

O.K.
The Musical
(Dutch Colonial)

Written and Directed by

Christopher Kline

Staged in collaboration with people from
The Hague

at

1646

MAY 26th & 27th, 2018

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.

Each iteration of the project takes on new scenes, and input from people in the place it's staged. Here at 1646 we've developed 5 scenes based around the Dutch Colonial period in what is now Kinderhook. Once Mohican territory, the first Dutch-commissioned ship passed by there in 1609 carrying Henry Hudson and his crew. Within five years Dutch settlement formally began in "Nieuw Nederland", initiating processes of attrition on the Mohican and other indigenous cultures of the region, some more violently than others.

The first Dutch settlements in "Kinder-hoeck" supposedly started right around the same time that the building which is now the project space 1646 was built in Den Haag. Most of New Netherland was broken up into "patroonships", tracts of land granted to wealthy individuals in exchange from peopling it with 50 families within four years. Then the patroon, often still living back in Holland, could run the region however he wanted, making laws and rules as he pleased, often resulting in a feudal-like system. The region directly around Kinderhook was one of the few in New Netherland that wasn't a patroonship, and so it attracted families of some means who could pay their own way over the Atlantic and "purchase" land from local tribes to begin farms.

New Netherland came to a drastic end in 1664 when England took it by threat of force. Already by then less than half of the population of New Amsterdam was Dutch, the rest being settlers from other European countries. Kinderhook was later officially established as a township in 1788.

O.K. – THE MUSICAL
(Dutch Colonial)

Written & Directed by Christopher Kline

PRODUCTION TEAM:

Johan Gustavsson
Floris Kruidenberg
Clara Pallí Monguilod
Daphne Simons
Kathrin Wagner

CAST and CHOIR:

Bergur Thomas Anderson
Yegyeong Cha
Vasiliki Giakoumi
Robbin Heyker
Kristýna Markovičová
Enna Mikkelsen Mahieu
Thorsten Nass
Sonja Pierie
Leonardo Scarin
Kim Smit
Julian Sirre
Meike Touw
Ilse van der Hoeven
Martje Verhagen

MUSICIANS:

Marian Masik - Arrangements & drum
Ornella Balhi - Arrangements & recorders
Philip De Goeij - Flute
Miro Herak - Vibraphone
Andor Horvath - Double Bass
Kayla Dewata - Violin
Valentine Leroux - Recorders
Rebecca Marcussen - Recorders
Leonardo Scarin - Guitar improvisations

COSTUMES BY:

Clara Pallí Monguilod
Yegyeong Cha

SETS AND PROPS CREATED BY:

Bergur Thomas Anderson
Dünya Atay
Ayla Aron
Ornella Balhi
Felix Bodin
Yegyeong Cha
Ioana Ciora
Rosa Dalle Vedove
Melle de Groot
Ines Delgado
Malou Den Dekker
Alex Enzlin
Vasiliki Giakoumi
Johan Gustavsson
Ronja Gustavsson
Ella Hebandanz
Paul Heß
Junghyun Kim
Christopher Kline
Floris Kruidenberg
Brigitte Louter
Shani Leseman
Marlot Meyer
Clara Pallí Monguilod
Ramon Ottenhof
Lorenzo Quint
Leonardo Scarin
Edd Schouten
Daphne Simons
Kim Smit
Pamela Soria
Kathrin Wagner
Bo Wielders
Dmitri van den Wittenboer
Jeroen van der Hulst

O.K. Banner created by:

Valley Street Textiles Studio, Burnley, U.K.

For *O.K. – The Musical* at Tate Liverpool, 2017

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

As part of this project at 1646, a penpalship was established between Mrs. Palmer's 4th Grade Class at Ichabod Crane Central, Kinderhook, NY and Mark Davies' class at European School The Hague.

Poster designs for this exhibition by Mrs. Palmer's class at Ichabod Crane

Deep thanks to Clara, Floris and Johan of 1646 for all of the support, time and love they put into the project.

Special thanks to all of the people living in and around The Hague who made this performance possible by singing, playing and making sets. It's been a pleasure to get to know all of you over the last month.

Appreciation also to Dyveke Rood, Nico Feragnoli, Noor Kloosterman, Mama Verhalen Koor, Mark Davies and European School The Hague, Kim Palmer and Ichabod Crane Central Schools.

SCENE I
THE MOHICANS AND THEIR LAND/
HENRY HUDSON ENCOUNTERS THE MOHICANS

An aside from the Mohicans to the audience:

It starts with the wind blow
and moves through the earth and trees
It's how you'd expect a scene to begin when
it's of Mohicans:
ethereal and projecting
all your hopes in the tropes of a token,
a noble role indeed;
a placeholder for all your cultural baggage
the noble savage—
a metaphor or a motif
to define the real
memories of cleansing
visions of what's lost to us all
we know these stories
can't be recovered
we've been discovered
nevermind
back to our role

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

[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”.

Wawayachtibic 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. Thinking the river that now bears his name

might lead to the Pacific Ocean, he sailed up it until it became too shallow. He and his crew of The Halve Maen anchored in the river, where they had a peaceful encounter with the Mohicans who invited them to share food with them. As the story goes, when Hudson went to return to his boat, the Mohicans thought he was afraid and so broke their arrows to show that they were peaceful.

While his expedition didn't lead to the Pacific, it did result in the Dutch establishing a foothold along the Hudson River for the fur trade.

Popular legend in Kinderhook still maintains that Henry Hudson named the area “Kinderhoeck” (Children's Corner) because he saw large numbers of Mohican children playing on the river bend. The truth behind this is doubtful at best, and it is still debated regionally where exactly Hudson went ashore.

SCENE II

THE BEAVER FUR TRADE

NOTES:

While the English colonists of the northeast desired to create a utopic settlement based purely on their religious beliefs, the Dutch settlements were based around trade. Especially relevant to the region was the trade in beaver pelts. Beaver fur was extremely valuable to Europeans because it had two layers, and the inner layer was used in to make felt top hats that were very popular at the time. Europeans had over-hunted their own beaver populations and so turned to the colonies as a new source of the fur. To the Mohicans, the beaver was respected but also a nuisance since it had dangerous, razor-sharp teeth and would cause flooding. They sometimes referred pejoratively to the Dutch as beavers because they were always busy working and cutting down trees.

The Dutch controlled trade along the Hudson River, establishing Fort Orange near what is now Albany, New York State's capital.

The various Iroquois and Algonquin tribes of the region, already rivals from pre-colonial times, entered into bitter disputes over territory and access to Dutch trade. Hit by massive death rates from new diseases, the indigenous communities became dependent on the Dutch for metal tools, knives, blankets, cloth, guns and alcohol, among other supplies.

During the 17th and into the 18th century the Mohawks (Iroquois) and the Mohicans (Algonquin) fought on opposite sides of a complex and long-running series of conflicts now known as the Beaver Wars which were also proxy wars between the English, Dutch and French. By the time the wars were over, the beaver population was near extinction in the region and beaver hats had also gone out of fashion in Europe, rendering the wars futile.

SCENE III
DUTCH SETTLEMENT

Trade of furs and fields
Raids for routes to Orange
Wars to gain the corridor
to the sea
Disease

Sowing the land
with charters and
reaping all that we've/they've patented

[Dutch Farmers:]
Beaver hats are out of fashion,
we want colonies.
We have papers, land grants, patents,
proof of property.
We suggest a reservation,
you'll find what you need.
You've been very welcoming
but sorry
now it's time you leave.

[All:]
Sowing the land
with charters and
reaping all that we've/they've patented

NOTES:

The Dutch began purchasing land from the Mohicans in the mid 17th century. As is widely known, the first peoples of North America didn't have the same concepts of property or time as Europeans. (In fact they had no word for "time".) In their culture, gifts were sometimes offered to another tribe in order to share territory for hunting or farming, but as land was seen as belonging to no one, no person or group owned or leased land.

Sometimes stories are recounted that the Dutch bought New York City for the equivalent of \$5 or some sea shells... a place which now has billions and billions of dollars in property value. In fact it wasn't only the "Indians" who misunderstood the deal, but also the Dutch who couldn't comprehend their principles.

Kinderhook's land was supposedly purchased from a sachem (regional chief) of people residing in the area. The circumstances of the transactions aren't well known, but it is recounted that the sachem later became a post man, delivering letters up and down the river. His signature was a drawing of a wolf.

After selling off their land in the area, again, under circumstances around which we don't have many details, some Mohicans remained. They were later pushed to a reservation in Stockbridge, Massachusetts where many converted to Christianity.

Despite their many concessions, and often successful integration into European customs, they were finally completely removed to reservations in Wisconsin in the 1820s and 30s under Andrew Jackson and Martin Van Buren's (aka Old Kinderhook) policies of Indian Removal which brazenly violated countless treaties made with tribes across the eastern United States. People were forcibly marched to lands west of the Mississippi River, often to places with infertile soil. Thousands of people died during this so-called Trail of Tears.

In Kinderhook today the words "Dutch Colonial" would mostly connote the style of architecture, referring to the quaint farm houses of the area, especially ones with a gambrel roof and dormer windows.

Today there is only one person with Mohican blood still living in their historic territory.

SCENE IV
DUTCH COLONIAL GHOST STORIES

NOTES:

Some people refer to Kinderhook as a “Halloween town” due to its connections to ghost stories, namely Washington Irving’s *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, which was supposedly based on real people from the town (the Van Alen family and school teacher Jesse Merwin). That story is a take on the old Dutch ghost stories from the region which deal with the supernatural, influenced by the various wars in the region and also preceding Mohican tales. Here it is unclear who is haunting this Dutch Colonial house. Perhaps it is a dream or other venture into the colonial subconscious. I’m reminded of an idea put forth by Joseph Campbell which supposes that our dreams are our personal myths, and that our myths are our culture’s dreams.

The song played by the recorders is called “The King of Denmark’s Galliard” by John Dowland, published in 1604.

SCENE V
O.K. FINALE (Dutch Colonial Version)

O.K.! 't is Oud Kinderhoek!
trots van Nederland, daarvoor Mahican
O.K. komt van Oud Kinderhoek
't meest ge-bruikte woord wereldwijd

Nederlanders:

we maakten de oversteek, stichtten de stad

Mahicanen:

maar dit land was daarvoor echt van ons

Nederlanders:

we brachten beschaving, en wapens,
sterke drank

Mahicanen:

en dood en verderf en
pokken, verslaving dat
jaagde ons toen van ons land

Allen:

Nieuw Nederland!
Ooooo oooooo

O.K.! 't is Oud Kinderhoek!
trots van Nederland, daarvoor Mahican
O.K. komt van Oud Kinderhoek
't meest ge-bruikte woord wereldwijd

O.K.! O.K.! O.K.! O.K.!
O.K.! O.K.! O.K.! O.K.!

O.K.! 't is Oud Kinderhoek!
trots van Nederland, daarvoor Mahican
O.K. komt van Oud Kinderhoek
't meest ge-bruikte woord wereldwijd
't meest ge-bruikte woord wereldwijd
't meest ge-bruikte woord wereldwijd
't meest ge-bruikte wooooooord
wereldwijd!!!!

NOTES:

The term "O.K." rose to national (and then international) prominence during Martin Van Buren's 1840 reelection campaign (which he lost).

Van Buren was born in Kinderhook in 1782 to Dutch-speaking parents. He was the first US President born in the United States (the previous 7 were born in the colonies) and the only US President for whom English was a second language.

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 Careful Dutchman
The Enchanter
The Great Manager
The Master Spirit
The Mistletoe Politician
The American Talleyrand

O.K.