.

**INDIEGOGO－September 11, 2015－10 Indiegogo Films to Watch For At the Toronto International Film Festival 2015**
https://go.indiegogo.com/blog/2015/09/toronto-international-film-festival-2015.html

With the 2015 Toronto International Film Festival already in full swing, Indiegogo unveiled 10 crowdfunded films that viewers at the fest will want to see.

The crowdfunding platform's Amy Yeh wrote:

indiegogo"The 40th annual Toronto International Film Festival has officially begun, and this year's lineup is packed with films from 71 countries around the world. Renowned as one of the most important and influential film festivals in the world, TIFF is always an exciting event to attend year after year. We're so excited to support 10 Indiegogo films at this year's festival – double the number we had last year, and more than any other crowdfunding platform! Indiegogo Film Associate Director Kristen Konvitz will also be a panelist on Financing Trends from the Festival Frontlines, discussing new possibilities for filmmakers through crowdfunding and emerging FILM FINANCINGtrends.

"As our presence continues to grow at such a prestigious event, there's no question that crowdfunding is making a powerful impact in the film industry. From September 10 to 20, 2015, over 400,000 people will flock to Toronto to screen film projects from aspiring artists, indie filmmakers and celebrities. Whether you're attending the festival or enjoying the festivities from afar, keep an eye out for these 10 Indiegogo films that are debuting at TIFF 2015."
Check out the films below!

**Fire Song**

Fire-Song-Indiegogo-TIFF"The debut feature by Adam Garnet Jones, Fire Song is one of the first films by a First Nations director to deal with two-spirited people. This thoughtful and moving film focuses on a young Anishinaabe man who is at a crossroads, forced to choose between staying in his familiar community or EXPLORING the expanded possibilities of the outside world. Fire Song was 107% funded on Indiegogo just over a year ago and is now making its world premiere at one of the most prestigious film festivals in the world."

**CKDR.net—September 11, 2015—Dryden Actress Shirley McLean At TIFF for Debut Of 'Fire Song'**
http://www.ckdr.net/news/783799585/shirley-mclean-tiff-attend-debut-fire-song

A Dryden resident will gain world-wide recognition this weekend as she attends the Toronto International Film Festival.

Shirley McLean plays a feature role in the Adam Garnet Jones film 'Fire Song', which debuts Saturday at the Festival.

McLean was a guest on the CKDR Morning Show Friday and stressed she had no acting experience and was just providing moral support for a couple of her friends during auditions.

After they were done, the director asked her if she wanted to try.

She agreed and walked away with no expectations.

McLean says six months later she received a call saying they were very interested and that's when the journey started.

She plays the role of Janice, a grocery store clerk, who has multiple appearances throughout the aboriginal drama.

The film was shot in Wabigoon and McLean stresses she will never look at movies the same way again.

McLean is also featured in another up-and-coming film and is waiting to hear if she will be casted in a movie with Dennis Quaid.

To hear the complete interview with Shirley McLean visit the link below.

You can also learn more about her on IMDb.

**The Chronicle Journal—September 14, 2015—TIFF spotlight: Adam Garnet Jones and 'Fire Song'**
http://www.chroniclejournal.com/entertainment/entertainment_news/tiff-spotlight-adam-garnet-jones-and-fire-song/article_04641f86-c3e4-5ec0-97ed-4b7bb76ae729.html

The Chronicle Journal
THE NEWSPAPER OF THE NORTHWEST

TORONTO — The Toronto International Film Festival is in full swing with hundreds of movies set to unspool through Sept. 20. Here's a look at a Canadian project trying to break through at the 11-day movie marathon:
Film: "Fire Song"
Synopsis: A closeted gay Anishinaabe man is forced to choose between staying in his community to take care of his mother after the suicide of his sister or EXPLORING the possibilities of the world outside.
Director: Adam Garnet Jones
Hometown: Toronto
Age: 33
The origins: "I feel like there's versions of this story I've heard again and again and again though my whole life from different people who've lived in small communities and come to the city, or decided to stay at home where there's this strong desire to stay in the community and live there and thrive ... and suicide is an enormous part of that."
On changing attitudes: "Just (recently) Six Nations had their first pride parade and it was the first pride parade on any reserve in Canada. So that was really exciting. But it's a really big reserve and it's close to Toronto so the attitudes there are a little bit more progressive, a little more welcoming. But a lot of communities, particularly in the North and particularly communities that have been influenced really strongly by Christianity, it's really not talked about and it's not OK and there's a lot of violence and suicide related to queer identity."

**Winnipeg Free Press—September 14, 2015—TIFF spotlight: Adam Garnet Jones and 'Fire Song'**
http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/arts-and-life/entertainment/movies/tiff-spotlight-adam-garnet-jones-and-fire-song-327364101.html

Winnipeg Free Press

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**She does the City—September 16, 2015—ACTRA'S STUDIO DISTRICT FILM PARTY WAS THE BIGGEST TIFF BASH THIS YEAR**
http://www.shedoesthecity.com/actras-studio-district-film-party-was-the-biggest-tiff-bash-this-year

The industry came out two by two, hoorah…HOORAH! ACTRA's inaugural Studio District Film Party was the Noah's Ark of TIFF parties. Just when we thought the Hangloose Media headquarters, located at Logan and Lakeshore, couldn't pack any more local actors and producers, it did. (The line continued down the block late into the night.)

The evening kicked off with the most well-trodden red carpet of all time, starting with the cast of Fire Song and Beeba Boys. In Fire Song, First Nations director Adam Garnet Jones tells the story of a young man growing up on a reserve, questioning his people's history, unsure which path to choose for his future. Deepa Mehta's Beeba Boys explores Vancouver's Sikh mob turf wars. Both films tell here-and-now stories that help show off Canada's rich cultural diversity.

The enthusiasm on the red carpet kept on coming! While Roy Thomson Hall and The Elgin may boast A-list celebrities, this carpet was all about celebrating the working industry in Canada; the people who keep the film and television industry thriving. It was a night to celebrate our people, homegrown creativity and entrepreneurship.

The film fest breezed into town for ten days, but the people below form the bedrock of our industry that flourishes year-round. Shedoesthecity was very proud to be a media sponsor.

**etalk—August 5, 2015—Patricia Rozema survival tale, Philippe Falardeau satire highlight TIFF's Canadian lineup**
http://www.etalk.ca/News/TIFF-2015-Canadian-lineup-announced

TORONTO -- Canadian films headed to the Toronto International Film Festival this year include a survival tale from Patricia Rozema starring Ellen Page, a political satire from Philippe Falardeau, a horror film from Bruce McDonald, and a reimagining of jazz trumpeter Chet Baker's life, starring Ethan Hawke.

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Sutherland stars in Jamie M. Dagg's "River," while Maddin co-directs "The Forbidden Room" and "Bring Me The Head of Tim Horton," a behind-the-scenes look at Paul Gross's new film, "Hyena Road," which will also screen at the festival.

Meanwhile, former CBC personality and doc maker Avi Lewis hits the festival with "This Changes Everything," inspired by the bestseller written by his partner Naomi Klein; longtime Maclean's film writer Brian D. Johnson directs the documentary "Al Purdy Was Here," about the celebrated poet; Toronto Star investigative journalist Michelle Shephard co-directs "Guantanamo's Child: Omar Khadr;" and former Postmedia film critic Katherine Monk explores the glass ceiling in electronic dance music in "Rock the Box."

The films join other Canadian features announced last week from Atom Egoyan, Gross and Deepa Mehta.

Other titles revealed Tuesday include:
"Ville-Marie," directed by Guy Edoin, which traces four lives at a hospital: an actress who hopes to reconcile with her son, a paramedic haunted by his past, and a nurse trying to keep an emergency room running.
"Ninth Floor," directed by Mina Shum, about the Sir George Williams Riot of 1969.
"Closet Monster," directed by Stephen Dunn, which follows a young man unsure of his sexuality and haunted by the memory of a tragic gay bashing he witnessed as a child.
"Fire Song," directed by Adam Garnet Jones, about a young man who moves back to a remote aboriginal community when his sister commits suicide.
"How Heavy This Hammer," directed by Kazik Radwanski, about a 47-year-old father of two who is consumed by a crude computer game as his marriage collapses.
"Our Loved Ones," directed by Anne Emond, about a family rocked by a death in the basement of their home.

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The Toronto International Film Festival runs Sept. 10 to 20.

**TORONTOIST—September 11, 2015—TIFF 2015 Tip Sheet: Your Best Bets for the Festival's First Weekend**
http://torontoist.com/2015/09/tiff-2015-tip-sheet-your-best-bets-for-the-festivals-first-weekend/

TORONTOIST

We help you navigate this weekend's available and rush-only screenings, from a dystopian comedy about endangered single people to a Toronto-set comedy of manners.

Having the most enormous public film festival in the world at your doorstep is a bit of a boon, but that doesn't mean TIFF is the easiest institution to navigate, especially for beginners. With over 300 offerings and a labyrinth ticketing system serving as the gatekeeper, the Festival of Festivals is best experienced with a tip sheet in hand. We humbly offer these suggestions for how best to approach the fest's busiest weekend, should you find yourself without advanced tickets.

As of press time, Friday is rough sledding for the uninitiated, featuring mostly sold out offerings. Anyone willing to brave the rush line — actually a pretty nice gathering of like-minded sorts, truth be told — can try their hand at some pedigreed off-sale titles, from Jacques Audiard's Palme d'or winning migrant drama Dheepan to Yorgos Lanthimos's star-studded dud The Lobster, a stilted absurdist comedy about a dystopian world where single people are given 45 days to mate at a luxe resort before being turned into an animal of their choosing. We weren't so big on either film, but anyone who wants to see what the fuss is about may have some luck, given that the former is showing at the VISA Screening Room and the latter at the Princess of Wales, the kinds of hefty venues that tend to yield actual rush line tickets.

Of course, some titles are still available. Festival opener Demolition, whose promotional material features Jake Gyllenhaal brandishing a reciprocating saw — not a jackhammer, as this author initially reported, to much reader disdain — didn't go over so well with critics, but still has some openings. So does Ridley Scott's Matt Damon starrer The Martian. Critical word isn't out yet, but who can resist the trailer's display of Kristen Wiig's repertoire of concerned faces? We're also keen to recommend Deniz Gamze Ergüven's Mustang, an important and prescient first film about five teen girls resisting the patriarchal domination of their uncle and the systems he represents.

Saturday is similarly booked up with major off-sale debuts, like Tom Hooper's The Danish Girl, but equally stacked with alternative options. Anyone up for more daring fare might like Athena Rachel Tsangari's Chevalier, her followup to the singular Attenberg, which for our money is a more effective surrealist comedy than her countryman (and former collaborator) Lanthimos's more high-profile effort. The Wavelengths programme is also showing the second volume of Miguel Gomes's epically long and critically claimed adaptation of Arabian Nights — which transposes the story to austerity-age contemporary Portugal — and Pablo Agüero's Eva Doesn's Sleep, a fitfully engaging, experimental look at at the legacy of Evita Peron for the Argentinian people. Perhaps most tempting, Frederick Wiseman's classic documentary Titicut Follies and Lucino Visconti's Rocco and His Brothers screen for free at the TIFF Bell Lightbox as part of TIFF Cinematheque's programme.

If Saturday is a kind of international alt paradise, Sunday is perhaps best spent at home with some of the fest's Canadian offerings. Those seeking films with an LGBTQ angle might find much to admire in a pair of feature debuts — Stephen Dunn's Closet Monster, about an aspiring makeup artist whose repressed sexuality emerges as the titular creature, and Adam Garnet Jones's Fire Song, about a young Anishinaabe man torn between tradition and experimentation as well as male and female partners. The latter is more successful, in part thanks to Dunn's overweening ambitions to make a body horror opera out of fairly routine teen angst, but both are worth a look. If we had to recommend one Canadian title on Sunday, though, we'd go with Kazik Radwanski's How Heavy This Hammer, an intimate, beautifully observed, and Toronto-set character portrait of a middle-aged father who escapes his humdrum life by zoning out into a fantasy game where he becomes some sort of viking. If that isn't enough, the film boasts the finest canine performance of the fest — with regrets to the ravenous guard dog from Green Room — surely worthy of some sort of special award.

**Ryerson University—RYERSON FILMMAKERS AT TIFF 2015**
http://www.ryerson.ca/fcad/news-events/latest-news/FCAD6.html

At a press conference on August 5th, the Toronto International Film Festival announced their line-up of Canadian films scheduled for the 2015 film festival being held September 10 - 20th. Among this year's directors debuting their feature and short films are a number of Ryerson alumni. We understand that a number of other alumni were also involved in the making of these films. Congratulations to everyone involved in bringing these films to the big screen. We are incredibly excited that your films have been selected to be part of this prestigious festival.

Ryerson Filmmakers at TIFF

2015 Festival Short Cuts
Grayson Moore and Aidan Shipley (Image Arts) Boxing

TIFF Docs
Michelle Shepard (Journalism) Guantanamo's Child: Omar Khadr

Discovery
Stephen Dunn (Image Arts) Closet Monster
Adam Garnet Jones (Image Arts) Fire Song
Kire Paputts (Image Arts) The Rainbow Kid
Andrew Cividino (Image Arts) Sleeping Giant
Kazik Radwanski (Image Arts) How Heavy This Hammer

Vanguard
Bruce McDonald (Image Arts) Hellions

For more information on these films, visit the TIFF Festival 2015 website.

**THE SCOPE at RYERSON—September 15, 2015—TIFF 2015: LAUREN'S TOP PICKS**
http://www.thescopeatryerson.ca/en/thescope/news/710/TIFF-2015-Lauren's-Top-Picks.htm

CJRU's TIFF reporter Lauren Malyk presents her top picks that you need to see at this year's Toronto International Film Festival. Follow Lauren on Twitter @lmalyk

**Fire Song**

Adam Garnet Jones tells the tale of Shane (Andrew Martin) an Anishinaabe man, debating his future. Should he leave his community and go to school? How's he going to raise the money for his education? Throw in some love life drama, neglect and tradition and you have Jones' feature Fire Song.

**Ryerson University－September 9, 2015－Ryerson Represents at TIFF 2015**
http://www.ryerson.ca/news/media/General_Public/20150909_mr_tiff2015.html

Record number of films from Ryerson alumni at this year's festival
September 09, 2015
Tomorrow evening, the lights go up and the red carpet gets rolled out for the 40th annual Toronto International Film Festival. Representing the best in international, Hollywood and Canadian film, TIFF is the place where many young filmmakers first debut their work, Ryerson University students and alumni among them.

TIFF 2015 will include seven films written, created and produced by over 20 Ryerson filmmakers, including director Bruce McDonald, who will return to TIFF with his indie horror film Hellions. The strong Ryerson representation at TIFF 2015 speaks volumes about Ryerson's world class film program.

"Graduates from The School of Image Arts are highly acclaimed within the film industry and the talent that we are featuring today is no exception," says Charles Falzon, Dean of the Faculty of Communication and Design at Ryerson University. "As the creative innovation hub at Ryerson, FCAD is proud to be celebrating the films that are being featured at this year's festival."

Films created by Ryerson filmmakers at this year's Toronto International Film Festival include:

Hellions – Directed by Bruce McDonald (IMA '82)
Closet Monster – Produced by Kevin Krikst (IMA '07), Written and Directed by Stephen Dunn (IMA '13)
The Rainbow Kid – Written, Directed and Produced by Kire Paputts (IMA '07), Edited by Michael Pierro (IMA '07)
Fire Song – Written and Directed by Adam Garnet Jones (IMA '07)
How Heavy This Hammer – Written and Directed by Kazik Radwanski (IMA '09), Produced by Daniel Montgomery (IMA '08), Photography directed by Nikolay Michaylov (IMA '14), Edited by Ajla Odobašic (IMA '08)
Sleeping Giant – Written and Directed by Andrew Cividino (IMA '06), produced by Karen Harnisch (IMA' 09) and Mark Swenker (IMA '08), edited by James Vandewater (IMA '07), written and produced by Aaron Yeger (IMA '06), James Klopko, Director of Photography (IMA '07), Erika Lobko (IMA '12), Production Designer and Adam Parsons, Sound Recordist
Boxing – Directed by Adam Shipley (IMA '14) and Grayson Moore (IMA '14), Edited by Daniel Haack (IMA '14), Production Designer Thea Hollatz (IMA '14)
Ryerson is proud to be a venue for TIFF 2015; a full listing of films showing on campus can be found here.

Ryerson University is Canada's leader in innovative, career-oriented education and a university clearly on the move. With a mission to serve societal need, and a long-standing commitment to engaging its community, Ryerson offers more than 100 undergraduate and graduate programs. Distinctly urban, culturally diverse and inclusive, the university is home to more than 38,000 students, including 2,300 master's and PhD students, nearly 2,700 faculty and staff, and more than 155,000 alumni worldwide. Research at Ryerson is on a trajectory of success and growth: externally funded research has doubled in the past four years. The G. Raymond Chang School of Continuing Education is Canada's leading provider of university-based adult education. For more information, visit www.ryerson.ca

**IN MAGAZINE－August 21, 2015－LIGHTS, CAMERA, DIVERSITY**
http://www.inmagazine.ca/index.php/art-entertainment/507-lights-camera-diversity

As it turns 40 years old this month, the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) is offering one of the most promising batches of LGBT-interest films in its history.

In a year that has already had an atypically large number of quality queer and trans-themed films from other festivals—in particular, Sean Baker's Sundance premiere Tangerine (in theatres now) and Todd Haynes' Cannes hit Carol (coming out in November)—TIFF just might turn into 2015's LGBT MVP. Here are six films that could end up proving why:

**Fire Song**

"Two-spirited" is an umbrella term used by some First Nations communities to describe people who are seen as having both male and female spirits within them. Cinematic depictions of two-spirited people are sadly rare, with Adam Garnet Jones' Fire Song one of the very first examples. Calgary-born Jones–who has made more than 20 short films, including a few that have screened at TIFF–makes his feature-film debut with Fire Song.

The movie follows a young Anishinaabe man who is forced to choose between staying in his community or exploring the possi-bilities of the world outside. In a festival that tends to be known more for its Hollywood fare than homegrown breakouts, Fire Song, like Closet Monster, is a potential hidden gem that should definitely be on your TIFF radar.

The Toronto International Film Festival runs from September 10th through the 20th. For ticket and other information, visit www.tiff.net.

**gettyimages—Toronto International Film Festival Portraits**
http://www.gettyimages.com.au/detail/news-photo/mary-galloway-of-fire-song-poses-for-a-portrait-during-the-news-photo/488181124

gettyimages

Mary Galloway of 'Fire Song' poses for a portrait during the 2015 Toronto Film Festival on September 12, 2015 in Toronto, Ontario.
CREDIT: MAARTEN DE BOER

**gettyimages－Toronto International Film Festival Portraits**
http://www.gettyimages.ca/detail/news-photo/adam-garnet-jones-of-fire-song-poses-for-a-portrait-during-news-photo/488164414

gettyimages

Adam Garnet Jones of 'Fire Song' poses for a portrait during the 2015 Toronto Film Festival on September 12, 2015 in Toronto, Ontario.

CREDIT: MAARTEN DE BOER

**gettyimages—Toronto International Film Festival Portraits**

http://www.gettyimages.ca/detail/news-photo/harley-legarde-of-fire-song-poses-for-a-portrait-during-the-news-photo/488164404

gettyimages

Harley Legarde of 'Fire Song' poses for a portrait during the 2015 Toronto Film Festival on September 12, 2015 in Toronto, Ontario.

CREDIT: MAARTEN DE BOER

**gettyimages—Toronto International Film Festival Portraits**

http://www.gettyimages.ca/detail/news-photo/andrew-martin-of-fire-song-poses-for-a-portrait-during-the-news-photo/488164406

gettyimages

Andrew Martin of 'Fire Song' poses for a portrait during the 2015 Toronto Film Festival on September 12, 2015 in Toronto, Ontario.

CREDIT: MAARTEN DE BOER

# FIRE SONG PRESS BREAKS at TIFF 2015 (INTERVIEWS)

## The Dryden Observer—August 20, 2015—Locally shot film to premiere at TIFF

http://thedrydenobserver.ca/2015/08/locally-shot-film-to-premiere-at-tiff/

'Fire Song' aims a spotlight on First Nations experience
By Chris Marchand

'Fire Song' is director Adam Garnet Jones' first feature-length film production.
Photo submitted

The shores of Dinorwic Lake and Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation will hit the SILVER screen this week at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) as writer/director Adam Garnet Jones' new film Fire Song makes its world premiere.

The project, a story of a closeted gay Aboriginal youth struggling with a family collapsing under the weight of grief, poverty and the impulse to flee his community, had close ties with Eagle Lake-born Michelle Derosiers of Thunder Bay's Thunderstone Productions. As executive producer for the film, Derosier was key in helping Jones find the locations he needed to tell the story.

"Michelle and I went around to about 12 different communities both east and west of Thunder Bay to see what was around and how they felt," said Adam Garnet Jones. "When we pulled into Wabigoon Lake (Ojibway Nation) it felt the closest to the way I imagined the community in the film, especially with its relationship to the water. When we drove down past the powwow grounds to the lake, I could just kind of see the film taking place there. There were other places where you felt like you could make it work, but at Wabigoon Lake it was just really easy to imagine."

Jones says the bulk of exterior scenes were shot at WLON, while many of the interior scenes were shot at Fort William First Nation in Thunder Bay.

In his main character, Shane (played by Andrew Martin), Jones packs not only the overwhelming pressures of the grief over his

younger sister's suicide and the social conditions of life on a reserve but also the further dizzying aspects of coming to terms with his homosexuality.

"I really wanted to tell the story of a character and a family who are being tested in the way that so many families in these communities are — being pushed to the very limit of what they can deal with emotionally. I wanted to show a family that could endure all that and find a way to come together — maybe not in the way you'd necessarily think or expect, but they still find a way to carry on and become stronger."

The push and pull of whether young Aboriginal people should leave their communities is another issue that Jones says he wanted to bring to light, perhaps challenging some established patterns of

thought.
“It’s funny, when we were developing the script, a lot of people in Toronto and those who didn’t have a lot of experience with First Nations communities really wanted the film to end with him (Shane) going to school in Toronto,” said Jones. “We’ve seen so many films where the hero is from a small town, has big dreams and hates the place where they’re from — in the end they triumph by getting away from their horrible small town and everyone’s happy. I think, particularly for Aboriginal youth, the connection to place and to ‘home’ is so much more complicated. With everything that was happening to that character, I thought that if I sent him off to the city…I know those kids. I’ve seen what happens to those kids who go to the city to escape whatever demons exist in their own communities. I see them fall into all the dangerous traps. It was really important to me to make that relationship to home more complicated, for it to feel more real and for the answer, in the end, not to be escaping and building this new life somewhere else.”

A long list of locals were featured as extras or in minor speaking roles, perhaps the most prominent being Donna Chief, who portrayed a police officer. Shirley McLean, Dakota Derosier and Denise Derosier had parts, along with Lisa Kooshet.

Kooshet, who helped out the film crew in 2014 says the experience was exciting and grueling.

“There were a lot of long days of filming and running around but it was a great experience,” said Kooshet. “They were an awesome crew to work with.”

A local drum/singing group, consisting of Tyson Gardner, Louis Pitchenese, Raymond Derosier Jr. and Caleb Esquega, were featured.

Further background roles were filled by Danine Chief, Rodney Howe, Ashley Thorburn, Jason Williams, Walter Green and Daniel Cantin.

Jones says he hopes the high profile festival premiere will help the film secure a wider release.

“I want as many people to see it as possible,” said Jones. “It’s really important to me that we find a way to get it out there to people in Northern Ontario and other parts of Northern Canada because the story really does speak to that experience. I hope the film can open up the doorway to a lot of important conversations.”

Andrew Martin and Jennifer Podemski star in Fire Song, filmed in part at Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation in 2014.

**NetNewsledger.com — August 28, 2015 — Fire Song Set to Premiere at Toronto International Film Festival**
http://www.netnewsledger.com/2015/08/21/fire-song-set-to-premiere-at-toronto-international-film-festival/

THUNDER BAY – ENTERTAINMENT – The movie Firesong was filmed on the Fort William First Nation and at Wabigoon First Nation. Harley Legarde-Beacham is a FWFN Actor and YOUTH WORKER who is in the movie.

Fire Song will premier at the Toronto International Film Festival on September 13th. Harley shares a little about the film and on how he is working to raise funds to travel to Toronto for the Premier.

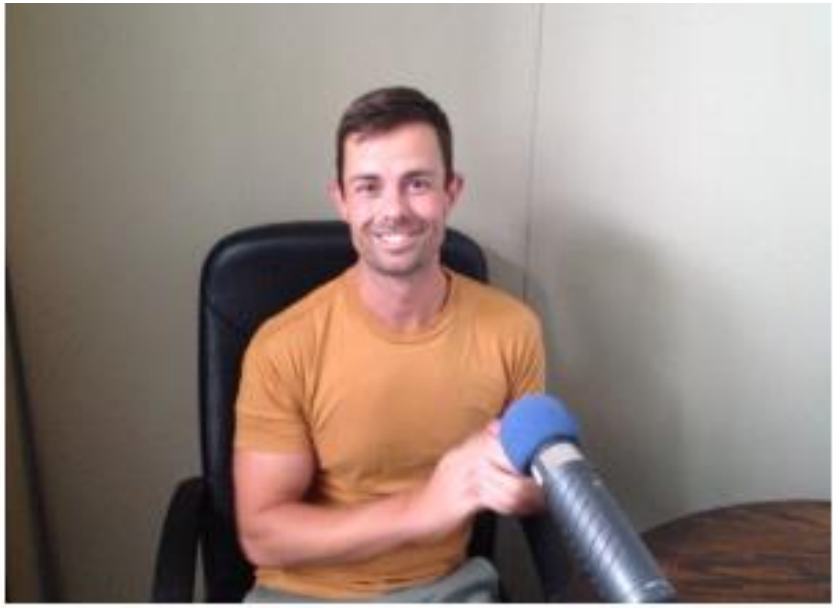
Local FWFN Actor Harley Legarde-Beacham Plays David
Harley is one of the local actors who is in Fire Song, and with support from Fort William First Nation he is seeking to make it to the Red Carpet in Toronto. To accomplish that goal, Harley is FUNDRAISING. You can visit his GoFundMe page at www.gofundme.com/px26zv24

Harley shares, "Last June 2014, I was cast as the second lead role in the movie "Fire Song" as the character David Thomas who is the secret boyfriend of Shane. It was the first time I have ever followed my dream and pursued acting, and to be honest I didn't think I was going to get the part, but I did! This was a great surprise and I was filled with joy everyday until we wrapped the movie last August 2014.

"As most of you know, the movie was selected to be a part of The Toronto International Film Festival's 40th year event! I was filled with excitement and surprise when I was told that we have been selected to be a part of such a prestigious festival!! The thing is I was told to a very close date to the event, and seeing as I have been cut down many hours at work I had no time to SAVE and plan for this trip. The Premier date of Fire Song is Sunday September 13, 2015. It is a definite spur of the moment opportunity, which is why I am doing the crowdfunding approach! By donating to get me to the premiere of Fire Song, you will be helping me get a chance to walk the red carpet with my co-stars, producers, the writer/director of Fire Song, and many others who have worked hard on the film.

"I have been stressing out about how I will raise the money for air fare, HOTEL accomodation, and food money. I wasn't going to do a go fund me page, but seeing as the date is quickly approaching I'm starting to panic and starting to think that my dream of doing something so "out there" is becoming less and less a reality and this may be my one and only chance to do something so huge for myself. So by setting up a go fund me page, I am hoping to reach the goal of $2000.00 to help me with part of the costs of being down in Toronto to make my dream come true. I will be trying to FUNDRAISE also by doing bake sales, 50/50, and a couple other games".

**CIUT — August 28, 2015 — Daniel Garber talks with filmmaker Adam Garnet Jones about Fire Song having its World Premier at #TIFF15**
https://danielgarber.wordpress.com/2015/08/28/daniel-garber-talks-with-filmmaker-adam-garnet-jones-about-fire-song-having-its-world-premier-at-tiff15/



Hi, this is Daniel Garber at the Movies for culturalmining.com and CIUT 89.5 FM.

Shane lives on an isolated First Nations reserve in northwestern Ontario. He's polite, smart, good-looking, hardworking and respectful – everything a teenage boy photo 3-2should be. He even has a pretty girlfriend, Tara. Shane's moving to Toronto in the fall to start his first year at University. Everything seems perfect… but it's not. His mother has been severely depressed since his sister's suicide. And his family has MONEY Adam Garnet Jonesproblems: they're deeply in debt. Can he even afford to move to Toronto? And then there's his relationship with another boy named David that he keeps on the down low. Sometimes Shane wishes it would all just go away.

I'm talking about Fire Song, a new film having its world premier at TIFF, the Toronto International Film Festival. The powerful drama is written and directed by filmmaker Adam Garnet Jones, and this is his debut feature. I spoke to him atAndrew Martin (L) Harley Legarde (R) CIUT. Adam talked about his background, hopelessness, suicide, coming out, the lives of gay youth in an isolated community, Native Child and Family Services, two-spirited people, traditional ideas, Christianity, life on a reserve vs. life in a city, talking circles, healing, his future work… and more!

**Way Too Indie－September 4, 2015－Adam Garnet Jones Talks About His Personal Debut Feature 'Fire Song'**
http://waytooindie.com/interview/adam-garnet-jones-talks-about-his-personal-debut-feature-fire-song/

WAY TOO INDIE
INDEPENDENT FILM & MUSIC REVIEWS

By C.J. Prince

Adam Garnet Jones' debut feature Fire Song follows Shane (Andrew Martin), a gay Anishinaabe teen in Northern Ontario dealing with multiple crises, setbacks and tragedies on his reservation. His younger sister recently killed herself, leaving his mother an emotional wreck; he has a hidden relationship with his boyfriend David (Harley LeGarde-Beacham); he covers up his own sexuality by dating Tara (Mary Galloway); and he might not be able to afford the tuition to GO TO SCHOOL in Toronto. All of Shane's conflicts and fears make it hard for him to choose between leaving in order to live an honest life, or staying home to feel secure within his own family and community.

Garnet Jones' film is the sort of subdued, human drama that feels rare coming from a first feature, and is all the more vital in the way it portrays the very real issues with mental health and suicide among young Aboriginals across Canada. In advance of Fire Song's world premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival this month, I talked to Adam Garnet Jones about his personal connection to the film's themes, the intensive and fascinating casting process for the film, and what he hopes the future will hold for him as a filmmaker.

Fire Song has its world premiere at TIFF on September 13th. To find out more about the film, and to buy tickets, visit its page on TIFF's official website HERE.

Tell me about how you came up with the idea for Fire Song.
I was trying to EXPLORE a kind of a feeling more than anything. It was this feeling of heaviness that exists after a young person commits suicide, and other people in the community are grieving but also worried that it's just the beginning of a cycle or cluster of suicides. I was writing different scenes and impressions based on that, and really finding the story by feel from there.

Did this project come from a personal place then?
It was definitely personal. I feel like it was a combination of a lot of different things so it's hard to pinpoint, but part of it was having been an incredibly depressed, suicidal teenager. And I've also seen this kind of common experience of young people who come from reserves and small communities, who have this desire to go and explore life in a larger place. But they also feel incredibly connected to the communities where they come from. I wanted to write something that sort of EXPLORED that complicated relationship.

In a lot of films about young people and small towns the story is this young person with a lot of promise from a shitty small town they hate, and at the end of the film they get away from their shitty small town and everything's better. But I felt like telling this story from an Aboriginal perspective just wouldn't feel realistic. The relationship to home and place is so much more complicated, and that's part of what I wanted the story to be about too.

How do you personally feel about young people in a situation like Shane's, where they have to leave their community in order to try and better themselves?
I needed to leave my home in order to feel like I would be comfortable really coming out and figuring out who I was. I think that's true for a lot of people, but there are people who feel like they have to leave their community in order to gain the skills to hopefully be able to help it one day. That's difficult for a lot of people, because a lot of them sever ties to their community when they do that and never return. But there are a lot of people like Shane who would stay if they felt like they could be who they really are and could feel safe in those communities. It's sad because I've certainly seen that happen to a lot of kids who leave their community. Not because they want to, but because they don't feel safe. They don't feel like they can be who they really are, so they go to the city and get swallowed up.

Yet in your film you do show there are opportunities for Shane to stay, and a chance that he can always come back. It's not a negative portrayal of where he's from.
It was difficult to try to write about a community with a lot of different problems and also try to not demonize that place. In any place there are lots of people trying hard to heal those communities and make a positive difference, and lots of people who are kind of trapped in the negative patterns that exist in those places as well. It was important for me to find opportunities to show the good in that place. There are characters who don't want to leave, so it was just as important to show why they might want to stay there.
Suicide hangs heavy over this community, and it reflects the very real crisis going on across Canada with young people in Native communities. For a coming of age film it has a life or death quality to it.
It is life or death. I remember when I turned 20 I was so shocked that I made it. I never thought that I would be 20 years old when I was a teenager. I was sure that I would have killed myself by then. I remember that feeling of being a teenager and being so hungry to live my life, to do something with my life, and being equally certain that I would kill myself before I got a chance.
Your cast is made up of a lot of young, nonprofessional actors. What was the casting process like?
When I was trying to fund [the film] a lot of people said "I really love the script, but I have no idea how you're going to put that cast together." There are no professional Aboriginal teenage actors that anybody knows of. There might be a couple in the whole country, but there isn't the pool of talent to make this film out there. And my response was always that the pool of talent is there, but nobody is looking for them. All we have to do is go out there and look.

We had general casting calls for anyone, they didn't have to have any acting experience whatsoever. We saw over 200 people I think, mostly for the parts of the younger characters because I knew that they would have to carry the film. Once we narrowed it down to a group that I thought had promise in front of the camera, we invited them to a week long casting workshop. It was an intensive workshop for all of these performers, and over the course of the week they learned about acting on camera.

It was a really important bonding experience for all the cast members because [almost] everyone who was at that workshop ended up on set playing one kind of character or another. Over the course of that week they formed a pretty tight bond as a group, and when it came to the incredible demands of making the film they had that trust in one another developed over the course of the workshop. They could lean on one another and support each other through it.

Did you have a different approach in how you worked with the nonprofessional actors versus the professional actors on set?
Yes and no, I guess. I did a lot more work with the nonprofessional actors than I did with the professionals. There were a couple of times when I was working with Jennifer Podemski where I stopped in the middle of talking with her and I realized "Oh shit, I've been talking to her in the same way that I was speaking with these super young actors who don't have any experience." I was over explaining things and getting into tons of detail and just more or less embarrassing myself. That was a learning curve for me. After getting so comfortable with the younger people over the course of the casting workshop, heading into production I had to switch gears and work with people like Jennifer who had a lot of experience. I had to learn to step back and give them a lot less than I did with the younger actors. It was strange and difficult moving between those two modes.

It was more on the sidelines of the film, but I liked the relationship between Shane's mother Jackie (Jennifer Podemski) and David's grandmother Evie (Ma-Nee Chacaby).
The casting is a big part of it. Teenagers are so much less comfortable in their skin than older people as a rule, but it somehow gets reversed when they're in front of the camera. Younger people, even if they don't have any experience on camera, are much more at ease being themselves in front of the camera than older people. It was much harder for us to find inexperienced older actors who could just relax and be themselves. We saw a lot of people for the role of Evie, and we just weren't really finding what we were looking for.

Then I was in Thunder Bay during Thunder Pride and happened to be at an impromptu backyard party where Ma-nee was like an important guest in attendance. Partway through the barbecue she got up and started telling this funny traditional story. She had on her big pride shirt and had the whole group of people in the palm of her hand. She was so CHARMING and I thought "This woman has to come in and audition," and sure enough she was perfect. So because Ma-Nee brings so much of her character and personality, and because Jennifer was such a professional, it was pretty easy to let things unfold between the two of them.

I'm surprised to hear that, since Ma-Nee plays such a subdued character in the film.
There aren't many queer Aboriginal people on screen, and I was really happy that there were so many people in this film who were queer and made it on screen. Ma-Nee being a really well known and respected two-spirited elder playing this homophobic elder was really satisfying for me, and in a way satisfying for her. She really got into the idea of transforming herself into this character. And I think in the same way that making a film in the north, and making a film about queer Aboriginal people starring queer Aboriginal people really brings something different and special to the table.

I always ask people what they're working on next, but you already have another film in post-production.
It's completely different in every possible way. It's called Great Great Great. It's a very, very, very micro budget film I made with a long-time and friend collaborator Sarah Kolasky. She co-wrote it with me and stars in it. It's about a woman who is in her late 20s and has been in a relationship with her boyfriend for about 5 or 6 years. Everything is kind of fine, but because of different things happening in her life she kind of feels like something new needs to happen. She decides to propose to him and they end up getting engaged, and as a result the relationship kind of gets ripped apart.

Do you want to make sure that you're making films that are completely different from what you've already made?
I would like to keep making films with radically different stories that feel different in terms of their tone and execution. I feel like that's the way I'm going to grow the most. There's so much hyperawareness of branding in the world of media arts right now that there's a lot of pressure for directors to develop a trademark or recognizable aesthetic stamp on their work. I just don't think I have it in me. My interests are too scattered and diverse, and I'm too restless to try to pin down an aesthetic and just keep following that one thing.

**Northern Stars—September 5, 2015—Jennifer Podemski at TIFF 40**
http://www.northernstars.ca/jennifer-podemski-at-tiff-40/

NORTHERNSTARS

*Jennifer Podemski © 2013 Northernstars.ca*

(August 28, 2015 – Toronto, ON) Canadian actress/producer Jennifer Podemski will be returning to the 2015 Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) with a starring role in Fire Song, produced by Big Soul Productions Inc., and Thunderstone Pictures. Having spent the majority of her life both in front of, and behind the camera, Podemski is an acclaimed actor, producer and director of both television and film. Fire Song is a thoughtful and moving debut feature by director Adam Garnet Jones. Podemski plays Jackie, an Anishinaabe mother, whose son Shane (Andrew Martin), in the aftermath his sister's suicide, is torn between his responsibilities at home, and his plan to move away for university with his boyfriend. "I am so grateful to have worked on this film. I loved the script and the process was so enriching. Fire Song is more than a film – it was a training ground for fresh indigenous, raw talent, many of them from the region of Northwestern Ontario," said Podemski. "It`s a story that needs to be told, touching on provocative themes that will hit home for many people." Podemski also has a second TIFF entry as executive producer of one of the festival's short films, Clouds of Autumn. Set on the Tsilhqot'in plateau in the 1970s, Clouds of Autumn focuses on two siblings, and explores the impact that Canadian residential schools had on the relationships of First Nations children with each other, their heritage, and nature itself. Podemski can be seen in Jimmy P alongside Benicio Del Toro (directed by Arnaud Desplechin); in Sarah Polley's Take This Waltz with Sarah Silverman and Michelle Williams; and in Blackstone (APTN) as Dr. Crowshoe. She is best known for her recent role as Minnie, the matriarch of a dysfunctional family in her award-winning, critically acclaimed first feature film, Empire of Dirt (directed by Peter Stebbings) which had its world premiere at TIFF 2013. Podemski not only starred in the film, but produced it as well. Empire of Dirt garnered five nominations at the 2014 Canadian Screen Awards, taking home the Best Screenwriter Award, and TIFF awarded the film Best Canadian Feature Film as a Special Jury Citation. Podemski also received a nomination for Best Outstanding Performance for her work on the film at last year's ACTRA Awards, and for Best Supporting Actress from the American Indian Film Festival, where the movie also received a nomination for Best Film. Podemski is also the co-executive producer of the Indspire Awards (Global TV, APTN), the only awards show celebrating Indigenous Achievement in Canada.

**The Mind Reels—September 8, 2015—The Mind Reels at TIFF 40**
http://themindreels.com/2015/08/08/the-mind-reels-at-tiff-40/

Sue and I were lucky enough to be invited to the TIFF press conference for this year's look at the Canadian films being showcased in the festival's 40th year! It looks to be an amazing season, and we got to meet and chat with some amazing people, as well as catch up with some friends, in our typical goofy, and informal way. We had a talk with Jason Anderson, the co-programmer for the shorts, or Short Cuts programme. finally we got to chat with some of the cast of the forthcoming Fire Song, check it out here. We unfortunately lost the video segment, but still have the audio portion…All in all it looks like it's going to be yet another amazing success for TIFF this year, and the Canadian content looks amazing!What are you planning on seeing? Check out everything TIFF has on offer this year here

**Indiewire—September 11, 2015—Adam Garnet Jones on His Feature Film Debut 'Fire Song,' Premiering In Toronto This Weekend**
http://blogs.indiewire.com/bent/adam-garnet-jones-on-his-feature-film-debut-fire-song-premiering-in-toronto-this-weekend-20150911

This Sunday, Adam Garnet Jones' feature film debut "Fire Song" makes its world premiere in Toronto. After having numerous shorts come to TIFF, the Canadian filmmaker is offering up a subtly powerful first feature in song, which depicts a young, queer First Nations man forced to choose between his community and the world outside of it. It's a thoughtful and all-too-rare glimpse into an intersection of identities, marking a welcome new voice in Canadian cinema.

/bent talked to Jones about the film earlier this week.

This is your first feature film, but certainly not your first foray into filmmaking. Can you explain your work leading up to "Fire Song," and how it led to it?

I have had a singular focus and interest in making films since I was about fourteen or fifteen, and so I didn't often question whether or not I would eventually make a feature. But for a young person who grew up without any connection to the broader world of art or culture, it has been a long road to get here. Like a lot of filmmakers, I began by directing short films, telling stories about characters that interested me, trying to share aspects of my experience that felt unusual or unseen.

My feelings about the world have always been murky, and my tendency has (for better or worse) play with characters who have very uncertain feelings about the world and their place in it. Fire Song is certainly an outgrowth from that. A number of characters in the film have had the foundations of their world shattered, and the film is all about seeing them try to understand how to come together and move forward in the face of something inexplicable. Fire Song feels like nothing I've ever made before, but a perfect culmination of all of my past work.
What was the genesis of "Fire Song," and why did you want to tell this story for your first feature?
When I first started thinking about Fire Song, I wanted to make a deeply personal film that could touch on my own experience as an adolescent, but could also serve to get people talking about sexuality and youth suicide in Aboriginal communities. I remember what it was like being a teenager with massive hopes and dreams for my own future, and at the same time I remember being terrified that I would kill myself before I could reach my potential. When I wrote Fire Song, I was writing about myself and lots of other young people that I've known over the years who were full of promise but also broken in some way.At the time, I had other scripts that I had been working on, but the struggles of the young people in Fire Song made it feel more urgent and relevant than anything else I could make. I remember telling one of my producers before we knew we had funding to make the film: "I want to Make Fire Song so bad that I actually get physically sick when I think that we might not get to do it."

What were some of the biggest challenges in getting this film made?

Nothing was easy. It's hard to get any movie made, but it's really hard to convince people to give you MONEY to make a movie about suicidal gay Aboriginal teenagers in northern Ontario. The cast is 100% Aboriginal and all of the shooting took place in First Nations communities, far away from any major production centre. My Producers at Big Soul Productions and Thunderstone Pictures deserve an enormous amount of credit for making the impossible possible. Aside from logistics, the subject matter was pretty harrrowing for us all. Almost every single person in the cast and crew had been touched deeply by suicide in one way or another. Many of us had to face our own demons in order to just get through shooting some of the scenes. Nobody kew it at the time, but I was an emotional wreck. Making the film was a beautiful act of bravery on the part of everyone involved, and

a show of strength and resilience for all of us.
This is one -- if not the -- first film where a First Nations filmmaker has tacked the idea of being queer in a First Nations community in a film. Did you feel a sense of responsibility taking this on?

I know that this story is going to resonate deeply with some Two-Spirited people, but I also know that for others it won't feel true to their experience. But like anyone who is telling a story about an underrepresented community, all I could do was try to be true to who these characters are. No story is going to be able to tell the experience of an entire community. That's not a problem with the story - it just means that there are more stories from that community waiting to be told.

For the ignorant among us, can you talk about the Two-Spirited identity and the issues that face Two-Spirited people in Canada today?

"Fire Song"

I have never been comfortable with the term Two-Spirited for myself, so in some ways I am reluctant to talk about what it means to be Two-Spirited. Two-Spirited is a category that is intended to capture a spectrum of Queer Indigenous people, and one that acknowledges the male and female spirits that Queer Indigenous people carry with them. I think it's a useful way to begin to talk about Indigenous gender and sexuality, but the term has always felt to BINARY for me to use in reference to myself.As far as the issues go, like being Queer anywhere, it depends on who you have in your corner. If you have people supporting you, and you live in a welcoming community, it's going to be easier. For lots of Two-Spirited people, particularly those who grew up in very Christian communities, coming out can be very unsafe.

What do you hope people take from "Fire Song”?

I hope people come away from Fire Song with respect for the resilience of Aboriginal people and Aboriginal communities, and an interest in EXPLORING more Indigenous cinema. There is a whole cinematic universe of stories, culture, and history waiting for a wide audience to discover. In a world where people feel like they have seen it all, this is a chance to be exposed to what will be a new world for a lot of people.
Any advice for budding filmmakers trying to make their first feature?

Advice is tough. I like getting it better than giving it, but here is something that I know for sure. When someone gives you an opportunity, say yes. You might not know where it will lead, and it may scare the shit out of you, and you may even thing you can't do it, but say yes. Saying yes is always more interesting than saying no. But the second part of that advice is: once you say yes, give it everything you have. Don't hold back. Because there's no point in saying yes to something if you're not going to follow through.
What's next for you?

I actually self-funded another feature that I shot this winter in Toronto, and I'm working with my producer Sarah Kolasky to secure finishing funds for it now. The film is called Great Great Great, and it's about a young couple whose decision to get engaged ends up tearing their relationship apart. I also have a number of other scripts for features on the go that I will be shopping around to producers while I'm at TIFF.

**Toronto Film Scene—September 11, 2015—CHOOSING A PATH: FIRE SONG DIRECTOR ADAM GARNET JONES**
http://thetfs.ca/2015/09/11/choosing-a-path-fire-song-director-adam-garnet-jones/

For his debut feature, Fire Song (making its world premiere at the 2015 Toronto International Film Festival), filmmaker Adam Garnet Jones had to dig deep into his past and the demons of his teenage years to tell the story of a two-spirited First Nations teenager named Shane (played by newcomer Andrew Martin). Shane finds himself torn not only between his highly motivated girlfriend (Mary Galloway) and the closeted son of a tribal elder (Harley Legarde-Beacham), but between leaving his rural community for the possibly greener pastures of Toronto and staying behind for the sake of a mother (Jennifer Podemski), who's still grieving over the loss of her daughter, and the two people he seems to love.
Not just an EXPLORATION of First Nations issues or teenage sexuality, the film looks deeply at how depression strikes the very young. It's a subject that the Cree-Metis filmmaker, who says he was a generally happy kid that wanted to please everyone around him, knows quite a bit about.
We caught up with Jones before the start of the festival over coffee at the TIFF Bell Lightbox to talk about the personal inspiration behind the film, why he hopes Fire Song will speak to a wide range of teens, working with novice actors and his film's connection to another Canadian coming-of-age film at this year's festival, Sleeping Giant.
Fire Song deals not only with First Nations issues and young people finally getting in touch with their sexuality, but also the fallout from teenage depression and suicide, which is a huge problem around the world. Why was this an important issue to focus on?
Adam Jones: I remember when I was pretty young, being in the house with my dad and hearing him talking to a friend who had called to say that her teenage son had killed himself. I saw all of the incredible grief around that, and when talking with my dad and other people in the community, I saw this fear from everyone in the family and community that this was just the first in what some thought would be a cluster of suicides.
I remember all of these things happening in my life, and the lives of other people I knew, and I felt like the grown-ups had no idea, even when they might have been through similar things. I grew up happy; I got good grades. But, really, I was on the verge of killing myself for a very long time. I think that most people in my life never had any clue how close I was to that. I remember as a teenager feeling like I always had this secret, internal life that no one ever had any clue about. There were plenty of adults around, but they just didn't have a window into what was happening.
It's also worth noting that your main character, Shane, has the option of staying or leaving, but neither would be a cure-all for his troubles or help him further identify who he wants to be in life. Was that also true of your experience and was it important to make sure that Shane has to choose between two very flawed, very different paths in life?
The reality is that we actually have lots of options as teenagers, even if we never realize it at the time. You can focus on doing well in school and put your blinders on to the world around you to just focus on this one thing. But you never realize until you're an adult that you could have done all these different things and that you can personally identify as more than one thing in life.
It was important, in making this film, that Shane can't see leaving his community as the answer to all his problems in life. There have been millions of independent movies about characters that want to leave their shitty small towns because they hate it there and, at the end of those films, the main characters usually achieve some sort of success in the big city and all their goals have been achieved. That never felt realistic and I know that's certainly not realistic for most aboriginal people, especially for someone like Shane and everything he's going through. If Shane were to up and decide in an instant to head off to Toronto at any point during the events of the film, he would go there and he'd be fucked-up as a result. I know kids like Shane, and that's exactly what would happen. He's someone who's going to have several hard years ahead of him no matter what he chooses.

How did you find Andrew Martin for the role of Shane, and what was it like working with a cast made mostly of teenage newcomers?

Andrew is from Six Nations and he was working two JOBS AT the time; he drove from Six Nations to the casting call in Toronto. He almost didn't make it, but when he came in, he was so open and earnest. He told us about how he had two jobs and how he saw coming to Toronto for this audition as a priority. When he said that, I immediately thought, "This is the character." He did a great job.

A lot of the people who didn't have much experience being on camera, we would have them do lines from the script first, then we would have them do an improvised scene and, nine times out of ten, the line readings were terrible, but the improv was great. All of a sudden, people who didn't have a lot of acting experience were bringing their real lives to the material, which was invaluable.

You were filming around the Thunder Bay area around the same time as another teenage coming-of-age drama that's playing the festival this year, Sleeping Giant. Did you cross paths?

[Sleeping Giant director] Andrew [Cividino] and I were shooting at the exact same time, and we were sharing some crew. Actually, he and I both graduated from Ryerson in the same class, so we already knew each other pretty well; it was really kind of funny that both of these movies were in development at the same time. We talked a few times, but we decided we weren't going to read each other's scripts because the material was too close, in some ways. James Klopko, who shot Sleeping Giant, and who we also went to school with, just shot my second feature, which I made right after coming back from finishing production on Fire Song. It's all like one little community and it's great to have these kinds of talents to tap into and talk to.

**Muskrat Magazine—September 12, 2015—FIRE SONG: TWO-SPIRITS, SUICIDE, AND A JOURNEY TO FIND LOVE**
http://muskratmagazine.com/fire-song-two-spirits-suicide-and-a-journey-to-find-love/

Fire Song is the first film EXPLORING two-spirited themes written and directed by a two-spirited Indigenous director that is premiering at TIFF this year. Writer and director, Adam Garnet Jones has created a raw narrative with intricate story lines that unpack and unearth the journey of a young Anishnaabe man living in a remote reserve community in Northern Ontario who comes to a tumultuous crossroad.

*Andrew Martin and Harley Legarde-Beacham star as Shane and David in Fire Song | Image Source: GAT Productions Media*

We're first introduced to Shane (Andrew Martin), and his mother Jackie (Jennifer Podemski), as they grieve for his sister, Destiny (Morteesha Chickekoo Bannon), who recently committed suicide. Fire Song EXPLORES the complex impacts that suicide can have on a remote reserve community without relying on negative stereotypes for dramatic effect. Shane is living in the closet and teetering upon a complex web of painful relationships. While the family is grieving, Shane must make the difficult decision whether to move to Toronto for school and also decide between his secret lover, David (Harley Legarde-Beacham) or his girlfriend, Tara (Mary Galloway). Director and writer, Adam Garnet Jones fluidly intertwines the many challenges Shane faces that will not only affect his life, but those he loves.

Podemski gives an honest portrayal of a lost and grief stricken mother, conveying anger, sadness and confusion about the suicide of her daughter. Her friend and community Elder, Evie tries to support her with traditional ways, but Jackie chooses to find her own way to deal with her grief. At the beginning of the film, the scenes between Martin and Beacham seem forced- but the pair's chemistry grows strong towards the end. Galloway nearly steals the show with her sincere performance as the naive and lovestruck Tara.

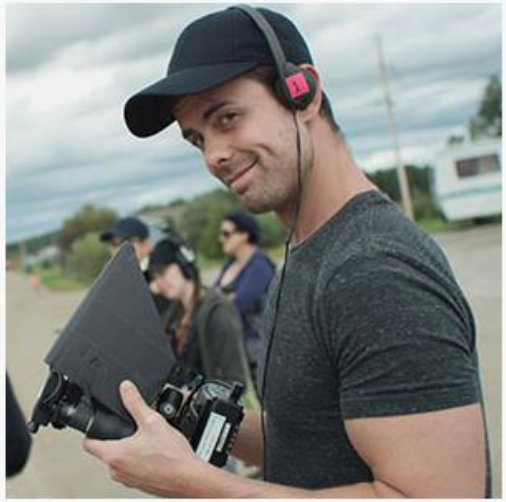
Erica Commanda from MUSKRAT Magazine caught up with Adam Garnet Jones to talk with him about his first feature film and what's next for the up and coming director.

MM: As the writer and director of the Fire Song: why did you want to tell this story now?

AGJ: It's so funny because this is such an immediate question because it takes so long to get films made. I've been trying to get it made for 5 or 6 years and it's only happening now. I started writing it with a tone in mind from a memory I had when I was a kid and overhearing a phone call with my dad and one of his close friends. They called to say that her son had just committed suicide. I remember the incredible grief and weight around all of that. Knowing people who committed suicide, that moment was repeated through my life in all kinds of situations.

I wanted to write a film with this kind of atmosphere of grief and fear in the community worried about who was going to be next. There is always this worry that these things aren't isolated and if there's going to be a cycle or a group of suicides.

That's where I started writing from. I was thinking about and remembering feeling that weight and that fear, and so from that feeling I really started asking a series of questions: Where is that coming



Director and Writer Adam Garnet Jones | Image Source: GAT Productions Media

from? Who are these people that are going through this? What are their lives like? Who's in the story? And started the story out from there. A lot of the characters and people are composites of people that I've known. I used to do a lot of work with youth, so it's my life and stories of other youth that all come together in this film.

MM: Are there any similarities between your own story and that of the main character, Shane?

AGJ: The facts of Shane's life don't really look like mine, but he's a lot like me when I was a kid. I was a good kid in high school. I tried really hard, did well in school and was always trying to live my life by doing the right thing and not hurt anyone.

As the film progresses it becomes more impossible for Shane to really pursue what he wants and who he needs to be without causing pain in his life. So that struggle feels really close to who I was.

MM: Are there any tensions in an urban based storyteller telling a northern story?

AGJ: I grew up, for a short period of time in a small town in British Columbia, but other than that I've been pretty urban. So yeah I was really worried that I was going to do it wrong.

Early on in the writing and throughout the process of making the film I was sending drafts of the scripts to people who grew up in the north and just asking: Is this ok? How do you feel about this? Am I getting it right? Does it feel right? I was really lucky that I always had positive feedback. I hope that people feel like it's fair when they are watching it.

MM: In Native culture two spirited people were often honored and REVERED because they were said be gifted with the spirits and insights of both genders. Are there any Indigenous teachings regarding two-spirited people that you explored in Fire Song? And do you touch on any other Aboriginal traditional teachings in the film?

Andrew Martin and Tara Galloway | Image Source: GAT Productions Media

AGJ: I would love to, but the film doesn't. It's part of who the boys are. The film doesn't really talk about teachings. There's a couple of little references to the fact that there are teachings. Some people think they are valid and some people don't, but we really don't get into what the teachings are and what really what that means.

In the film I wanted to ask a lot of questions and not necessarily give a lot of answers. I feel like there is a lot of pressure, like there's a trend towards really saying that when there are problems, traditional teachings are the answer. Having worked with youth and different people who have been through things like suicide, substance abuse and all kinds of things, a lot of times it is the answer. But some people don't respond in that way at all. So I didn't want to give the example of traditional knowledge being the easy answer.

Evie, who is the Elder in the film is also a little bit homophobic, so there's this clash between what she sees as traditional knowledge and the way that christian morality has kinda eroded some of that knowledge.

The mother in the film, Jennifer Podemski, lost her faith in the teachings after the suicide of her daughter. Evie

tries to get her to smudge and do a GIVEAWAY a year after her daughter's suicide, but she just refuses all of that stuff. The mother finds her own way, which does look and feel like ceremony, but she's not doing it based on any teachings.

MM: After completing 20 short films, what lessons have you learned from your first feature film?

AGJ: There's nothing like making a feature, it feels completely different than a short film. There's something that's really private about a short. You can EXPLORE something that you've been thinking about and feeling and it has smaller audience.

I'm learning more and more now that the film is about to be released, with a feature, you need to get it funded. Now that's it getting released it feels like it needs to be so much bigger, have so much more to say and be able to reach out and interact with people in the world in a way that I don't think I've been able to with short films.

MM: When and how did you know you wanted to be a film director?

AGJ: I actually wanted to be an actor, but I was kind of an abused and neglected kid, so I was just scared all of the time. I was so scared to be in front of people. I'm still scared to be in front of people. When I tried be an actor I just couldn't get over that fear, I was bad. I didn't know what else I could do.

I guess the other things that's closest to my story with Fire Song is my experience with suicide. I've had periods where I was deeply suicidal starting from when I was 7 years old and going through my teenage years. And so when I was a teenager I really needed some kind of an outlet. I really tried acting and it wasn't working. I knew I wasn't going to be good and didn't know where else to put that energy.

Andrew Martin, Jennifer Podemski, Ma-Nee Chacaby, Harley Legarde-Beacham | Image Source: GAT Productions Media

One day, I saw an advertisement for the Gulf Islands Film and Television School. It was this neat place started by a bunch of queers, hippies and anarchists on the Gulf Islands where they decided that they wanted to open a school just for youth to tell their stories on screen. That's something that nobody was doing because it was the mid-nineties and equipment wasn't really available. When I saw an ad for this, I thought 'that's it, that's what I'm going to do'. So I did all kinds of odd jobs and saved up all the MONEY that I could. I even did a work exchange at that school in order to pay tuition to make my first short film.

When I got there the experience was so incredibly welcoming and so rewarding. I felt like that finally I had a way to speak and share my voice without having to stand in front of people and speak. It was a great to find that outlet, but it also gave me a little bit of protection.

MM: What was the first short film that you made there?

AGJ: It was called Past Tense and it was very angsty. My first short film was a drama about suicide. It's interesting for me because the topic is something that I haven't really touched on, except for my first short film and my first feature.

MM: Have you discovered an Indigenous approach to directing? How would you describe your approach?

AGJ: It's all about telling the story the way it needs to be told. When I first started to write Fire Song, it was really important to me that I get some really strong Aboriginal producers on board. I felt like even though there might be non-Aboriginal producers who were more experienced that might be able to help me in different ways, I just knew I couldn't bring non-Aboriginal producers into an Aboriginal

community. I felt like it was gonna just be wrong and that they weren't going to get it.

I was looking for a director of photography and James Kinistino from Big Soul Productions was interested in shooting. I thought about how I couldn't imagine anyone who would be more committed to the ideas behind the project.

When we knew where we wanted to shoot, we went to all those different communities and did casting sessions. We tried to bring in as many people from those communities to be involved in different aspects of the film shoot as possible.

So I think that was more of an Indigenous approach and more of a community based approach than what a lot of production companies would do. They would just go into a community, bring all their own people, get in there, do it fast and get back out.

MM: Besides directing movies, what do you hope to accomplish with your film CAREER?

Andrew Martin | Image Source: GAT Productions Media

AGJ: I'm interested in a longer form of storytelling, so I would like to get into television or a miniseries. People are going to theatres less and less, they're watching content on things like Netflix, Amazon, Hulu and all of those different platforms more and more. I find a lot of those stories that I'm working on and developing feel like they could spread into a world that world that's deep, and more something like a mini-series.

MM: Do you have any projects lined up after working on your first feature film? If so how do you decide what you're going to work on?

AGJ: There's another project that I've been developing for a really long time called The Walking Wounded. It's about this very chubby, fun, kinda unstoppable, young Native woman who wants to get into fashion design and styling, but she's also deeply insecure. At the beginning of the film she catches her boyfriend cheating on her and takes off….. It's almost like an Alice in Wonderland story where she falls into this rabbit hole into a completely different life. Through that she discovers who she is and learns to really stand up on her own two feet. It's cool to tell a story that original and very urban, very sexy and very queer.

For tickets and showtimes go to: http://tiff.net/festivals/festival15/discovery/fire-song

**CBC Unreserved—September 13, 2015—Andrew Martin makes film debut at star-studded TIFF**

http://www.cbc.ca/radio/unreserved/unreserved-powwow-meets-electronic-beats-a-halfpipe-in-an-art-gallery-and-a-mohawk-actor-hits-tiff-1.3223318/andrew-martin-makes-film-debut-at-star-studded-tiff-1.3223431

cbcradio

Listen 5:29

The Toronto International Film Festival is on in Toronto. TIFF is one of the biggest film festivals in the world.

Movie stars like Johhny Depp, Steve Martin, Penelope Cruz and Sterlin Harjo will all be making appearances. Andrew Martin will also be making his TIFF debut.

He is a Mohawk actor from Six Nations in Ontario. And it is his first feature film.

In Fire Song, Martin portrays Shane, a gay Anishinaabe teenager in Northern Ontario. He struggles to support his family in the aftermath of his sister's suicide. But what he really wants to do is move away to the big city.

Click the listen button above to hear Rosanna's interview with Andrew Martin.

**CTV News—September 14, 2015—TIFF film profile: Adam Garnet Jones' 'Fire Song'**

http://www.ctvnews.ca/entertainment/tiff-film-profile-adam-garnet-jones-fire-song-1.2561956

TORONTO -- The Toronto International Film Festival is in full swing with hundreds of movies set to unspool through Sept. 20. Here's a look at a Canadian project trying to break through at the 11-day movie marathon:

Film: "Fire Song"

Synopsis: A closeted gay Anishinaabe man is forced to choose between staying in his community to take care of his mother after the suicide of his sister or EXPLORING the possibilities of the world outside.

Director: Adam Garnet Jones

Hometown: Toronto

Age: 33

The origins: "I feel like there's versions of this story I've heard again and again and again though my whole life from different people who've lived in small communities and come to the city, or decided to stay at home where there's this strong desire to stay in the community and live there and thrive ... and suicide is an enormous part of that."

On changing attitudes: "Just (recently) Six Nations had their first pride parade and it was the first pride parade on any reserve in Canada. So that was really exciting. But it's a really big reserve and it's close to Toronto so the attitudes there are a little bit more progressive, a little more welcoming. But a lot of communities, particularly in the North and particularly communities that have been influenced really strongly by Christianity, it's really not talked about and it's not OK and there's a lot of violence and suicide related to queer identity."

**Toronto Star—September 14, 2015—'Fire Song' puts aboriginal gay issues in the spotlight at TIFF 2015**
http://www.thestar.com/entertainment/2015/09/14/-fire-song-puts-aboriginal-gay-issues-in-the-spotlight-at-tiff-2015.html

thestar.com
MOVIES

Reposted:
http://www.msn.com/en-ca/movies/trailers/tiff-fire-song-puts-aboriginal-gay-issues-in-the-spotlight/vi-AAegEaD

**DAILY Xtra—September 14, 2015—VIDEO: Fire Song's world premiere at TIFF**

http://www.dailyxtra.com/world/arts-and-entertainment/film-and-video/video-fire-song%E2%80%99s-world-premiere-at-tiff-135983?m=0sites/all/themes/dailyxtra/images/facebook_big.pngsites/all/themes/dailyxtra/images/dailyxtra_header_logo.pngterms-of-use

Fire Song premieres Sept 13, 2015, at the Toronto International Film Festival. It's the first feature film for director Adam Garnet Jones. Daily Xtra's Peter Knegt meets with the excited filmmaker days before the world premiere.

## Movie Moves Me－September 16, 2015－TIFF 15 Interview: Jennifer Podemski talks FIRE SONG

http://moviemovesme.com/2015/09/16/tiff-15-interview-jennifer-podemski-talks-fire-song/

Suicide. Searching for an identity. Sexuality. Struggle. All these can be seen in Fire Song directed by Adam Garnet Jones where you can see how Shane, a gay Anishnabe teenager in Northern Ontario is struggles to support his family in the aftermath of his sister`s suicide. Jennifer Podemski plays his mother, Jackie who gladly agrees for an interview with MOVIEMOVESME.COM to talk about her character, the relationship with Shane and the importance of seeing this truly profound film.

**MOVIEMOVESME: How would you introduce Jackie, the character you play in Fire Song?**

Jennifer Podemski: She's a mother of a recently deceased girl and a son who is struggling with his sexual identity. She's trying to, I guess, keep her head above the water. In this part of the film she's very much under the care of her son. She's not able to do very much on her own. She's like one of the things in Shane's life that's feeling him.

**MOVIEMOVESME: When the movie begins we find Jackie heartbroken, even refusing to go out to pay her last tributes to her daughter. There is a moment where she's trying to distance herself from Shane, who's trying to do his best. So can you talk about the psychological situation of Jackie at that point in time?**

Jennifer Podemski: The way I interpreted and worked with Adam, the director on it was that she falls into this very deep despair because of her own guilt. Not the guilt of being a bad mother but her guilt for not knowing as a mother that her daughter was in trouble. Being a parent myself, you sort of recognize when your child has the ability and the strength and the confidence to carry on. So I think that's how she feels about her son. She lives in her despair and sadness but trusts he's going to be okay. He doesn't need her as much as her daughter needed her.

**MOVIEMOVESME: We see Shane trying to support his family financially while trying to distance himself from it. Do you think it's because he thinks his family may not welcome the truth about his sexual identity?**

Jennifer Podemski: I think he doesn't want to burden his mother with it. I think he wants to be the accomplished academic, the survivor in the family, the one who gets out. He wants to be able to give back to his mother and make her proud but what seems to get in the way is his struggle with his sexual identity and he doesn't want to burden his mother with it. So that's why she's still in the dark. But I'm pretty sure that how Adam intended it was that the last person on earth who would judge him would be his mother. They even say in the film an elder told her that he'd be tooth bearded, so I think she always knew who he was and was just waiting for it to happen.

**MOVIEMOVESME: What is your opinion on the second suicide in the film and its relation to the first, if it indeed had any?**

Jennifer Podemski: Well, there are a couple of interesting connections. The first one is typical, and I know mostly about the aboriginal community, that suicides happened in groups. It is very common to hear that when a young person takes their life it is followed by several others. This typically happens in clusters. The overarching scene that Adam was utilizing to tell the story that there's a ripple effect. For Jackie's daughter I don't think there was anything deeply, deeply wrong. It's is very possible that it is the result of living in a very small modern community where there's a lot of drugs and alcohol issues facing the community that are direct result of residential schools. So the ripple effect on residential schools affect really intensely within smaller communities where there's a lack of resources. So I think with that the palette that the filmmaker was trying to paint, so it's almost less important of why the first person committed suicide and more important to recognize that suicide itself is a very big issue in the aboriginal community and is usually in clusters.

**MOVIEMOVESME: What is your opinion about the story and the way Adam brought it to the screen?**

Jennifer Podemski: I think he told it very well, it's very subtle and at its core is really a love story. All of the other things are just obstacles that are in his way and reality, the unfortunately reality that are facing our young people and community everywhere. But really, at its heart it's a love story. So in many ways, I think he struck a very good balance between telling a story that has very dark and relatable themes like suicide and abuse and incest but balanced so nicely with a very gentle homosexual love story which is rarely seen in movies.

**Toronto Star—September 16, 2015—Watch a TIFF star get red-carpet ready, from start to photo finish**
http://www.thestar.com/entertainment/tiff/2015/09/16/watch-a-tiff-star-get-red-carpet-ready-from-start-to-photo-finish.html

thestar.com
MOVIES

What does it take to prepare for a gala? Photographer Melissa Renwick followed actor-producer Jennifer Podemski for an entire day to find out.

The star: Producer and actor Jennifer Podemski, appearing at TIFF this year in First Nations teen drama Fire Song.

The event: Toronto Life Best Dressed 2015, Trump International Hotel & Tower, Sept. 10

MELISSA RENWICK

Podemski walks through the hallways of The Stylist Suite in the Trump Residences in the winning black gown by Canadian designer, Andrew Majtenyi. She selected this outfit to wear to that night's party.

**Phase 1: Picking an outfit**
9:20 a.m. The Stylist Suite, Trump Residences, 311 Bay St.

MELISSA RENWICK

Hair stylist, Judana Silvera, pampers Jennifer Podemski at Her Majesty's Pleasure and creates a hair style that she describes as 1920s glam, with a touch of fashion forward.

**Phase 2: The makeover**

11:30 a.m. Her Majesty’s Pleasure, 556 King St. W.

MELISSA RENWICK

Photographer, Luis Mora, photographs Podemski and other celebrities that visit the Tastemakers Lounge, a gifting suite for select talent.

**Phase 3: The gifting suite**
2:30 p.m. Tastemakers Lounge, InterContinental Hotel, 225 Front St. W.

MELISSA RENWICK

Podemski poses with Canadian rapper, Kardinal Offishall, at the Toronto Life Best Dressed party.

Phase 4: The party
7 p.m. Trump International Hotel & Tower

## Ryersonian.ca—September 14, 2015—Rye grad premieres Fire Song at TIFF

http://www.ryersonian.ca/rye-grad-premieres-fire-song-at-tiff/

Ryersonian.ca

By Charles Bossy

Ryerson film graduate Adam Garnet Jones' first feature film Fire Song premiered last Sunday at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) and is one of the first films directed by a First Nations director.Fire Song is the story of a closeted Anishinaabe teenager, who, in the fallout of his sister's suicide, deals with the challenges that arise; specifically supporting his mother or moving on to the outside world.For the 33-year old, who graduated from Ryerson in 2006, making the film was an emotional time. The film's subject matter of suicide resonated with him—it had been something Jones had struggled with in his youth.

"[The film] was in some way inspired by my time as a teenager, struggling with my own thoughts of suicide," Jones said.

He said that the cast members were also hit hard by the production of the film.

"Even though it was really difficult for me, I think for the people who were around me working on the film—it was even harder," Jones said. "In particular, because the content was so close for them as well."

Actress Ma-Nee Chacaby agrees. Chacaby first met Jones at a get-together in Thunder Bay. Jones asked her to audition for Fire Song—her first film. Chacaby, who plays Evie, a homophobic and religious woman, says the themes of Fire Song hit close to home.

"Fire Song is real," Chacaby said. "I see this in Thunder Bay. This film is going to seem real for First Nations people."

For Jones the film doesn't answer a lot of questions that viewers might have, but does start an important conversation for Aboriginal and queer people.

"The film is a good way to start talking about issues around sexuality and youth suicide…particularly in reserves," Jones said. "I don't think the film gives a lot of answers, except for, that it is important for people to open and come together and support one and other."

Sadly, for Jones and for most Aboriginal and Canadian filmmakers, Fire Song won't get nearly the amount of exposure as it should. A combination of no celebrity attachment and a lack of funding means movies like Fire Song slip under the radar.

But Jones plans to tour Fire Song around Aboriginal reserves that wouldn't usually have access to any movies at all.

"I think it's important that people in the community see this story, and a lot of people can use it as a springboard to talk about what's going on," Jones said. "The film has the ability to have the greatest impact in the Aboriginal community and within the queer community."

Originally wanting to be an actor, Jones decided to attend the Gulf Islands Film & Television School after his drama teacher told him he was too feminine to be an actor. At 14, his first short film made rounds in the Canadian film festival circuit and his film Cloudbreaker made its TIFF debut in 2006.

"My experience was just night and day from trying to be an actor," Jones said. "So much power, so much control to say what I really wanted to."

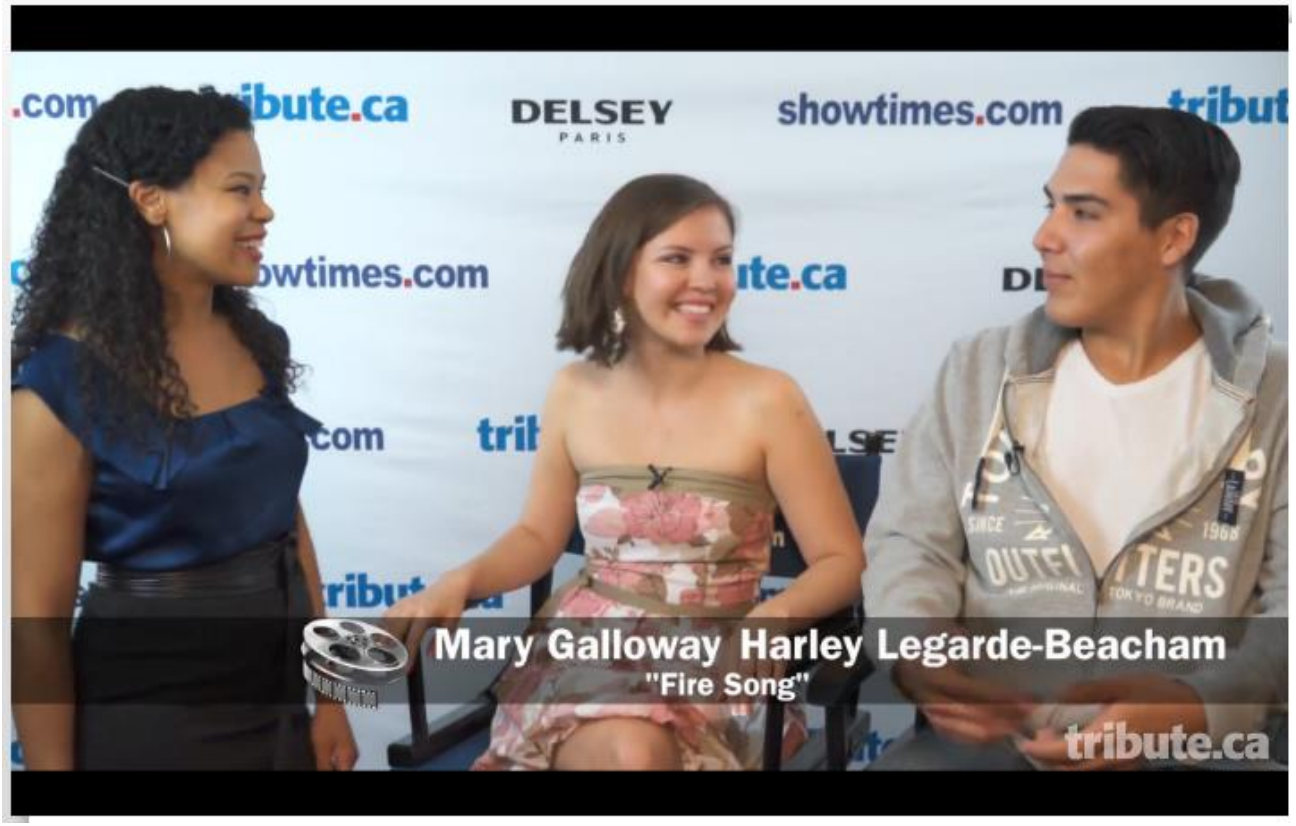
For Jones, Fire Song is not like other films about First Nations.

"The general perceptions of stories like this is, [Aboriginals] are really tough and really sad," Jones said. "I want people to walk away from Fire Song with the thought that Aboriginal people are incredibly strong and incredibly resilient."

The movie is playing at the Scotiabank Theatre for the rest of TIFF. With any luck it'll have a wider release sometime soon.

**tribute.ca－Mary Galloway & Harley Legarde-Beacham - Fire Song Interview**
http://www.tribute.ca/interviews/mary-galloway-harley-legarde-beacham/starchat/2676/

tribute.ca




After his sister commits suicide, leaving behind a stricken mother and distraught community, Shane (Andrew Martin), a young Anishinaabe man, becomes unsure of his future. He wants to go away to school, but he's having trouble coming up with the tuition...

**THE GLOBE AND MAIL—September 27, 3025—Jennifer Podemski on the struggle to tell First Nations stories**
http://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/awards-and-festivals/tiff/jennifer-podemski-on-the-struggle-to-tell-first-nations-stories/article26400136/

THE GLOBE AND MAIL

In Adam Garnet Jones's feature debut Fire Song, which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival this week, Jennifer Podemski plays a shattered Anishinaabe woman whose son is secretly gay and whose daughter commits suicide. Podemski, of Saulteaux and Polish descent, is an actor as well as an advocate for indigenous filmmaking. The Globe spoke with Podemski about her 15-year struggle to try to change the way Canadians view native people on screen.

**It must have been something of a risk to get involved in a movie in which you were just about the only professional performer on screen.**

In any sort of indigenous filmmaking you have to enter uncharted territory. In this case, the director and producer really wanted to work with unfamiliar talent, and in order to do so they had to train and bring in young non-union actors. That was presented to me as a mentoring experience, and I'm always interested in strengthening visibility from the indigenous-storytelling perspective. It was a leap of faith in many ways, but that's always exciting in film because anything's possible.

**Tell us about the story.**
It's a lovely, two-spirited love story about this young man with some sexual-identity issues in a very northern community against the backdrop of some other pretty traumatic social issues happening at the same time. It's definitely a story we haven't seen in this way. I was really taken by that and I think it's cool for me to sort of be in the position where it's like, "Will you come out and play the mom?"

**Was there a turning point where you decided acting in movies wasn't enough?**
My turning point, where I absolutely made the decision where I had to make movies instead of be in movies, was when I lived in New York City and I was sort of

going the American route in terms of getting my name out there and doing auditions. I knew the way I looked was not what people were ready for. So after constantly hearing things like “Can you play Asian?” or “You don’t look native enough” or “Your look is just too unusual” or “You’re too pretty to be the ugly best friend but not pretty enough to be the ingenue sort of starlet.” I thought, “I can’t do this. I need to make meaningful work.” That’s pretty much what I started doing.

**How would you describe the progress you’ve made?**
It’s moved a lot slower than I had dreamt. But when that happens you have to look at baby steps as really significant moves forward. So the fact that this film is at TIFF this year is a remarkable milestone. Hopefully this will lead to something else. Not just for Adam Jones but maybe other people involved. But I am a little bit disappointed over all that there’s not been giant leaps forward.

**What’s held things back?**
We’re not at a place yet where people believe they can relate to our stories as much as their own. There’s still a very tangible belief that an indigenous story can only penetrate a certain part of the audience. I’ve heard people refer to native filmmakers as fulfilling a niche. Unfortunately, that also holds us back from being able to penetrate a larger audience and prove that we, too, have stories that can access a global market. It’s frustrating.

**So what’s got to happen?**
Everything has to work hand in hand. As storytellers we need to collectively focus on staying true to the stories we want to tell and not be deterred by the fact that there may not be an audience for it. Political movements like Idle No More and the people fighting for recognition about missing and murdered women, these things filter down into our stories in a very natural way. But until Canadians can stop being separate from the indigenous experience, our storytelling will not be able to penetrate on a deeper level.

**Will developments such as Truth and Reconciliation influence this process?**

Truth and Reconciliation is about so much more than residential schools. It’s a climate. It’s created a conversation that has to do with everything: the education system, entertainment, conversations around the dinner table, everything. It’s working toward all of us as Canadians understanding we have a shared collective experience. The other day I heard there was a teacher near where I live teaching that Indians came here after so-called “Contact.” After Columbus. They crossed over a bridge, a landmass, well after the white man was here. This was being taught today. When we hear these kinds of stories of misinterpretation or misrepresentation or just outright racism, it’s so difficult to focus on people paying to watch your story in a movie. That’s so big compared to the fact that we need to change the curriculum or we need to figure out what’s happening to treaty rights and land titles. There’s so much happening simultaneously. But we also need to really nurture our storytellers because that’s how you change history.

Fire Song plays at TIFF on Sept. 20, 10:15 a.m., Scotiabank 10.

**First Nations Drum Magazine—Young First Nation cast impress in the new film Fire Song.**

# First Nations Drum

Film Review

## Young First Nation cast impress in the new film Fire Song

By Kelly Mane Guns

After sitting through a screening of the movie 'Fire Song,' a film by Adam Garnet Jones, I thought the director captured some realities of life on the reservation and definitely a movie worth checking-out.

The movie follows Shane, the lead character played by Andrew Martin, who is struggling with the suicide of his sister Tara (Mary Galloway) while supporting his mother Jackie, played by Jennifer Podemski. Shane is grappling with his personal life, being a gay teenager struggling to come out of the closet, while being in a relationship with his girlfriend Tara, played by Mary Galloway. Shane is also hiding his true feelings for boyfriend David, played by Harley Legarde.

The story is set in a remote northern Ontario First Nation community dealing with the recent suicide of their band member (Destiny), all the while, Shane is confronted by a series of events that make his decision on attending college, a difficult one.

"I was over whelmed and had my doubts about doing justice to the character of Shane. What if I couldn't pull it off? But then I realized, they picked me for a reason and I just went for it."

Without giving too much away from the film the toughest scenes Martin said he had to do where with his on screen boyfriend, Harley Legarde.

"One particular scene I did with Harley was pretty tough and I really had to dig deep down and feel what Shane would feel feeling in that moment and that was with the closet scene."

This was also Legarde's first supporting role in a film and originally wanted to try out for the lead character, but after reading the script decided to audition for the David character.

The character of David is also dealing with his best friends death (Destiny) and hides Shane in the closet and hiding his relationship with his boyfriend.

"Since all the local on shore were filmed in my community of Fort Williams First Nations, so of course there would be a lot of familiarities," Legarde said. "I think the film really did a great portrayal of youth on first Nations and what they struggle

Above: The Young cast of 'Fire Song,' the World Premiere was set for September at the Toronto International Film Festival. Fire Song is a universal story about a young man fighting to survive on a remote aboriginal community. From left to right: Harley Legarde, Lisa Ryder, Mary Galloway, and Fort Williams First Nation

I had the opportunity to talk with Andrew Martin on playing his character, and how he approached it.

"I drew parallels to my life into the character of Shane," Martin said. "Shane is gay, living on the rez and he has to look out for the dangers he faces because of some people's perceptions. Also a feeling of alienation he feels toward himself."

This is Andrew Martin's first lead role in a film where you see him in almost every frame. I asked him how he felt when he got the role, and carrying the movie on his character.

"It was over whelmed and had my doubts about doing justice to the character of Shane. What if I couldn't pull it off? But then I realized, they picked me for a reason and I just went for it."

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"One particular scene I did with Harley was pretty tough and I really had to dig deep down and feel what Shane would feel feeling in that moment and that was with the closet scene."

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The character of David is also dealing with his best friends death (Destiny) and hides Shane in the closet and hiding his relationship with his boyfriend.

"Since all the local on shore were filmed in my community of Fort Williams First Nations, so of course there would be a lot of familiarities," Legarde said. "I think the film really did a great portrayal of youth on first Nations and what they struggle through. Also the struggles of being gay in a small community and coming out."

Fire Song also stars got one for up and coming actress, Mary Galloway of the Cowichin First Nation who plays Tara.

Galloway received the news she got the role at the same time Martin did on their flight back to Toronto from Thunder Bay, where they had a table read and a one-week actors workshop.

"I was on the flight back home when they announced on the airplane speaker that Andrew and me got the roles of Shane and Tara," Galloway said. "So that was exciting, and then we couldn't share our good news with anyone until the made the official announcement."

Galloway said she enjoyed filming with the crew and fellow co-stars but some of the scenes were very intense.

The character of Tara goes through her own struggles of not knowing what the real truth is in front of her and her relationship with Shane.

"There was some intense scenes with the role of Tara, and I think her vulnerability was what I had to really focus on when I played the role," Galloway said. "What I really like about Fire Song is that it doesn't sugarcoat what reservation life is about, and keeps it really real-to-life."

This is I'm will introduce moviegoers to a host of new young First Nation actors, as well as other supporting cast members like award winning actress, Jennifer Podemski, and recording artist Derek Miller.

Director Garnet Jones sums it up best, "The film is about Shane trying to have it all - trying to do the best he can in an impossible situation."

Fire Song had its world premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival this September.

"Tough yet compassionate, subtle and affecting, Fire Song announces the arrival of powerful new voice in Canadian cinema." Kevin Gray-cock, senior programmer at TIFF, has selected Canadian feature films for the festival since 2004.

The first feature film by Adam Garret jones, Fire song, works firmly as a great example of First Nations cinema in Canada but also as a teen film that could reach much further with audiences. Never one to shy away from talk of suicide, drug use, and sexuality in frank, bluntly honest detail, Jones vigorously depicts one of the most emotionally confused periods in a teenager's life. - Toronto On-line Film Magazine

**CBC Radio Thunder Bay - September 4、2015—Interview with Harley Legarde and Adam Garnet Jones**
(no online link available)

**Your World This Week – September 12、2015—Interview with Adam Garnet Jones, Mary Galloway, Harley Legarde and Andrew Martin**
(no online link available)

**Out There with Melissa DiMarco – September 11　2015—Interview with Jennifer Podemski and Adam Garnet Jones**
(no online link available)

**CBC Metro Morning – September 14, 2015 – Interview with Adam Garnet Jones**
(no online link available)

**What She Said (Sirius XM) – September 11, 2015 – Interview with Mary Galloway and Jennifer Podemski**
(no online link available)

**CP24 Breakfast – September 10, 2015 – Interview with Jennifer Podemski**
(no online link available)

**FIRE SONG PRESS BREAKS at TIFF 2015 (REVIEWS)**

**Way Too Indie—September 8, 2015—TIFF 2015: Fire Song**
http://waytooindie.com/news/tiff-2015-fire-song/

WAY TOO INDIE
INDEPENDENT FILM & MUSIC REVIEWS

From the very first frames of Fire Song, writer/director Adam Garnet Jones casts a somber tone over his film. Taking place in an Aboriginal community in Northern Ontario, Fire Song focuses on Shane (Andrew Martin), a teenager dealing with the recent suicide of his sister. Shane plans to go to college in Toronto in the hopes of bettering himself, but he has a host of issues getting in the way: his mother (Jennifer Podemski, giving a terrific performance) is inconsolable about her daughter's death, his family's in dire financial straits MAKING it harder for him to use what MONEYthey have for his tuition), and he's trying to maintain a relationship with his girlfriend Tara (Mary Galloway) while secretly dating his true romantic interest David (Harley LeGarde-Beacham).

When the plot is all laid out like that, it might sound a little convoluted, but Garnet Jones—making his feature debut—does a commendable JOB juggling the different characters and plot strands as they impact Shane's life in different ways. At its core, Fire Song is a familiar coming-of-age drama that's revitalized by contextualizing it through an Aboriginal point of view. Garnet Jones takes an intimate, character-heavy approach, delving right into the complexities of Shane's decision to move away, along with coming to terms with his homosexuality. Even more admirable is the way Fire Song doesn't shy away from portraying the grim reality of Shane's situation at home and on the reservation. Garnet Jones addresses the very real crisis of suicide among Aboriginal youth in Canada (for example: suicide is the leading cause of death for First Nations youth, and that's not even one of the more grim facts) by portraying it as an all-too-familiar part of this community. Rather than go for a macro approach, highlighting the systemic causes of the reservation's problems, Garnet Jones prefers to watch how everyone works within their constraints on a day-to-day basis, and by doing so, he heightens the drama while making his characters all the more natural and well-rounded.

A tragic event kicking off the film's final act is Garnet Jones' biggest misstep, as the rather subdued drama almost crosses into genre territory, and some of the story's moral complexities go into more black-and-white territory, betraying the more naturalistic approach beforehand. But there's plenty more to celebrate about Fire Song. It's nice to see a film showcasing a perspective that's rarely seen in cinema, and the mature, intimate approach MAKES it all the better.

**The Seventh Row—September 9, 2015—TIFF15: 'Fire Song' presents an authentic queer narrative in a First Nations community *** 1/2**

http://seventh-row.com/2015/09/09/fire-song-tiff15/

# The Seventh Row

Adam Garnet Jones' "Fire Song" is a frank portrait of indigenous LGBT people and how depression and isolation intersect within a First Nation community. Suicide is rupturing what Shane knows as home. His sister has just killed herself, and his entire family is reeling from this tragedy. His mother has made herself a cocoon of grief around her deceased daughter's room. Every interaction he has with her is stilted and doesn't connect. She is depressed, and Shane cannot fix her.

But the biggest quandary he is facing is the decision to potentially leave the reservation for the big city so he may go to school and explore his sexuality. Shane is two-spirited, which is loosely defined in "Fire Song" as exhibiting traits of both a masculine and feminine side. Shane has a girlfriend (Tara), but he is also smitten with David, the grandson of the community's leader. Shane is at a major crossroad in his life regarding his sexuality, his future, his family, and his community. He doesn't want to betray his family or his community by leaving, but his future lies beyond the reservation. Only by leaving the reservation can he be open about his sexuality.

Filmed on Ontario aboriginal reservations, Jones' camera captures both a feeling of home and the internalized homophobia that coexists on the reservation. Beautiful landscaping shots, and a murky-dusk colour palette give "Fire Song" a perpetual haze of grey in the image surrounding these characters, which increases our awareness of grief that cuts through every character motivation. It's reminiscent of the cinematography in "Winter's Bone."

Characters often discuss suicide. Garnet Jones wants the realities and the impact of that action to be felt. His camera lingers on bodies as they hang, and doesn't flinch at the unrelenting grief that comes afterward. Depression affects everyone in the community, and the greatest fear is that suicide will beget more suicide.

This makes "Fire Song" an important movie in Canadian cinema, because these stories aren't often told. According to the Canadian Mental Health website, First Nations people are about five to six times more likely to commit suicide than non-aboriginal youth. These rates are among the highest in the world, and something all Canadians should be aware of when they think about the people of their country.

"Fire Song" adds an extra layer onto that already scary statistic by making the protagonist queer. Shane is one of the more well rounded queer characters in cinema in recent years. He doesn't fall prey to stereotypes, and he doesn't exist simply to be queer. All of his actions are funneled through his own queerness, but his aspirations of finding love, chasing his

dreams, and honouring his family are universal. These universal themes are unique when presented through the lens of an indigenous character though, which is why “Fire Song” holds a rare place in Canadian cinema and queer cinema.

Garnet Jones’ first feature comes from an intrinsically humane place, as it feels personal to his own upbringing. He’s been working on the film for over five years, and by completing it, he has proven himself as resilient as his characters. “Fire Song” is something to be proud of as it debuts at TIFF this year: it’s a work of Canadian cinema, which brings light to a narrative that gives visibility to a serious national problem. It’s confident, fresh cinema that rarely falters.

“Fire Song” screens Sun. Sept. 13 at 4:30 p.m., Tues. Sept. 15 at 9:30 p.m., and Sun. Sept. 20 at 10:15 a.m. at the Scotiabank Theatre. For tickets and details, visit the TIFF website here

**TWO ROW TIMES— September 9, 2015—Fire Song Makes its Debut at the Toronto International Film Festival**
http://www.tworowtimes.com/arts-and-culture/fire-song-makes-its-debut-at-the-toronto-international-film-festival/

TWO ROW TIMES
"THE SPIRIT OF ALL NATIONS"

By Lindsay Monture

The Toronto International Film Festival is upon us and has PROGRAMMED a feature film with fresh young First Nations talent in a story that will speak to native communities, LGBTQ communities and native youth.

Fire Song is a story about having to MAKE life's hard decisions through grief and heartbreak, while searching for freedom and acceptance at the same time. It will have a world premiere this Sunday, September 13th in Toronto.

Shane, played by Six Nations' Andrew Martin, is an Anishinaabe youth who wants nothing more than to leave his life in a remote community to attend school in Toronto and build a new life with his secret boyfriend, David (Harley Legarde-Beacham).

After his sister Destiny takes her own life, Shane is left to pick up the pieces of his mother's broken heart and make ends meet at home. Shane also struggles to hide that he is two-spirited from his friends and girlfriend Tara (Mary Galloway), while trying to convince David to move with him to the big city. One night, Tara discovers Shane's secret and everything Shane has tried to maintain falls apart at once, leaving Shane VULNERABLE and willing to do whatever it takes to get away.

Fire Song is Cree/Métis filmmaker Adam Garnet Jones' first feature film. "When I first started thinking about Fire Song, I wanted to make a deeply personal film that could touch on my own experience as an adolescent, but could also serve to get people talking about sexuality and youth suicide in Aboriginal communities," says Jones. "I remember what it was like being a teenager with massive hopes and DREAMS for my own future, and at the same time I remember being terrified that I would kill myself before I could reach my potential. I was writing about myself and lots of other young people that I've known over the years who were full of promise but also broken in some way."

Fire Song addresses a lot of social issues that many of our First Nations communities face day to day. The film is full of tragedy and darkness, balanced out by tender moments between characters and beautiful, still morning landscapes.

Shot on-location in Fort William First Nation and Wabigoon Lake First Nation, the lake plays a deliberate role in the film. "The relationship of the community to the water was always important to me. The characters are living in a community that needs to feel fairly isolated, and the idea that you can see the physical boundary of the community – the water's edge." Jones explains, "But then water works on a metaphorical level as well. When the characters gather near the lake it's often to think about their future, like gazing into the unknown. There is a feeling of a boundary being crossed."

"I want young people who are struggling to see themselves in Shane, and know that no matter what life throws at them, they can survive," Jones shares, "It won't always be EASY, but Aboriginal people are nothing if not resilient. I hope young people can gather strength from that."

On an international platform such as TIFF, Jones hopes audiences come away from the film "with respect for the resilience of Aboriginal people and Aboriginal communities, and an interest in EXPLORING more Indigenous cinema. There is a whole cinematic universe of stories, culture, and history waiting for a wide audience to discover. In a world where people feel like they have seen it all, this is a chance to be exposed to what will be a new world for a lot of people."

Tickets to see Fire Song at TIFF are now on sale at www.tiff.net. Fire Song has also been selected as the closing night feature for the 16th imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival in October. Visit www.imaginenative.org for ticket information.

**Movie Moves Me－September 9, 2015－TIFF 15 Review: “Fire Song” (2015)**
http://moviemovesme.com/2015/09/09/tiff-15-review-fire-song-2015/

When Shane’s sister all of a sudden commits suicide, he finds himself at a crossroads; whether to support his family, to mourn his sister, or fix his personal life, which is not that simple for Anishnabe teenager. Even though he seems to be in love with Tara (Mary Galloway), our hero tries to hide from his family and girlfriend that he is gay. But when the time comes to face the fact, nothing will ever be the same….

When FIRE SONG begins we find Shane trying to comfort his mother due to the loss of her daughter, his sister. He asks her to go to requiem with him, but not only does she refuse to go out, but stays in the room like if it was the last place she would ever wanted to stay. Despite Shane being heartbroken, he tries to find peace in his own life. But the aftermath of his sister’s suicide impacts him so strongly that he struggles to support his family.

As the film progresses, we find Shane is about to be forced to choose between his own family’s home and his own future that might await him in Toronto. As his relationship is getting more complicated with his girlfriend, Tara, he still tries to protect her from the truth of being gay and dating with his best friend, David (Harley Legarde). Meantime, we see how hard it is for Jackie (Jennifer Podemski) to cope from the loss of her daughter. She also loses the connection with her son, who is on his way to damage his life….

FIRE SONG is Adam Garnet Jones’s first feature film which well examines the loss, relationships and struggle in one film. The way he’s written Shane’s character is quite impressive

where we learn something new from him all the time. Despite the reason why Shane's sister had to commit suicide is not mentioned, there's always a feeling that the family might know something we are not aware of. Jackie, played by Jennifer Podemski, is devastated by the loss. She deliberately rejects Shane's attempt to somehow ease her pain. However, even though we find her keeping distance from her son who also has personal issues, we will find Jackie face the moment of truth. The moment, when she realizes how important it is not to lose the bond with her son if she does not want to lose him the way she lost her daughter.

In conclusion, FIRE SONG is a well-directed movie with solid performances from the entire cast. It's quite a sad story of how to cope with loss without losing those you're still having beside you. It's a movie about learning, acceptance and willingness to not lose yourself when there are million reasons for that.

Schedule:
SUN SEP 13, 4:30 PM
Scotiabank Theatre Scotiabank 14
TUE SEP 15, 9:30 PM
Scotiabank Theatre Scotiabank 8
SUN SEP 20, 10:15 AM
Scotiabank Theatre Scotiabank 10

**CINEMA AXIS—September 12, 2015—TIFF 2015: FIRE SONG**
http://cinemaaxis.com/2015/09/12/tiff-2015-fire-song/

The sense of desperation in Adam Garnet Jones' debut film Fire Song is almost stifling. Similar to the ghost of their recently deceased peers, the threat of a potentially hopeless future haunts the Anishnaabe youth. While some have resolved to accept their fate in the Northern Ontario aboriginal community, Shane (Andrew Martin) is determined to get out at all costs. Set to go to university in Toronto in the fall, Shane's plans take an unexpected detour when his sister commits suicide. Struggling to support the family in the aftermath, including tending to his depressed mother Jackie (Jennifer Podemeski), and raise money for school, Shane soon finds the walls of life closing in on him.

Complicating matters further is the fact that Shane is gay within a culture where the elders believe "too much male energy is not good." Forced to meet with his boyfriend David (Harely Legrade) in secret, while stringing along an unknowing girlfriend, Tara (Mary Galloway), for appearances sake, only intensifies Shane's desire for the freedom of the big city. Blinded by his visions of a better future, and filled with guilt over his sister's passing, Shane's life begins to spiral out of control. Before long he is making reckless decisions that will have reverberations throughout the entire community.

As intriguing as the film is, there are moments when Fire Song bites off more than it can chew. Tackling themes of homophobia, suicide, rape, drugs, small town life, and cultural values, Jones' film does not always juggle the various talking points smoothly. Fortunately, the predictable nature of some of the narrative beats are minor stumbles made up for by the film's rich and complex characters. Jones ensures that the audience is able to identify with the plight of the characters regardless of whether his lens is pointed toward the frequently neglected Tara or the spiritually conflicted David. Similar to the wonderful image of David and Shane spending a quiet moment on the grass, it quickly becomes apparent that the majority of the characters, in their own way, have a burning desire to live a life that transcends the bleak societal shackles which currently bind them.

Fire Song paints a complex portrait of the adversities facing modern aboriginal youth. Filled with heartbreaking sorrow, Jones presents a society where suicide and alcohol are often the preferred choices to numb the pain of life. As bleak as life may seem for the characters, the film never loses its sense of optimism. Jones hints that the bridge between traditional and modern values is achievable. While education, acceptance and respect are just a few of the key tools for breaking dangerous cycle that many face, Fire Song never neglects the importance of holding on to traditions that make the culture unique. The trick, of course, is in finding balance.

Screens
Sunday, September 13, 4:30 PM, Scotiabank Theatre
Tuesday, September 15, 09:30 PM, Scotiabank Theatre
Sunday, September 20, 10:15 AM, Scotiabank Theatre
Ticket information can be found at the TIFF website.
FIRE SONG (REVIEWS)

**TORONTO FILM SCENE—September 12, 2015—TIFF 2015 REVIEW: FIRE SONG**
http://thetfs.ca/2015/09/12/tiff-2015-review-fire-song/

TORONTO FILM SCENE

A young and bright First Nations teenager, Shane (Andrew Martin), finds himself torn in many of the same ways most high school seniors find themselves torn in. Only in Shane's case the push and pull between staying on his reservation and leaving for university in the potentially greener pastures of Toronto are compounded by four things: his heritage, his chronically depressed mother (Jennifer Podemski), a lack of money, and his bisexuality. Following the suicide of his sister, his mother can barely leave the dead sibling's bedroom, let alone the HOUSE. Shane wants to keep his girlfriend (Mary Galloway) happy so she'll go to Toronto with him, but he would much rather pursue the affections of the closeted grandson of a tribal leader (Harley Legarde-Beacham). Not wanting to let anyone down, Shane faces a harsh decision where someone close to him will be emotionally hurt regardless of the path he chooses, and the ramifications could be devastating.

The first feature effort from filmmaker Adam Garnet Jones, Fire Song, works not only as a great example of First Nations cinema in Canada, but also as a teen film that could reach much further with audiences. Never one to shy away from talk of suicide, drug use, and sexuality in frank, bluntly honest detail, Jones expertly depicts one of the most emotionally conflicted period's in a teenager's life.

The real drama comes from watching how Shane makes increasingly poor decisions in coping with his troubles and how he must bounce back from them. It's a more than accurate depiction of small town living pretty much anywhere, and while it's assuredly a First Nations story, the same themes could apply to teens anywhere with equal resonance.

Everything about Fire Song, especially an exceptional performance from newcomer Martin, feels authentic, and that's what makes it so sad, intense, and ultimately moving.

IS FIRE SONG ESSENTIAL FESTIVAL VIEWING?

Yes. It's not only one of the best Canadian films in this year's festival, but also one of the best films about teenagers the country has ever produced.

FIRE SONG SCREENING TIMES

Sunday, September 13, 2015 – 4:30 pm – Scotiabank Theatre
Tuesday, September 15, 2015 – 9:30 pm – Scotiabank Theatre
Sunday, September 20, 2015 – 10:15 am – Scotiabank Theatre

**Torontonicity－September 7, 2015－TIFF 2015 Previews**
http://www.torontonicity.com/2015/09/07/tiff-2015-previews/

Diana Condolo

Torontonicity was given the opportunity to preview a few films for the 2015 Toronto International Film Festival, including Fire Song, Jafar Panahi's Taxi and The Ardennes. The Toronto International Film Festival is one of the premiere Toronto events and runs from September 10-20, 2015.

Fire Song at TIFF
(Previewed by Lori Bosworth.) Fire Song, written and directed by Canada's Adam Garnet Jones, will make its World Premiere at the 2015 Toronto International Film Festival.
Set on the Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation and Fort William First Nation in Northwestern Ontario, Fire Song focuses on the struggle of Shane (Andrew Martin), an Aboriginal teen, after the suicide of his sister. Desiring to help his mother (Jennifer Podemski) financially and emotionally, Shane also has conflicting aspirations to move to Toronto with his secret boyfriend (Harley LeGarde-Beacham) unbeknownst to his girlfriend (Mary Galloway).

There is not much to aspire to on this Northern Ontario reserve: there is a dearth of opportunities for youth and Saturday nights consist of getting drunk or high. Fire Song touches on many themes rampant in Canada's Aboriginal community including suicide, drug and alcohol abuse, sexual assault and incestual relationships. We also see Shane and his mother torn between Native traditions and the pull of modern society. Fire Song is directed with an economical hand and features honest performances and some gorgeous photography of Wabigoon Lake, which underscores the fertility of the land versus the utter barrenness of life on the reserve. Hopefully, the film will open many eyes and hearts to the frustrating conditions for youth in many of Canada's Aboriginal communities.

Adam Garnet Jones is a gay Cree/Metis filmmaker originally from Edmonton. His short films have been broadcast widely on television and at film festivals. In 2008, Adam received the imagineNATIVE/Canwest Mentorship Award and was the recent recipient of the RBC Emerging Artist Award and the Jim Burt Screenwriting prize for the script for FireSong. He recently wrapped production on his second feature film, Great Great Great.

Canada | 85 minutes | World Premiere

Fire Song World Premiere

Sunday, September 13, 4:30 PM – Scotiabank

Public Screenings of Fire Song at TIFF

Tuesday, September 15, 9:30 PM – Scotiabank

Sunday, September 20, 10:15 PM – Scotiabank

**Toronto Star – September 4 –"Fire Song"**
http://www.thestar.com/entertainment/tiff/2015/09/04/what-to-movies-to-see-and-what-to-skip-at-tiff-2015.html

** ½ / ****
Canada | Shane (Andrew Martin), a closeted gay Anishnaabe teenager in Northern Ontario, lives in a world of secrets. Anxious to begin a new life in Toronto at university, he finds himself caring for his emotionally shattered mom (Jennifer Podemski) after his sister's suicide. He keeps up a straight pretence with girlfriend Tara (Mary Galloway), going to desperate places to find money to support his family, while struggling with feelings for David (Harley Legarde-Beacham). Writer-director Adam Garnet Jones's script wanders occasionally but the strong aboriginal principal cast keeps the story interesting. Lovely cinematography from James Kinistin. L.B.

**TORONTO SUN – September 10 – "TIFF 2015: From Sicario to Spotlight to The Lobster – An Early Look at What's Playing at the Film Fest"**
http://www.torontosun.com/2015/09/04/tiff-2015-from-sicario-to-spotlight-to-the-lobster-an-early-look-at-whats-playing-at-the-filmfest

FIRE SONG – DISCOVERY - CANADA
**3 (out of 5)**
With his friends committing suicide with numbing regularity, a young man in a Northern Ontario Anishnabe reserve has more than a few reasons to plan to leave. Though he has a girlfriend, he has a secret affair with the son of the reserve elder and dreams of them living together in Toronto. The debut feature by acclaimed indigenous filmmaker Adam Garnet Jones is more tragic teen soap opera than social mirror. But the actual Northwestern Ontario reserve location lends verisimilitude to the tale of aimless teens with easy access to drugs and booze and no easy way out. – Slotek

**CanCulture –September 7 –"TIFF Review: Fire Song"**
http://www.canculture.com/2015/09/07/tiff-review-fire-song/

CANCULTURE

Adam Garnet Jones brings the fire to indigenous cinema, a call for both the cinematic and the indigenous communities. With its Aboriginal cast and pressing themes in the First Nations communities, Fire Song is vital for Canada's cinematic world. The film marks Jones' arrival as a booming new voice for Canadian cinema in his feature directorial debut.
WINNER of the Jim Burt Screenwriting Prize for its script, Fire Song is the emotional story of Shane, a gay Anishnabee teenager whose sister just committed suicide. Shane, played by Andrew Martin, struggles between staying in his remote Northern reserve to support his fragile home and moving to Toronto for university where he's certain he'll find solace in the LGBTQ community. The issues that weigh on the community are brilliantly captured in this coming-of-age feature.

Martin channels the complexities of a young man undergoing mounting responsibilities and crippling dreams in the resilient Shane. Sometimes unlikable, Shane is selfish and impulsive and occasionally runs away from his problems. But that's just what makes Martin's performance so powerful and the character development so real and relatable. He struggles through his story with the support of his secret boyfriend, David played by Harley Legarde-Beacham.

Fire Song's cinematography has pockets of beautifully captured scenes. Filmed in Forth William First Nation and Wabigoon First Nation, shots of the lake and encompassing forests are awe-inspiring, with the scene where Shane and David go off in a canoe to collect rice being one to look out for. In this scene, the secret lovers find comfort in the lake's tranquil beauty during a time when their situation is at its most tense and nerve-wracking.

With suicides, separation and sexuality, Fire Song is an important film. It is one of the first features by a First Nations director to focus on two-spirited people, making its plot a bold confrontation to some of the most tenacious questions facing First Nations communities.

This isn't a hyper-sexualized film or one filled with jam-packed action sequences. It's the cutthroat script and paced drama that ignite Fire Song. The problems that arise for Shane and his community are not out of place or filled with frills. What keeps the audience interested is the unique depiction of what could be everyday experiences for the Aboriginal community.

Shane, who despite being an important voice for marginalized peoples, is such an excellently complex character that he becomes relatable to more than just the LGBTQ and Native communities. The crossroads Shane stands before — where one path holds his dreams and freedom and the other holds selfless responsibilities and guilt — is one so many of us face.

**EXCALIBUR – September 16 –"Fire song heats up the Canadian cinema scene"**
http://www.excal.on.ca/fire-song-heats-up-the-canadian-cinema-scene/

EXCALIBUR
YORK UNIVERSITY'S COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

The directorial feature debut of Ryerson graduate Adam Garnet Jones, Fire Song is an emotional tale of community, self identity, and the struggle to fit in, set in the northern reserves of Canada.

The film follows Shane, a gay teenage Anishinaabe who is forced with the decision to stay at his reservation, or leave his community to go to post-secondary education. Friends, family and even his girlfriend cannot help with this decision, as it ultimately means abandoning his identity to fit into society's standards, a society that has a history of actively oppressing the community.

With emotional performances from Andrew Martin, Mary Galloway, and Harley Legarde-Beacham, this feature film feels anything but amateur. The cinematography, framing, and lighting all serve to accent the raw emotions presented. Although some scenes can be over the top with drama, the cringe worthy moments are few and in between, seemingly forgotten with the amazing score and soundtrack.

As you get emotionally invested in all these characters, you realize how universal this story is, and how your deepest doubts, fears, and concerns are within each of these characters.

With an aboriginal cast, filming at Forth William First Nation and Wabigoon First Nation reserves, it is sufficient to say this is truly a Canadian film, representing a minority group that succeeded today's majority immigrant population.

Winner of the Jim Burt Screenwriting Prize, this is a historical piece of Canadian cinema that deals not only with Aboriginal identity, but sexuality, depression, suicide, and is a true coming of age story for all.

# THE FILM CORNER—September 17, 2015—FIRE SONG - Review By Greg Klymkiw - TIFF 2015 - Legacy of Canadian Colonialist Apartheid

http://klymkiwfilmcorner.blogspot.ca/2015/09/fire-song-review-by-greg-klymkiw-tiff.html

THE FILM CORNER
with Greg Klymkiw
filmmaker | writer | teacher

Fire Song (2015)
Dir. Adam Garnet Jones
Starring: Andrew Martin,
Jennifer Podemski, Harley LeGarde-Beacham, Mary Galloway

Review By Greg Klymkiw

The legacy of British colonial rule in Canada has resulted in apartheid and virulent racism. Life on many Aboriginal Reservations is fraught with abject poverty, crime, sexual exploitation, incest and worst of all, an increasingly learned epidemic of suicide. None of this has been alleviated in the years of fascist rule in Canada under Prime Minister Stephen Harper and in fact, has only increased due to his government's complete disregard for Aboriginal nations on virtually every level including the theft of land, natural resources and pernicious backstabbing. The aforementioned blights are all explored in Adam Garnet Jones's feature length debut - and then some.Fire Song is a deeply moving and an indelibly-captured slice-of-life portrait of young and old alike. They all seek a better life; if not on the reservation, then off it.When his sister commits suicide, a smart, sensitive young gay man (Andrew Martin) is torn between leaving the reservation to get a post-secondary education and staying behind to care for his beloved mother (Jennifer Podemski) who has crawled into a pit of the deepest despair. Complicating matters further, he's kept his sexual orientation a secret between himself and his lover (Harley LeGarde-Beacham) whilst maintaining a "straight" appearance by dating a beautiful young girl (Mary Galloway), whose father keeps coming on to her incestuously.

In many ways, our hero bears the burden of being a protector, but in reality, he'd eventually fulfill that role even more effectively if he left the reserve to study.Director Jones captures reservation life with such a keen eye, eliciting superb performances from his entire cast, that it's a trifle disappointing that the screenplay feels so rigidly structured, capturing its story beats on its sleeve. The film needed a bit of breathing space and perhaps might have benefitted from writing which was even further rooted in a neo-realist tradition. As well, far too many conflicts and loose ends are addressed and dealt with in a positive fashion during the final third of the picture. They feel rushed and almost shoe-horned into the proceedings.

Given the often overwhelming despair and confusion, both redemption and positive movements forward are indeed very welcome, but they finally seem too forced to be fully effective. There is, however, one aspect of the tale which is handled beautifully on both the writing, directing and acting fronts which addresses the film's initial suicide in an alternately bittersweet and downright heartbreaking manner guaranteed to get the tear ducts flowing freely.The mostly youthful cast handle themselves naturalistically, but the one knockout performance comes from Jennifer Podemski who demonstrates, yet again, why she's one of Canada's finest actors. She evokes the character's despair and vulnerability without the kind of histrionics the role might have inspired and Podemski very nicely moves into her character's sense of acceptance and love (especially for her gay son) with a reality that's inspiring. The camera loves her and she knows how to use it by keeping her performance delicately muted in a manner which allows for the kind of impact that only great, understated acting is capable of achieving.

The film ultimately elicits sadness and occasionally anger, but in a sense, it's both a positive and enormously important approach to place us in the heart and soul of a place, a way of life which should have been a paradise, but by virtue of being drafted so long ago within a racist context, is a living Hell - one that had (and still has) the potential for healing. Sometimes, though, healing can't only come from within. It needs genuine help from the outside.

THE FILM CORNER RATING: ***½ 3-and-a-half-stars

Fire Song received its World Premiere in the Discovery series at TIFF 2015. For further info, visit the TIFF website HERE.

**Fire Song wins imagineNATIVE audience award - November 9, 2015**
**http://playbackonline.ca/2015/11/09/fire-song-wins-imaginenative-audience-award/**

PLAYBACK

**The feature from Adam Garnet Jones picked up the Air Canada Audience Choice Award at the fest.**

Adam Garnet Jones' *Fire Song* has won the Air Canada Audience Choice Award at ImagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival.

The feature film, which made its world bow in the Discovery program at **TIFF '15**, was selected from a field of 123 eligible films. More than 9,370 votes were cast in total via the festival's balloting system, with the filmmakers also taking home a $1,000 cash prize.

This year marked the 16th edition of imagineNATIVE festival, taking place from Oct.14 to 18.
***Fire Song*** is produced by Toronto-based Big Soul Productions (*Moccasin Flats*) and Thunderstone Pictures.

**5 top picks: Winnipeg's Aboriginal Film Fest packed with fire - November 18, 2015**
http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/winnipeg-aboriginal-film-fest-packed-with-fire-1.3323318

## Magnitude of indigenous films and emergence of talented filmmakers is clear at festivals like WAFF

***Fire Song***

The indigenous cinema genre is about 40 years old, but in recent years it has exploded into the mainstream. *Fire Song,* showing at this week's Winnipeg Aboriginal Film Festival, is one of those films. It debuted earlier this year at the prestigious Toronto International Film Festival. The magnitude of films and emergence of talented filmmakers is clear at festivals like WAFF.

The third largest festival in North America devoted to indigenous film and video starts today and runs until Sunday, November 22. Here are some flicks you don't want to miss.

*Fire Song* is a powerful and compelling story set in an indigenous community in Ontario. It is the creation of Cree-Metis director Adam Garnet Jones and is one of the first films to cover two-spirited issues by an indigenous director of Canada — an issue close to Garnet Jones' heart.
"It's just a composite of what I've known and heard over and over again. I didn't grow up on reserve, but I'm gay and as a teenager I felt the same type of fear and isolation that the characters in the film do," Garnet Jones said from his home in Toronto.
At the crux of the film is the struggle to either stay or leave an indigenous community, and the complexities on each side. But the main character Shane, is still reeling from the suicide of his sister. That subject of suicide crept off screen and into real life during production.

The film is dedicated to Kieran McArthur, the teenage son of film's makeup artist who died by suicide during production.

"It felt like a full life time. There were things that were wonderful, joyous and beautiful and things that were heartbreaking, that tore us apart and almost stopped us from finishing the film."

*Fire Song* tackles hard issues with intelligence, sensitivity and bravery through a talented all-indigenous cast.

**10 films to see at Image+Nation: LGBT festival's directors offer their top picks - November 27, 2015**
http://montrealgazette.com/entertainment/movies/10-films-to-see-at-imagenation-lgbt-festivals-directors-offer-their-top-picks

Fire Song: a definite must-see, it boasts poignant storytelling. ADAMGARNETJONES.COM

Image+Nation is moving on up. For its 28th edition, Canada's longest-running celebration of LGBT cinema is adding the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts to its list of venues.
It's a fittingly sophisticated venue for this dynamic festival, which this year boasts films hailing from Venezuela to New Zealand, Kenya to Israel, with a healthy homegrown contingent thrown in for good measure.

To help you sift through the program, the Montreal Gazette consulted with Image+Nation director Charlie Boudreau and programming director Katharine Setzer, who offered up this insider's selection of picks screening through Dec. 6.

**Fire Song (Dec. 5 at 7 p.m., at MMFA)**
Adam Garnet Jones's poetic directorial debut brings to life an aboriginal community through the story of a queer native man. With completely sympathetic, well-drawn characters and absolutely poignant storytelling. An important addition to Canadian LGBT film, and a definite must-see. (KS)

**10 Canadian films added to Palm Springs lineup - December 22, 2016**
http://playbackonline.ca/2015/12/22/10-canadian-films-added-to-palm-springs-lineup/

PLAYBACK

The Palm Springs International Film Festival (PSIFF) has named 10 Canadian films to its lineup, with Andrew Cividino's *Sleeping Giant* set to make its U.S. premiere in the California festival's New Voices/New Visions program.

The in-competition program is exclusively for U.S. premieres of first features, and will see Cividino's *Sleeping Giant* go up against projects such as Adriano Valerio's *Banat* (Italy), Andrew Steggall's *Departure* (U.K.) and Maris Curran's *Five Nights in Maine* (U.S.).

Six Canadian films were also named to the festival's World Cinema Now program, with *Closet Monster* (Stephen Dunn), *Endorphine* (André Turpin), *Fire Song* (Adam Garnet Jones), *My Internship in Canada* (Philippe Falardeau), *On My Mother's Side* (Dominic Goyer) and *Sabali* (Ryan McKenna) all set to screen out of competition.

Elsewhere, *Felix & Meira* (Maxime Giroux) will appear in the Awards Buzz program, which features films that have been put forward as entries for the Best Foreign Language Film category of the Academy Awards. In September it was announced that *Felix* – winner of the best Canadian feature prize at **TIFF '14** – had been selected as **Canada's foreign language Oscar entry**. The film ultimately did not make the Oscar shortlist, which was revealed last week.

In addition, Brie Larson (*Room*) will receive the Breakthrough Performance Award at the PSIFF awards gala on Jan. 2, while Saoirse Ronan (*Brooklyn*) will be presented with the International Star Award. *Room* is a Ireland/Canada copro, while *Brooklyn* is a Ireland/U.K./Canada copro.

The 27th edition of PSIFF takes place from Jan. 1 to 11, 2016

**Darkness & grit at this year's Reelout - January 15, 2016**
http://www.queensjournal.ca/story/2016-01-14/arts/darkness-and-grit-at-this-years-reelout/

THE JOURNAL
QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY – SINCE 1873

Reelout's opening gala at the Isabel Bader Centre on the evening of Jan. 29 will feature a premiere of homegrown film talent with the critical darling *Fire Song.*

The film, which concerns the lives of youths living on reservations in Northern Ontario, has generated buzz from critics since its release earlier last year. The film's director Adam Garnet Jones, and other cast and crewmembers will be in attendance on opening night.

"It had its opening premiere at TIFF this year and critics have warmly received it," Salton said. "It's such a great Canadian film that we wanted to give it a great spot for our opening."
"It's one of those stories about people who we don't hear enough about, so I think it's part of our job to shine our projector light on these stories."

And it is — the Reelout Film Festival's mission statement is to tell stories that have gone unheard. Reelout incorporated in 2004 as a non-profit organization a few years after its start as an OPIRG group conceived and cultivated at Queen's in the late 1990s.

**Publicity handled by GAT PR**