

O.K. The Musical

Written and Directed by

Christopher Kline

Staged in collaboration with people from
Liverpool and Lancashire

at

TATE LIVERPOOL

APRIL 29th & 30th, 2017

Commissioned by TATE Liverpool and Super Slow Way

O.K. - The Musical is an on-going, evolving project that is being developed in collaboration with many people through several years of exhibitions, publications, performances, videos, workshops and social projects. Through this process a new, multi-faceted lens is crafted which provides an altogether fresh take on the obscure history of a small town: Kinderhook, New York. This playbill is best coupled with the O.K. history guide accompanying the exhibition here at Tate Liverpool which provides more detailed background information on the subject.

Today we present nine vignettes; moments from Kinderhook's history spanning from the formation of the landscape starting 4.5 billion years ago up until contemporary folklore.

Here in Liverpool and Burnley I've had the immense privilege of working with an enormous group of wonderful people listed here in this program. I'd like to sincerely thank them for offering up their enthusiasm, talents, time, and support. It's been a pleasure. And special thanks to my family.

CAST

in order of appearance:

SCENE I: The Beginning of the World

Paleoindians: Alice L. Chilton, Victoria Podemska, Crystal Quinney Barella

Mammoth: Julia Szewczak, Alice Bolton

SCENE II: Henry Hudson Encounters the Mohicans

Mohicans: Melanie Robson, Karen Askew, Glennis Brown, Marguerita Johnson

Henry Hudson: John Prescott

Crewmen: Paul Davenport, Terry Gray

SCENE III: Don't Lose Your Head, Ichabod

Ichabod Crane: Marcus Turner

Katrina Van Tassel: Julia Szewczak

Townspople/Ghosts: Daniel Lynch, Victoria Podemska, Jen McCool, Alice Bolton

Headless Horseman: Alice L. Chilton

SCENE IV: The Shakers at Mount Lebanon

Shakers: Elena Adorni, Alice Bolton, Alice L. Chilton, Anabell Edwards, Emily Edwards, Julian Evans, Chelsea Hoskins, Emma Hoskins, Hollie Hoskins, Victoria Podemska, Crystal Quinney Barella, Jo Taylor, Steven Taylor, Lynsey Turmore

SCENE V: The Great Blizzard and Fire of 1888

Cotton Mill Workers: Joan Pinnington, Anne Smart, Dee Spencer

Family at Home: Barbara Davenport, Paul Davenport

Firemen: John Prescott, Daniel Lynch, Terry Gray

Townpeople: Elena Adorni, Anabell Edwards, Emily Edwards, Julian Evans, Chelsea Hoskins, Emma Hoskins, Hollie Hoskins, Sandra Moolgoaker, Sarah Whatmough, Jo Taylor, Steven Taylor, Lynsey Turmore

SCENE VI: Something in the Woods

Scared Kids: Anabell Edwards, Emily Edwards, Chelsea Hoskins, Emma Hoskins, Hollie Hoskins

Some Things in the Woods: Elena Adorni, Charlotte, Julian Evans, Sandra Moolgoaker, Nosteah, Jo Taylor, Steven Taylor, Lynsey Turmore, Sarah Whatmough

SCENE VII: The Indian Removal Act of 1830

Megan the Tour Guide: Victoria Podemska

Tourists: Daniel Lynch, Julia Szewczak, Marcus Turner, Robyn Elizabeth Whittle

Portrait of Andrew Jackson: ???

The Ghost of Martin Van Buren: Paul Robertson

The Ghost of Martin Van Buren's Niece: Alice Bolton

SCENE VIII: The Ballad of the Kinderhook Creature

Kinderhook Creatures:

Alice L. Chilton, Jen McCool, Crystal Quinney Barella

SCENE IX: O.K. Finale

The People and Buildings of Kinderhook Past and Present: Full Cast

O.K. – THE MUSICAL

Written & Directed by Christopher Kline

O.K. TEAM:

Art Director - Raphaella Davies
Art Director - Alexandra Morton
Vocal & Choir Director - Mersey Wylie
Orchestra Director - Jon Hering
Head of O.K. Media Team - Jake Ryan
Production Manager - Amy Worsley
Vocal Director Burnley - Julian Evans
Costume Designer -
Charlotte Van der Haer Richardson
Sound Technician - David Berger
Videographer - Terry Gray
Additional Photography - Roger Sinek
Lighting - Frank Millington

O.K. TATE Production Team:

Lindsey Fryer
Tamar Hemmes
Michael Birchall
Mike Stout
Jacqueline Dexter
Mike Pinnington
Jemima Pyne

O.K. Super Slow Way Project Leader:
Elena Adorni

SETS AND PROPS CREATED BY:

O.K. ART DEPARTMENT:

Raphaella Davies
Alexandra Morton
Jonathon Beaver
Alice Bolton
Amelia Rose Caine
Dale Cook
Louise Crawford
Jon Edgley

Phoebe Gauthier
Ian Jones
The Logan Family
Maravilha Pedro
Joana Pedro
Rochana Pedro
Rachel Pedro
Katie Waters
Naomi Wilson
Amy Worsley

O.K. BURNLEY TROUPE:

Anabell Edwards
Emily Edwards
Emma Hoskins
Hollie Hoskins
Chelsea Hoskins
Sandra Moolgoaker
Steven Taylor
Jo Taylor
Lynsey Turmore
Sarah Whatmough

YPAS:

Suziie Davis
Alexis
Charlotte
Firehue
Nosteah
Pebbles

FAMILY COLLECTIVE:

Denise Wright
Debbie Goldsmith
Jen McCool
Jacqueline Gaughan
& the public

GROUND UP:

Cath Ford
Fi K. Hornby
Annette Bailey
Brenda Burton
Sonya Connolly
Liz Ford
Lorraine Griffiths
Hayley Gruby
Cilla Higgins
Margaret Hindle
Angela Palmer
Sarah Parker
Amanda Platt
Jonathan Platt
Lisa Scarlet
Pat Stringer
Verna Walker

BLUE ROOM:

Becky Waite
Kat Shock
Laura Aquilina
Tony Carroll
Phillip Foxley
Josh Henderson
Robin Jones
Susan King
Anna Patterson
Natalie Peacock
Lynn Robinson
Tom Rooney
Lewis Scott
Veronica Watson
Kathleen Whelan

COSTUMES BY:

Charlotte Van der Haer Richardson
Sophie Barends
Marguerita Johnson
Nzuzi Musungu
Marta Pedro

Karen Scott
Tony Simonsen
Anne Smart
Jan Smith
Jessica Williams

Makeup Team:
Alex Wainwright
Sam Morgan

O.K. BANNER BY:

VALLEY STREET
TEXTILES STUDIO:
Sue Reddish
Parveen Akhtar
Jean Collinge
Yvonne Goodwin
Lorraine Hanlon
Joanne Hargreaves
Linda Hargreaves
Jenny Humphreys
Nikki Kennedy
Sandra Moolgoaker
Dulce Maria Ong Cabili
Tracy Warden
Sarah Whatmough

O.K. MEDIA TEAM:

Jake Ryan
Terry Gray
Lorraine Connor
Jack Conway
Callum McQueen

Thank you to Francesco Manacorda, Laurie Peake and the entire Tate Liverpool & Super Slow Way Teams as well as to Tracey Brown, Pete McDevitt, and Jan Schofield of City of Liverpool College, Alicia Foley & Andrea Bushell of Calico, and Waltraud Boxall.

MUSIC PERFORMED BY:

THE CHOIR WITH NO NAME:

Mersey Wylie (Director)
Ema Quinn (Manager)
Anastacia Marshal
Andrea Heffernan
Bob Fulton
Chantelle O'Toole
Chris Hughes
Daniel Willcox
Debbie Divine
Emma Folan
Emma Howes
Frank Warenn
Gareth James
James Thorne
Jane Smith
John Partington
Joyce Huston
Kenny Ashton
Louis Roberts
Michael Murphy
Michael Roach
Patricia Macdonald
Paul Aylward
Phillip Wellbelove
Rosehannah Heathfield
Shirley Fellows
Stephen Foley
Stephen Ainscough
Sylvia Morris
Tony Simonsen
Alison Hobbs
Becky Waite
Beth Cropper
Diana Ford
Ellie Markham
Emily O'Brien
Emma Moss
Janet Lawton
Jenna Gill
Jo Lea
Lucy Melkowski
Martin Herr

Matt Bown
Max Wall
Paul Brown
Pauline Carney-Broster
Sue Kay

THE O.K. ORCHESTRA:

Jon Hering - Piano and Conductor
Elena Adorni - Violin
Rory Ballantyne - Trumpet
Jan Booth - Cello
Nick Hunt - Trumpet
Mark Jones - Flute
Simon Jones - Double Bass
Loaf - Guitar
Laura Parsons - Viola
George Rix - Violin
George Roberts - Flute
Paul Sheard - Drums

O.K. CAST:

Alice Bolton
Alice L. Chilton
Daniel Lynch
Crystal Quinney Barella
Victoria Podemska
Paul Robertson
Julia Szewczak
Marcus Turner
Robyn Elizabeth Whittle

ROYAL COURT THEATRE

COMMUNITY CHOIR O.K. CAST:

Karen Askew
Glennis Brown
Paul Davenport
Barbara Davenport
Margaret Gill
Marguerita Johnson
Joan Pinnington
John Prescott
Melanie Robson
Anne Smart
Dee Spencer

SCENE I
THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD

From molten hellscape to towering mountain peaks to tropical dinosaurs to a mile-thick glacier, here we have the first 4.5 Billion years of Kinderhook's past up until the very first moments of the human era...

Molten and lifeless
the landscape is shifting
three hundred million years
not a glacier could resist it
From the astroid cloud
to the explosion of owl...
who who who

As humans and their spears
chase the mammoth in migration
Three hunters and a bear
stay in perfect constellation
along the river which flows both ways
ooo ooooo

It's getting nearer
the Great Spirit
put a vision in my head
she speaks through dreams
with scenes
of cosmic breakdown

ah oooo oooo
ah oooo oooo
ah oooo oooo

Island on a turtle
Gitche Manitou

It's getting nearer
the Great Spirit
put a vision in my head
she speaks through dreams
with scenes
of cosmic breakdown

SCENE II
HENRY HUDSON ENCOUNTERS THE MOHICANS

It is September of 1609. The Mohican people are going about their business as Henry Hudson and crew sail up the river on the Half Moon.

[Mohicans:]
Seepow Mahecaniittuck
ooo ooo ooo ooo o o ooo oo ooo
Wawyachtibic Wekagjoc
ooo ooo ooo ooo o o ooo ooo ahh oooo

What lay in the distance there
coming through the fog
ghost ship of white devils
(ghost ship of white devils...)
hungry as their dogs

[Henry Hudson:]
Well I have come from a land far away
on the dime of the
[with Crew:] Dutch East India Company
And we do search for a passage to the west
to arrive at the east of the far far east

[Mohicans:](to each other, confused)
Is he asking us for food?
or has he lost his way?

[Henry Hudson:] (to Mohicans)
Do you hear my words?

[Crew:] (to Hudson) They do not hear you,
do not hear you, do not hear you

[Mohicans:] We welcome you to stay

[Hudson and Crew:] "O.K."

[Mohicans:]
Seepow Mahecaniittuck
ooo ooo ooo ooo o o ooo oo ooo
*Wawyachtibic Wekagjoc
ooo ooo ooo ooo o o ooo ooo ahh oooo

*[Hudson with Crew sing over:]
We are the first of many –
Harbingers that one day you
will be forced to move to Wisconsin
and to work at the North Star
Mohican Casino and Resort
[Henry Hudson:]
Well I have come from a land far away
on the dime of the
[with Crew:] Dutch East India Company
And we do search for a passage to the west
to arrive at the east of the far far east

NOTES:

Seepow Mahecaniittuck is the Dutch transcription of the Mohican for “river where there are people from the continually flowing waters”, the original name of what is today called the “Hudson River”.

Wawyachtibic is Mohican for “people of the curving channel”, the name of the people who inhabited the area around what became Kinderhook before Europeans arrived.

Wekagjoc is Mohican for “upper reaches of a river”, another name for the region.

Henry Hudson (b.1565, d.1611) was an English sea explorer who was employed by the Dutch East India Company in 1609 to find a route around the north of Norway and Russia to Asia. After his way was blocked by ice he went against his instructions and turned west to find a route through North America, where he staked territory up the Hudson River to Albany to establish a Dutch foothold for the fur trade.

The Mohicans were pushed off their land to a series of reservations before being completely removed to Wisconsin in the 1820s and 30s. Today there is only one person with Mohican blood still living in their historic territory.

SCENE III
DON'T LOSE YOUR HEAD, ICHABOD

Ichabod is attempting to woo Katrina Van Tassel from outside of her window. When he is rejected, the mocking townspeople pretend to comfort him, but as darkness approaches Ichabod finds that the forest is not what it seems.

[Ichabod Crane:]

My lips were made for kissing you
and my heart was built with holes you fit into.
Your touch soft and sweet, how I long to meet
half-way between top and fitted sheet.
My hands were made to melt in yours
and your touch is tender– (interrupted)

[Daniel the Townsperson:]

Don't lose your head, Ichabod
she's just a girl
and if you really wanna make it
in this big bad world
ya gotta lower your standards,
don't set the bar so high...

[other Townspeople join:]

Just use your head, Ichabod, it could be worse
ya could catch yellow fever,
small pox, or a witch's curse
so just remember that all wounds heal in time!
Don't lose your head Ichabod,
and everything will turn out fine...

[Forest darkens, wind picks up, thunder storm
approaches. Sung emulating the wind:]

Ah ooooooo ooooooo. Ah ooooooo ooooooo.
Ah ooooooo ooooooo. Uh ooooooo ooooooo.

[Forest Ghosts/Trees:]

Dark caves of solitude now flood with rain–
the desperate tears of hopelessness.
A never-ending night, pitch blackness seeping
infects the mind, obscures the senses

He wants your head, Ichabod it's not a dream!
You can run, you can hide,
you can try to scream
but the decapitated Hessian

will cut your crown off clean.
Don't wet your bed, Ichabod,
the nightmare rides,
the ghosts of Sleepy Hollow
will not heed your cries, keep your wits
or you'll give yourself a fright!
Don't lose your head, Ichabod,
if ya wanna make it home alive!

Don't lose your head, Ichabod
she's just a girl and if you really wanna make it
in this big bad world ya gotta suck it up
and lift your chin up high

Just use your head, Ichabod
it could be worse, ya could catch yellow fever,
small pox, or a witch's curse, so just
Cut your losses or you'll give yourself a fright!
Don't lose your head! Don't lose your head!
Don't lose your head, Ichabod
if you wanna make it home alive!

NOTES:

Writer Washington Irving lived in Kinderhook for a mere eight weeks in 1809, and based several characters in his famous story “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” on friends of his from the village. His tale's anti-hero, the lanky and frightened Ichabod Crane was based on school teacher Jesse Merwin, and the object of his affection Katrina Van Tassel was supposedly based on the daughter of a prominent local farmer. Though the short-story explicitly takes place in Tarrytown, another town about 150km towards New York City, Kinderhook has latched on to its tenuous connection, naming its new centralized school system “Ichabod Crane Central” in 1954. The Headless Horseman has been a familiar sight since then on school apparel and sports team logos.

SCENE IV
COME LIFE, SHAKER LIFE

Come life
Shaker life
Come life eternal
Shake shake out of me
All that is carnal

I'll take nimble steps
I'll be a David
I'll tell Michael twice
How he behaved

NOTES:

This is a traditional Shaker spiritual.
In the mid 1800s, the Shakers had their central ministry at
Mount Lebanon, not far from Kinderhook. Much of their
music is sung in unison with no musical accompaniment.

SCENE V

THE GREAT BLIZZARD (AND FIRE) OF 1888

[Village of Valatie, March 1888]

Three women are working at the cotton mill...

It's bitter cold
and I can't feel my hands but I can't stop
working
when your pay is low
and your stomach hangs by a thread
and your future feels like it's set in stone,
maybe it's only snow...

Little Falls is frozen now
Pray it won't be frozen long

A struggling family in their home...

No one said it was easy living,
but where I'm from there aren't storms like
this
This ain't the life that I envisioned back home.

Little Falls is frozen now
Pray it won't be frozen long

– I feel there's something wrong,
Ya see, the sky is orange.
– It's just the blizzard Jack,
sit back down and eat your porridge.
– Maybe it's Revelations
coming down to revelate!
– Well if the world is ending,
they won't mind the rent is late.

– The drift's above the roof
but I can just make out the sky.
– It's glowing pink and orange,
Mary, something isn't right.
– The telegraph is down,
the storm must've destroyed the wires.

[Fire chief storms in]

– Don't ya hear that clanging sound?
– The Mill's on FIRE!

FIRE FIRE FIRE FIRE
(shouting, panic, EVACUATE!!!)

[Volunteer Fire Department bursts into action]

Get the hand pump!
Get the engine cart!
Get the hoses and the axes
and the ladders out!
– Break the pond ice!
– It's frozen to the bottom!
– Open the upper dam!
– But sir, it's frozen solid!

The fire's spreading
and the men are frozen to the bone
The telegraph is down,
the roads are closed, we're on our own.

But what to tell the children
now that all our jobs are gone?
The charred remains of all the dreams
that we were hanging on!

Little Falls is frozen now
Pray we won't be frozen long...
Come what may
but the blaze won't be soon forgotten.

Though the ash is raining red
you'll be safe inside your bed
until the fire goes out
you won't be waiting long.

NOTES:

During the Great Blizzard of 1888 the Beaver Cotton Mill in Valatie (derived from the Dutch for "Little Falls") caught fire and burned. The snow drifts were up above the doors of the local homes and the snow was so torrential that the glow of the fire spread strangely over Kinderhook, leading many to think that the world was ending.

SCENE VI
SOMETHING IN THE WOODS

Some kids are playing hide and go seek in the woods and start to sense something isn't right...

The Woods, The Woods
The Woods, The Woods
The Woods, The Woods
The Woods, The Woods

There's something in the woods
I know it's there
I feel its presence.
There's something in the woods
I know it's there
I feel it... oooooOOOOOOO

People say it can smell your fear, oh-oh
People say it can smell your fear...
and it can hear your heart beat!

... by the light of the moon
... by the light of the moon
... by the light of the moon
... by the light of the moon

... by the light of the moon
... by the light of the moon
... by the light of the moon
Red eyes! Red eyes!

shadows appear by the light of the moon
 appear by the light of the moon
shadows appear by the light of the moon
 by the light of the moon
shadows appear by the light of the moon
 appear by the light of the moon
shadows appear by the light of the moon
Red eyes! Red eyes!

SCENE VII
THE INDIAN REMOVAL ACT OF 1830

as sung by the ghosts of Martin Van Buren and his unnamed niece who appear during a contemporary tour of Lindenwald, Van Buren's historic Kinderhook home

[Niece, spoken:]

Uncle Martin, I don't like the Indian Removal Act, it's RUDE!

[Martin Van Buren, spoken:]

Oh, my dear niece, allow me to explain!

[Sung:]

Ya see, the Indian Removal Act of 1830 was Andrew Jackson's faction's master plan. They had been out there fightin' Injuns for our future generations and they'd had it with the savage's demands.

[Niece:]

Well the Indian Removal Act of 1830 is a crime against humanity, you know. And your administration's patience for such abominations is a stain upon our nation's underclothes.

[MVB:]

Well if they cry a trail of tears it AIN'T THAT BAD... a little cryin' never hurt nobody none, and you will thank the Indian Removal Act of 1830 for your land, your life, your scalp, your wife, your mon.....ey.

[Niece, spoken:]

Uncle, I must say to you that it is my earnest wish that you may lost the election as I believe that such a result ought to follow such acts.

[MVB:]

Well we'll leave that decision up to the *electorate*, won't we?

[Tour group:]

Between the Indian Removal Act of 1830 and Old Van Buren's stance on slavery, his incessantly defending all the brutal ethnic cleansing is inscribed in blood upon his legacy

And to all of his defenders say'n

[Andrew Jackson Portrait on wall sings]:
he AIN'T THAT BAD

[Tourists]:

keep in mind the Spoils System he congealed and how political considerations trumped his moral obligations like in his handling of the Amistad appeal.

[MVB, spoken:]

Well, you can call it evacuation or plain ol' extermination, but your condemnation of my administration fills me with resolute indignation!

[Niece:]

Well I think you're a one term-imbecile *AND* a bona-fide war-criminal!"

[MVB:]

I don't give a hoot what you folks say I gotta feeling my legacy's gonna be O.K.!

NOTES:

Martin Van Buren (b. 1782, d.1862) was the 8th U.S. President, born and raised in Kinderhook. He also died there where his home is now a National Historic Site. Still today thought of as "Kinderhook's Favorite Son", he set up the first political machines in New York State (promising jobs and money for political support), attempted to send the Amistad Slave Mutineers to Spain and furthered the policies of his Indian-killer mentor Andrew Jackson.

SCENE VIII
BALLAD OF THE KINDERHOOK CREATURE

A family of big-foots laments the harrowing winter, the scarcity of food and their loneliness in the frozen wilderness.

Oh my children,
come press close to me
and warm these bones filled
with frost and ice and dust.
Forgive your father for the
climate whence we've come
and for the blade of night's
impending... thrust.

Down, drop drips from the sky
frozen sheets of ice
and death all around in white
Down, the merciless ground
the creaking of lakes
the knives of snowflakes
and sound

Will our selves and our souls
get to live forever
(ooooooooo)
or will we stay in this cave
where we freeze together
(ooooooooo)

Will we see the spring?
or will we be with our parents in heaven then?

Drowned, in chill from the north
the frosty divorce
of blood from the veins and skin
froze, from fingers to toes
ice hangs from the nose
of death's soft approach
oh those fractals of suffering, suffering!

Will our selves and our souls get to live forever
(ooooooooo)
or will we stay in this cave
where we freeze together
(ooooooooo)

Will we see the spring?
or will we be with our parents in heaven when
They decide if our souls get to live forever
(ooooooooo)
(or) if we stay in this cave
where we freeze together
(ooooooooo)

Will we see the spring?
or will we
be with our parents in heaven then...

Down, drop drips from the sky
frozen sheets of ice
and death all around in white
Down, the merciless ground
the creaking of lakes
the knives of snowflakes
and sound

NOTES:

The Kinderhook Creature is a Bigfoot-like animal which was sighted in the region mostly between 1980-83. More often reported two hours north in the Adirondack Mountains, it is thought that perhaps the creatures briefly sojourned in Kinderhook looking for a better food supply.

SCENE IX
O.K. FINALE

O.K.! It's Old Kinderhook
home of President Martin Van Buren
O.K. stands for Old Kinderhook
the most popular word in the world

When "satisfactory" just ain't enough
and "mediocre" seems too refined
when "alright already" is a little bit much
and articulating your reluctant agreement feels
like a waste of time,
well that's fine.

O.K.! It's Old Kinderhook
Briefly home
to writer Washington Irving
O.K. stands for Old Kinderhook
the most popular word in the world

Well, what have we learned over 400 years?
To never trust a white man's word!
[Van Buren & Hudson]: Hey!
We've got computers, lawn mowers
and automobiles.
Everything is copacetic,
forget your troubles and your fears,
we're right here.

it's what you want
it's what you need
it's fine, it's satisfactory
it's bound to be...

O.K.! It's Old Kinderhook
Home of President Martin Van Buren
O.K. stands for Old Kinderhook
The most popular word in the world

O.K.
O.K.
O.K.
O.K.
O.K.
O.K.
O.K.
O.K.

OK! It's Old Kinderhook
Briefly home
to writer Washington Irving
O.K. stands for Old Kinderhook
The most popular word in the world
O.K.!

The most popular word in the world
O.K.!

The most popular word in the world
O.K.!

The most popular word
in the world

O.K.!

NOTES:

The term "O.K." rose to national (and then international) prominence during Martin Van Buren's 1840 reelection campaign (which he lost). His supporters formed the "O.K. Club". Van Buren had many nicknames besides "Old Kinderhook" such as:

The Little Magician
The Red Fox
Martin Van Ruin
The American Talleyrand
The Careful Dutchman
The Enchanter
The Great Manager
The Master Spirit
The Mistletoe Politician

O.K.