



Tomson Highway

LANGUAGES: ENGLISH, FRENCH, CREE

Tomson Highway was born in a snow bank on the Manitoba/Nunavut border to a family of nomadic caribou hunters. He was raised off-reserve, in the spectacularly beautiful natural landscape that is Canada's sub-Arctic. He had the great privilege of growing up in two languages, neither of which was French or English; but Cree, his mother tongue, and Dene, the language of the neighbouring nation; a people with whom they roamed and hunted.

Following an education where he earned both a Bachelor of Music and the equivalent of a Bachelor of Arts with an English major, he spent seven years immersed in the field of Native social work. He then combined his education and training and poured himself into writing.

*Today Tomson enjoys an international career as playwright, novelist, pianist, and song writer. Tomson is best known for universal hits such as **The Rez Sisters, Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing, Rose, Ernestine Shuswap Gets her Trout, (The Post) Mistress** and the best-selling novel **Kiss of the Fur Queen** and his recently published memoir **Permanent Astonishment**. He has also written children's books, namely **Caribou Song, Dragon Fly Kites** and **Fox on the Ice**. His work has been translated into eleven languages.*

For many years Tomson was Artistic Director of Canada's premiere aboriginal theatre company, Toronto based Native Earth Performing Arts, from which has emerged an entire generation of playwrights and theatre artists.

*Tomson is the recipient of eleven honorary doctorates and is an officer of the order of Canada. His awards and nominations include **Dora Mavor Moore Awards, Governor General's Literary Award, Floyd S. Chalmers Canadian Play Award, Toronto Arts Award, National Aboriginal Achievement Award, and the 2022 Lifetime Artistic Achievement Award at the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards. The (Post) Mistress was nominated for a 2015 Juno Award for the best aboriginal recording of the year, and in the spring of 2022, Tomson released his first album of country songs, Cree Country-Tomson Highway. Tomson is the recipient of the 2021 Hilary Weston Writers' Trust Prize for Nonfiction for his memoir Permanent Astonishment. In September of 2022, Tomson will deliver this year's CBC Massey Lectures to audiences across Canada in the series' first live event since 2019.***

Fluent in Cree, French and English, he continues to write, teach, lecture, and perform across Canada and around the world.



