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**CBC and APTN Greenlight Acimow Media and White Pine Pictures' Documentary
on Acclaimed Cree Writer and Composer Tomson Highway**

(Toronto & Vancouver - June 9, 2025) BC-based Acimow Media and Ontario-based White Pine Pictures have joined forces to produce a feature documentary inspired by Tomson Highway's award-winning memoir, *Permanent Astonishment* (Doubleday Canada). Production is now underway, and the documentary will be shot in Alberta, Quebec, Ontario, as well as Highway's birthplace in Northern Manitoba.

Highway, an internationally renowned Cree playwright, author, musician, and composer, is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Hilary Weston Writers' Trust Prize for Nonfiction for *Permanent Astonishment*, a Governor General's Lifetime Artistic Achievement Award, an Indspire Award, and Dora Mavor Moore Awards for his plays *The Rez Sisters* and *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing*. A collection of his 2022 CBC Massey Lectures, *Laughing With the Trickster: On Sex, Death, and Accordions*, was published by House of Anansi Press and can be heard on [CBC.ca/ideas](https://www.cbc.ca/ideas). A classically trained musician, Highway has written Cree libretti for two operas, released a Cree country CD, and written several musicals, including *Rose*, *Ernestine Shuswap Gets Her Trout*, and *The (Post) Mistress*.

Cree/Métis filmmaker Barbara Todd Hager will direct the film, with Peter Raymont and Hager co-producing. Commissioned by APTN and CBC, the film will be a documentary Channel Original with additional funding from the Canada Media Fund's POV program and the Rogers Documentary Fund.

Director Barbara Todd Hager said, "I saw *The Rez Sisters*, in 1993, and it changed my perception of Indigenous storytelling, and inspired me to pursue a career as an Indigenous writer. It's a tremendous honour to direct a documentary about Canada's celebrated Cree creator, Tomson Highway."

Producer Peter Raymont said, "Tomson Highway has had a profound impact on both Indigenous and non-Indigenous theatre in Canada since the 1986 premiere of *The Rez Sisters* at Native Earth Performing Arts, and the remarkable run of his play *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing* at the Royal Alexandra Theatre in the 1990s. I'm thrilled that White Pine Pictures and Acimow Media are collaborating in bringing Tomson's brilliant memoir, *Permanent Astonishment*, to the screen."



“Tomson Highway’s impact on the cultural and artistic landscape of this country is profound,” said Adam Garnet Jones, APTN Director of TV Content and Special Events. “APTN is thrilled to be part of a landmark documentary that will celebrate his legacy as an inimitable creative force and a guiding light for Indigenous storytellers. This is an important celebration of Indigenous excellence, and APTN is proud to be part of sharing it with audiences across the country.”

“Tomson Highway has been a creative tour de force in the literary and theatre communities in Canada for close to 40 years. Working in collaboration with White Pine Pictures, Acimow Media and APTN, we look forward to celebrating and sharing Tomson’s influential story with audiences across the country,” said Jennifer Dettman, Executive Director, Unscripted Content, CBC.

The film is expected to premiere on documentary Channel in the 2026-27 broadcast season. For interviews with Barbara Todd Hager or Peter Raymont, please contact Paula Raimondi at acimow.communications@gmail.com

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About Barbara Todd Hager (Producer / Director / Writer)

Barbara Todd Hager is a Métis/Cree award-winning filmmaker. She has produced and directed four documentary series and five feature docs for APTN, CBC, CTV, CHUM, SBS/NITV, TELUS, Knowledge Network, and ZDF, including *Leaving Beringia*, *Forbidden Music*, *Down2Earth*, and *All Our Relations II*. Her eight-part docu-drama series, *1491: The Untold Story of the Americas Before Columbus*, covers 20,000 years of history from the perspective of Indigenous people. The series won three 2018 Canadian Leo Awards for Best Documentary Series, Music Composer, and Screenwriter. Hager owns Acimow Media, a BC-based production company specializing in high-quality, international Indigenous documentaries. Acimow means “she/he tells their story” in the Cree language.

About Peter Raymont (Producer)

After beginning his career at the National Film Board, Peter Raymont started his own production company in 1978 and co-founded the Canadian Independent Film Caucus (now the Documentary Organization of Canada) in 1982. His films have received numerous awards including Geminis, Emmys, Canadian Screen Awards, and major prizes at the Sundance Film Festival and the Berlin International Film Festival. Raymont’s most recent productions include *Plastic People*, *Buffy Sainte Marie: Carry It On*, *Once Were Brothers: Robbie Robertson and the Band*, *Toxic Beauty*, and many others. White Pine Pictures is a Toronto-based film and television production company that has had films broadcast internationally on CBC, Bell Media, TVO, Hulu, Starz, Super Channel, BBC, Channel4, PBS, Smithsonian, Love Nature, France 2, ZDF, ARTE, SVT, NHK, ABC, SBS among others.

About CBC/Radio-Canada

CBC/Radio-Canada is Canada’s national public broadcaster. Through their mandate to inform, enlighten and entertain, they play a central role in strengthening Canadian culture. As Canada’s trusted news source, they offer a uniquely Canadian perspective on news, current affairs and



world affairs. Their distinctively homegrown entertainment programming draws audiences from across the country. Deeply rooted in communities, CBC/Radio-Canada offers diverse content in English, French and eight Indigenous languages: Dëne Sųłíné, Dene Kədé, Dene Zhatié, Eastern Cree, Dinjii Zhu' Ginjik, Inuktitut, Inuvialuktun and Tłıchq. They also deliver content in Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, Punjabi and Tagalog, as well as both official languages, through Radio Canada International (RCI). We are leading the transformation to meet the needs of Canadians in a digital world.

About APTN

APTN launched in 1999 as the first national Indigenous broadcaster in the world. Since then, the network has become a global leader in programming that celebrates the rich diversity of Indigenous Peoples at home and abroad via two distinct HD channels: APTN and APTN Languages, and through its Indigenous-focused streaming service, APTN lumi.

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