



BUFFALO

PRESS KIT



MAKING THE BEAT OF THE DRUM

COMMUNITY SPIRIT

At the intersection of ancient tradition and modern community building, the Pictou County Forest School is redefining how we connect. In a recent winter gathering, project lead Michelle united local families—including the Verhagan family—for a hands-on immersion into the art of building buffalo drums.





SYNOPSIS

Michelle Tweed is an Indigenous drum maker based in Rockfield, Nova Scotia. We follow her as she crafts a drum using buffalo hide sourced from Verhagan Bison Farms. Michelle collaborates with students from the Pictou County Forestry School to create this drum, highlighting the power of community learning alongside Mother Nature and the spirit of the land. This journey brings people together, culminating in a celebration where handmade drums are presented to the Verhagen family.

DIRECTED BY MATT HARRIS

Matt Harris is a multifaceted creator based in Pictou, Nova Scotia, whose work bridges the worlds of music, film, and visual arts. As a celebrated photographer and the owner of LensFlare Photography, Matt has built a diverse portfolio—from intimate concert photography and striking military portraiture to album covers and gallery-featured fine art.

Beyond the lens, Matt is a seasoned filmmaker with extensive production experience, having collaborated with international industry houses such as Business Goose Studios (Belgium), Gradual Upgrade Productions (Fredericton, NB), Tell Tale Productions (Halifax, NS), and Cestou necestou (Slovakia). This global filmmaking background complements his work as an accomplished musician and two-time award nominee (ECMA and Music Nova Scotia). A Military veteran with a disciplined, story-driven perspective, Matt brings a unique narrative depth to every project, whether he's behind the camera, in the studio, or on set.





Theme of the film

A NATURAL CONNECTION

This is more than a story of craftsmanship; it is a glimpse into the universal need for belonging. The project explores the intersection of gratitude and legacy, illustrating that when we learn together, we break down the barriers between "us" and "nature." It serves as a gentle reminder that when we create with intention, we do more than make objects—we rebuild the broken bridges between communities and the land that sustains us all.



**“THIS FILM IS NOT
ABOUT ME, I DON’T
WANT IT TO BE
ABOUT ME...I’M
JUST THE
MESSENGER”**

MICHELLE TWEED

— Gwyn



THE CAST AND CREW



MICHELLE TWEED

Michelle Tweed (Rockfield, NS) is an Indigenous drum maker, Reiki teacher, and mentor who walks in deep harmony with the earth. Infusing her cultural heritage and spiritual beliefs into her artistry, Michelle transforms simple materials into sacred vessels of history and energy.

Her recent collaboration with the Pictou County Forest School and Verhagan Bison Farms brought this vision to life. By crafting drums from locally sourced buffalo hide and gifting them to the Verhagan family, Michelle and her students honored the spirit of the land and celebrated the "return of the buffalo." Michelle's work acts as a powerful reminder of our need for interconnectedness. In her hands, drum making becomes an act of unity—a way to preserve Indigenous wisdom, honor Mother Nature, and invite us all to remember our place within the living, breathing world.



JACOB VERHAGAN

Jacob Verhagan is a steward of both land and history. Located in Linacy, NS, the Verhagan farm is home to a dedicated 15-acre bison enclosure, where Jacob preserves his family's agricultural heritage by ensuring the holistic use of every part of the bison. His work is rooted in a desire to support the local community and embrace the Indigenous spirit that has long honored these lands. When the drums were gifted to the Verhagan family, it was a moment of profound unity. For Jacob, the experience was about more than just the art; it was about the future. He is already looking forward to playing his bison drum with his daughter, teaching her to hear the heartbeat of the land and to respect the interconnectedness of all living things.



MAYA HOEHNE

The Pictou County Forest School, led by Program Director Maya Hoene, has become a hub for environmental stewardship and outdoor learning.

Maya, a Scotsburn native and graduate of Jane Norman College, uses her extensive background in Early Childhood Education to lead young adults through the "woods, water, and sky (Hamick Village) ". With an athletic spirit and a fierce passion for the planet, Maya teaches students that preserving the Earth is not just a concept, but a practice. When she invited Michelle Tweed to the school, the vision was clear: to create something that would teach students the deep, sacred interconnectedness of all living things.

THE PROCESS



THE PREPERATION

The project's true beginning was rooted in the quiet, atmospheric setting of the woods, where the site had to be carefully prepared to hold the massive frame necessary for the buffalo hide. This was a significant undertaking, requiring careful planning and physical effort to ensure the structure was positioned perfectly among the trees.



THE BUILDING

The creation of this drum is a profound, labor-intensive journey that honors the animal and the recipient alike. It begins long before the first beat is struck, rooted in a series of careful, traditional steps that transform raw materials into a drum.



THE CELEBRATION

The final step of the process is the moment of presentation, bringing the journey full circle. As the winter celebration winds down, the drum is formally gifted to the Verhagan family—a quiet, powerful exchange that transforms a simple object into a vessel of shared history.

SCREENINGS

<u>The deCoste Performing Arts Centre</u>	<i>Premiere screening</i>	June 16 th 2026
<u>Digital Griffix Film Awards</u>	<i>Best Documentary Short Best First Time Screenplay for Short Film</i>	August 26 th 2026
<u>Lunenburg Doc Fest</u>	<i>Short Documentary Screening</i>	September 23 rd 2026
<u>Parrsboro Film Festival</u>	<i>Official Screening</i>	October 3 rd 2026
<u>11th Canada Independent Film Festival</u>	<i>Best Director</i>	October 19 th 2026

KEY FACTS



Production company

LensFlare Photography Inc.

Production location

Pictou, Nova Scotia

Genre, subcategories

Short Documentary

Running time

15 minutes, 32 seconds

Audio format

Digital Sound 5.0

Producer

**Matt Harris and Michelle
Tweed**

Shooting format

4k, high resolution

Aspect ratio

16:9

Exhibition format

4k digital

Languages

English

Music by

Matt Harris

Production year

2026

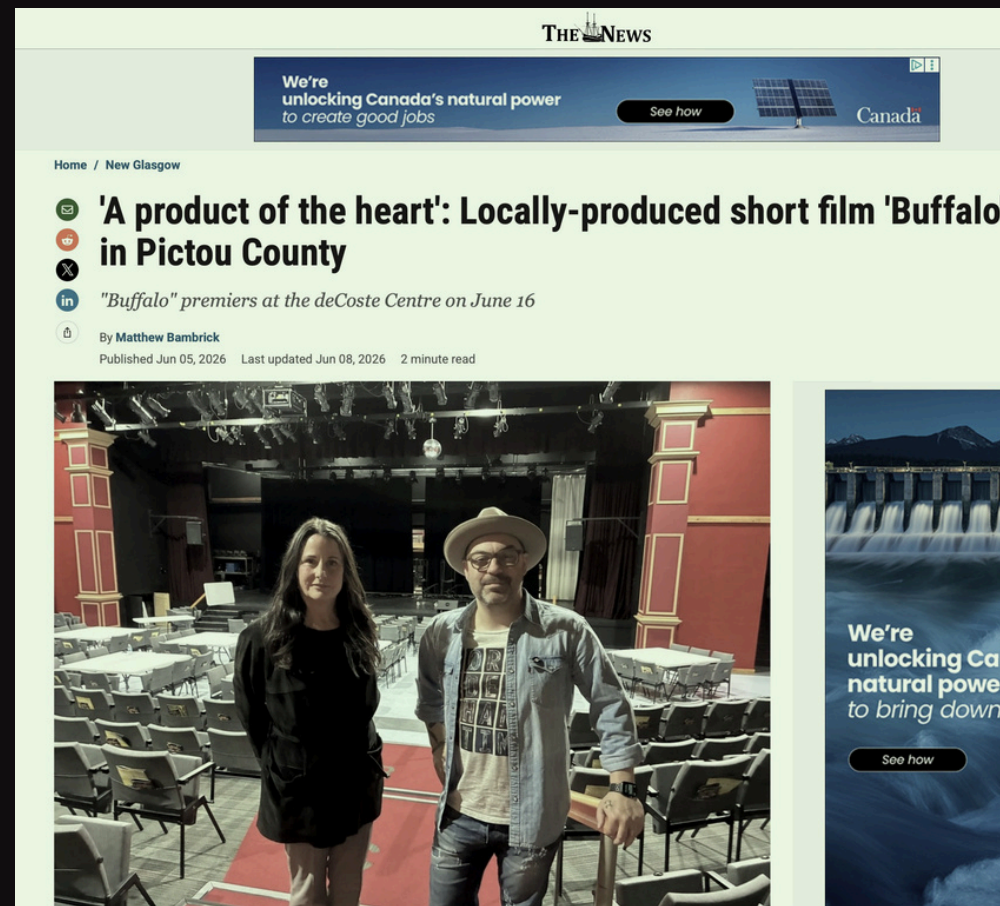
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Email

contact@lensflarephotography.ca

Social media

[@lensflarephotography2021](https://www.instagram.com/lensflarephotography2021)

Phone

902-955-6288