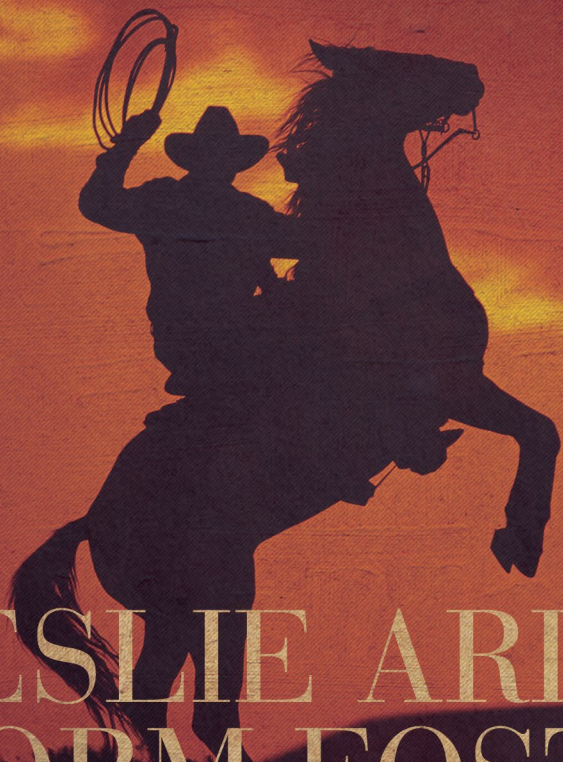


NED DURANGO



LESLIE ARDEN
NORM FOSTER

Also by Leslie Arden:

The House of Martin Guerre

(book by Leslie Arden & Anna
T. Cascio)

The Happy Prince

The Greatest Gift

Harvest Moon Rising (book by
Peggy Sample)

The Last Resort (book by Norm
Foster)

A Meeting of Minds

*The Princess and the
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Also by Norm Foster:

Bedtime Stories

Dear Santa

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A Foster Christmas

The Foster Season

The Foursome

Jasper Station

Jenny's House of Joy

Kiss the Moon, Kiss the Sun

The Long Weekend

The Melville Boys

Mending Fences

Office Hours

Old Love

One-Actmanship

Opening Night

Outlaw

Self-Help

Sinners

Skin Flick

Storm Warning

Triple Play

Wrong for Each Other

NED DURANGO

MUSIC AND LYRICS BY LESLIE ARDEN

BOOK BY NORM FOSTER

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TORONTO**

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Ned Durango was first performed at Theatre Orangeville in Orangeville, Ontario, from May 5–22, 2011, with the following production team:

Tom Shaw: Geoffrey Tyler

Orson: David Rosser

Catherine Wilson: Diana Coatsworth

Ned Durango: William Colgate

Kay Starling: Keely Hutton

Directed by David Nairn

Musical director/piano: Leslie Arden

Guitar: Bruce Ley

Bass: Bob Hewus

Set & lighting design: Steve Lucas

Costume design: Vandy Simpson

Stage manager: Kate Brown

Assistant stage manager: Paula Stewart

SONG LIST

Act One

- | | |
|---|----------------------|
| 1. Overture/Ned Durango | Company |
| 2. The Crossroads Café | Orson & Tom |
| 3. Big Oak, Goodbye | Catherine & Tom |
| 4. Ned Durango Reprise | Tom & Orson |
| 5. Half a World Away | Kay |
| 6. There Ain't No Woman Who Can Hogtie Me | Ned, Tom, &
Orson |
| 7. Somebody Sends You a Sign | Kay & Company |
| 8. She'll Be Disappointed | Orson |
| 9. Sleep On It Tonight | Company |

Act Two

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. The Crossroads Café Reprise #1 | Orson |
| 2. It Was a One-Time Thing | Catherine & Tom |
| 3. A Little White Lie | Orson |
| 4. Can You Turn Back the Clock? | Ned |
| 5. Durango Medley | Company |
| 6. Better Than This | Kay & Orson |
| 7. Ned Durango Reprise | Tom, Catherine,
Orson, & Kay |
| 8. The Crossroads Café Reprise #2 | Tom, Catherine,
Orson, & Kay |

CHARACTERS

Tom Shaw

Orson

Ned Durango

Catherine Wilson

Kay Starling

ACT ONE

(Time: The present. August.

Place: The Crossroads Café, a small restaurant owned and operated by TOM Shaw.)

O/S VOICES

Ned Durango! Ned Durango!

A rootin' tootin', singin', shootin' star!

Ned Durango! Ned Durango!

A-rightin' wrongs and singin' songs on his ol' guitar!

(The entrance to the restaurant is stage right. Upstage centre is a lunch counter with four or five stools. Behind the counter are all of the usual accoutrements of a restaurant. Coffee pots, glasses, cups, menu on the wall, etc. Also in the room is a swinging door that leads to the kitchen. There are a few restaurant tables spread around the rest of the area. Upstage left is a door that leads upstairs to where TOM Shaw lives. On the wall next to the door is a telephone. Inside the front door at stage right is a coat rack. On the front door stage right is an "Open/Closed" sign that is turned around

so that the “Open” side is seen from inside the restaurant. On one wall of the restaurant hangs a hockey stick and on one of the tables is a plastic bin filled with cutlery.

TOM Shaw and ORSON enter from the kitchen. TOM is carrying a handful of mail. ORSON carries a newspaper.)

ORSON

Okay, I got the muffins in the oven, the coffee's goin', and my fly's done up. That takes care of *my* to-do list. Tommy, did I ever tell you about the time Neil Paxton and me double dated the Klotzmer sisters? You know the Klotzmer sisters, right? Katie and Klara? Klara had braces back then. She had that big space between her two front teeth, remember? Girl could eat a pot roast through a picket fence. Well, this one time Neil and me took 'em for a midnight swim over in the Poonish gravel pits. That's where my uncle Pee owned all that land. He left it to me, you know. When he died? Two hundred acres of nothin' in the middle of nowhere. And I never even got to thank the son of a—anyway, we go for this swim and don't we just get into the water when a lightning storm hits. I'm tellin' ya, the sky lit up like Aunt Frannie's face on Tequila Tuesdays. So out of the water we get and the next thing I hear is Neil telling Klara to stay the heck away from him. You see, at six foot one, Klara is the tallest structure in the immediate area and Neil's worried that with her mouth full of metal braces she's gonna

attract a lightning strike and he doesn't want to be the victim of collateral damage. So he's runnin' away from Klara and she's runnin' after him, and they didn't have a stitch of clothing on between them. Funniest thing I ever saw.

TOM How are those muffins?

ORSON Klara's? Ample, as I recall.

TOM No. The muffins you're baking? In the oven?

ORSON Oh. Five more minutes.

TOM Is this all the mail that came in yesterday?

ORSON That's it.

TOM All bills. Beautiful.

ORSON Well, there's a letter from the Halifax Schooners in there too. What's that about?

TOM Oh, they want me to be an assistant coach. They've been hounding me for a couple of months now.

ORSON You don't want to do it?

TOM What, be an assistant coach for a junior team? No thanks. I think I can do a whole lot better than that,

Orson. What about you? You ever think of looking for a job somewhere else?

ORSON Are you kidding? Why would I do that?

TOM Why wouldn't you?

THE CROSSROADS CAFÉ

ORSON *Sometimes, I wonder, Tommy,
When my thoughts, they turn profound,
Why I love the status quo.
Why I love this café so.
Sure, it's been a little slow,
But we'll turn that around.*

*Hits me like thunder, Tommy,
Lady luck has smiled on me.
Some folks never find their niche,
Never learn to scratch that itch.
Me? I never will be rich,
But I know where I'm s'posed to be.*

*And what could be finer than a crossroads mornin'?
Bacon fryin' at the break o' day?
Heaven can hit ya without any warnin',
Here at the Crossroads Café.*

TOM But how do you know that this is your calling? Maybe your calling is in another line of work.

ORSON You think there's another line of work I'd be better suited to?

TOM Maybe. If it involves a lot of talk and not a whole lot of movement.

ORSON *Folks like to wander, Tommy,
Lookin' round for something more.
Why am I so damn content?
This job ain't so heaven-sent.
Hell, it barely pays the rent,
But then I come waltzin' through that door.*

*And what could surpass the smell o' coffee brewin',
Muffins risin' with the mornin' sun?
This is the life and what I should be doin' and—*

TOM *Orson, the muffins are done.*

ORSON The thing is, I feel like I'm somebody in here, Tommy. When folks come in here they throw me a big smile and I throw one back and it's like we've brightened up the day together.

TOM *But there's a world out there, Orson.
There's a world of things to do.
Maybe beyond that door,
Fame and fortune are waiting for you.*

ORSON Oh, I doubt it, Tommy.

TOM *There's a world out there, Orson.
No one's giving you the sack,
But you could walk away,
Seize the day, and never look back.
You could finally get your life on track.*

ORSON *Everyone wants to find a row worth hoein',*

TOM *A line worth toein',*

TOM & ORSON *Folks worth knowin'.*

ORSON *Me, I'll throw in with my very best friend.
Him and me, we got a good thing goin'.*

TOM *All good things come to an end.*

ORSON *What could be finer than a crossroads mornin'?*
Doesn't matter if it's sunny or grey.
Who wouldn't thank you for the chance to horn in
Here at the Crossroads...

TOM *Here at the Crossroads...*

TOM & ORSON *Here at the Crossroads Café!*

(The song ends.)

TOM Do you smell smoke?

ORSON I think the muffins are done.

(ORSON exits to the kitchen. CATHERINE Wilson enters through the front door. She is a woman of forty. She wears business clothes.)

CATHERINE Good morning, Tom.

TOM Sorry, Catherine. We're not open yet.

CATHERINE The door's open.

TOM But the sign says closed. I know it's a crazy notion but when the sign says closed and the door's closed, we're closed. So, if you want breakfast, come back in half an hour.

CATHERINE I don't want breakfast. I'm here on urgent city business.

(She takes her coat off and hangs it on the coat rack.)

TOM Oh, an official visit. Well, Your Worship, I don't open for business of any kind for another half-hour.

CATHERINE No, I think you'll be open for this business, Tom. Could I have a coffee, please?

TOM Catherine?

CATHERINE Well, it's ready, isn't it?

TOM My God, you're a stubborn woman.

CATHERINE I know. That's how things get done.

(CATHERINE sits at a table. TOM pours her a coffee.)

TOM All right, so what's so urgent?

(TOM gives CATHERINE her coffee and goes about getting ready to open while CATHERINE and he talk. He puts the menus out, puts cutlery out, etc.)

CATHERINE Well, as you know, Tom, Big Oak is a town in distress.

TOM In distress how?

CATHERINE Oh, come on. The local economy suffered its biggest setback in twenty years last year, what with the brewery pulling up stakes and the bicycle plant shutting down. Everybody's hurting. Well, *you* know that.

TOM What's that supposed to mean?

CATHERINE Well, I ran into Larry Olchuck at the farmer's market on Saturday and he told me you haven't paid him for

your last two shipments of fresh produce. He said you're insolvent.

TOM That's a lie! What's insolvent?

CATHERINE Broke.

TOM Okay, that's true.

CATHERINE Well, Tom, I think I might just have the solution to your financial woes.

TOM And what's that?

CATHERINE One word. Talisman.

TOM Talisman?

CATHERINE The Talisman Entertainment Group. The amusement park people? They're thinking of building a Talisman Fun Park right here in Big Oak and they're coming here on the August twenty-first weekend to look us over. Do you have any idea what this could mean? If they build that park here our tourism industry will go through the roof.

TOM So what's this got to do with me?

CATHERINE Well, they're coming to have a look at our Tomato Festival, and I know that you've organized the Tomato

Festival parade for the past four years, so I wanted to make you aware that it has to be extra special this year. We can't come off looking like hicks to these people. Not like last year's parade.

TOM What was wrong with last year's parade?

CATHERINE Oh, where would you like me to start? First of all, the Tomato Queen fell off the Viva Las Vegetables float, and the parade had to be stopped while two clowns and that man dressed as a werewolf lifted her back onto the thing.

TOM He wasn't dressed as a werewolf. That was Perry Chalmers. He's got a condition.

CATHERINE And another thing. I don't think we should invite that singles club to put a float in again this year.

TOM Why not?

CATHERINE Well, they're just not happy people. Half of them have been dumped three or four times. They're a bunch of serial losers. They bummed out the whole crowd last year. And they wouldn't even wave. Just pointed and winked. And the same goes for that senior citizens group.

TOM What's wrong with the seniors?

CATHERINE They're old. They make people uneasy. People look at them and think, "My God, that's going to be me in a few years. Sipping rice pudding through a straw from the back of a Salute to Regularity float." It's very depressing.

TOM You mean it's depressing to you.

CATHERINE Old people make me nervous. I can't help it.

TOM Sorry, Catherine. The seniors stay.

CATHERINE Oh, Tom, come on.

TOM They stay.

CATHERINE Fine. On one condition.

TOM What's that?

CATHERINE I want my Melissa to be Tomato Queen this year.

TOM Melissa?

CATHERINE Yes, if she can drag herself away from that two-legged hormone she calls a boyfriend.

TOM Louis Miller?

CATHERINE Right. The boy that time forgot. I'm hoping that being Tomato Queen might take Melissa's mind off of him for a while.

TOM Well, the Tomato Queen does have to meet certain requirements.

CATHERINE Oh, nuts. The only thing she has to meet is you upstairs here after the parade, which, by the way, Melissa has no intention of doing.

TOM Catherine, please! She's only eighteen years old. What do you think I am?

CATHERINE You're an aging jock who continues to make a fool of himself by chasing women half his age. Now, what about Melissa?

TOM Fine. She can be queen. Whatever. Who cares?

CATHERINE I'll be sure to pass along that ringing endorsement to her.

TOM So, what's in this Talisman park for you, Catherine?

CATHERINE For me? Only the satisfaction of a job well done. I mean, I'm the mayor, Tom. I've been charged with the task of looking after you people, and if I get this park built here, the quality of life in Big Oak will improve tenfold.

Here at the Crossroads
Here at the Crossroads
Here at the Crossroads—

CATHERINE All right, shut up and kiss me. I'm not getting any
younger.

*(TOM and CATHERINE kiss. ORSON and KAY exit. Lights
fade, leaving a spot on the poster of Ned Durango.*

Lights down.

End.)

Leslie Arden is an acclaimed composer/lyricist/librettist who has written over a dozen musicals, including the critically acclaimed and multi-award-winning *The House of Martin Guerre* and the Chalmers Award-winning *The Happy Prince*. She and Norm Foster also collaborated on the oft-produced *The Last Resort*. Leslie lives on a ten-acre farm north of Toronto, Ontario.

After twenty-five years in radio arts, Norm Foster discovered the world of theatre and began his legacy as Canada's most-produced playwright. He has penned an impressive array of plays, including a handful of musicals, that have been produced across North America. Norm lives in Ancaster, Ontario.