

**Labrador City Collegiate
Labrador City
presents**

“The Iron Mountain”

Cast

**Jennifer Bourgeois
Scott Neary
Meg Simmons
Matthew Smith
Billy O’Quinn
Adam Coish
Catherine Schwab
Andrew Costello
Stephanie Choiunard**

Crew

**Sound..... Andrew Kelly
Lighting..... Todd Decker
David Bridger**

Teacher Advisors

**Emerson Coish
Donna Walters**

This play begins in 1958 with a percussion number that was choreographed to simulate the energy of the early construction days. The cast then takes us through some of the highlights of the 60's and 70's culminating with the *Storm* of '82. It is their hope that the spirit of Labrador West shines through.

“The Iron Mountain”

Curtains open to reveal a large mountain (made of black boxes) against a red early morning sky. All is quiet except for the sound of birds chirping. (Nature music) This scene symbolizes Labrador West before “the mine”.

In front of the mountain are four large oil drums, three tire rims, and four hub caps. The cast of nine enter slowly from stage right and left looking around with their picks and shovels getting ready for work. A loud siren is heard. The cast takes a crouched position. This is immediately followed by a loud blast. Fog rises behind the mountain and stage lights go up to illuminate the stage. This signals the cast to take position and begin their opening “stomp” routine, which is a percussion number, choreographed to simulate the energy of the early construction days. Immediately following this routine the cast sing the chorus of the song “The Iron Mountain”

Chorus: *There’s a new day dawning in ol’ Labrador
 They found there a mountain that’s made of ore
 It stretches for miles through Cain’s rugged land
 A true gift from God to each working man.*

Lights fade. Spotlight on stage right.

SCENE 1

Narrator: *(sitting on bunk writing a letter home) June 15, 1958. Dear Mom & Dad, How are you? Good I hope. I got here Tuesday past on a twin otter out of Goose Bay. The flight was long and rough but the pilot made me feel safe. When I stepped off the plane I was nearly eaten alive by a swarm of black flies. But they didn’t get much out of my skinny frame! Ha! Ha! Well. Mother maid, the food is good, but not like your home cooking. I’m dying for a bit of fish and brewis. Eating your supper with 500 sweaty men is enough to take away your appetite. I met a couple of guys from the rock who are trying to make a fortune like myself.....*

(Lights come up on center stage - fading off the narrator. We listen in on two conversations.

CONVERSATION 1: *(2 young construction workers leaning on their shovels)*

Worker 1: How’s she going Pete?

Worker 2: Not bad boy. I’m just waiting for a few more pay checks and I’ll be cruising out of here to get my first set of wheels.

Worker 1: What are you going to buy?

Worker 2: A Ford Galaxy 500 - a red Galaxy 500 - with a white leather interior and meg

wheels - V-8 engine too.

Worker 1: (*Whistles*) Sounds like a real beauty! A real chick magnet.

Worker 2: As long as my ol' man doesn't find out. He thinks I'm saving up for university.

Worker 1: I thought you were going to MUN in the fall. Are you having second thoughts?

Worker 2: Well, first things first! I'm having my dream car "come hell or high water".

Worker 1: That won't take long, with the kind of money we're pulling in around here. I've been working twelve-hour days, six days a week ever since I got here.

Worker 2: That's right --- with mud up to your knees and nearly getting eaten alive by black flies,. I think I deserve something to look forward to — or I'd go off my head.

Worker 1: Yes boy, the only thing that the crowd back home sees is the money. But here we are, in the middle of nowhere, working like dogs to create a mine for IOCC.

Worker 2: I got to say, they treat us some well. Did you taste those stuffed green peppers in the cafeteria last night? I didn't know whether to eat them or ask them out to dance, they looked to good.

Worker 1: Well, I thought mother's grub was good, but those cooks from Quebec sure know what they're doing.

Worker 2: All jokes aside - I think we really lucked into something here. Ol' Joey Smallwood was a smart cookie, getting this mine going.

(Spotlight moves from one conversation to another)

CONVERSATION 2: (*two "more settled" construction workers converse*)

Worker 3: Bill, my back is nearly broke working with a pick and a shovel all day long.

Worker 4: Mine too Norm! Sure, I'm spending half my paycheck in Minard's Liniment.

Worker 3: We got to try for another job. Sure there are boys driving trucks making twice as much as we are.

Worker 4: They were posting openings in the bunk house this morning. We should check it out and put in a bid.

Worker 3: Well, I only came down here for a few months to get my stamps. Then I was going home to spend the winter with the wife and kids. But I've been thinking... there might be a real future here if we play our cards right.

Worker 4: You know Norm, I'm thinking like you! We'd be fools to walk away from this opportunity. The money is great, we got a clean bunk, the best of food and a chance to improve ourselves. Most guys are here to make a quick buck. But let's face it, there's not much on the island for us, and we both got a wife and family to provide for. We should put in our names for a truck driver or even shovel operator. Sure, we're known as hard workers and we ain't no dummies. I'd say we stand a good chance.

Worker 3: You know another thing? They've already started construction on some houses down behind the cafeteria. They're calling it Marconi Street. They're hoping to attract families to move in. The Super said that they got plans for a small school and they'll stand to all the expenses.

Worker 4: Well, when I wrote Bessie last week, I put out a few feelers to see how she'd feel about moving up. I thought she wouldn't go for it. But she's got a lot of sense you know. She wrote back and said that we had eight mouths to feed, with no future in Portugal Cove,,,,,and that she'd be game for anything if it was going to benefit the kids.

(Lights fade.....hub caps and tire rims are removed from stage. Plank put on drums to create bar.)

SCENE 2 *(Spotlight stage - right on the Narrator (a slicked-up dude of the 60's who telephones home) Background music playing Beatles tune.)*

Narrator: Hi Mom *(pause)* I just got off work an hour ago. The phone was tied up in the bunkhouse, so I dropped up to the Ashuanipi for a cold one. I thought I'd give you a quick call from here. Do you hear the music. I might have to shout cause it's a little loud. *(Long pause)* Oh. I'm grand - beat out as usual, but a shower works wonders after twelve-hour shifts.*(Long pause)* yes it's been five years since I first came here. The money is just too good to leave. Besides there's a few women around here now and you never know your luck when you're good lookin' like me. *(Pause)* yes Mother, I got your good looks and the ol' man's charm. What can I say? *(Pause)* yes wasn't that sad? I can still remember where I was when I heard that President Kennedy was shot. Everyone was stunned! Just like losing someone in the family. Of course, he was nearly buried before I got a chance to read the write-up in the Evening Telegram. It's still a day late. I suppose we'll be reading about that for the next month. *(Pause)* Well, anyway, Mother Maid, this is costing a fortune so I'd better go. I'll write you this weekend and fill you in on all the

other news. Besides a few girls just came in...and if I'm not ol' "Johnny on the spot" I might be too late.

(Light fades off narrator - lights up center stage. Some guys are hangin' around the bar. Four girls walk in Female 1: Nurse, newlywed from Newfoundland, Female 2: Teacher from Ontario, Female 3: Engineer from Quebec, Female 4: Secretary from New Brunswick.

Female 4: I bet yeah \$10 we're going to be the only girls in here.

Female 1: Yeah Joe says there are 200 men for every girl in Labrador City.

Female 3: Go on, you gotta be kidding. I think I've died and gone to heaven.

(Form the bar, a few cat calls and whistles are heard.)

Female 4: *(starts giggling)* Well, here's my \$10. I guess the first drink is on me. *(Walks to bar)*

Female 3: So, are you settled in by now?

Female 2: Oh yes, the lady staff house is very small but comfortable. Of course, Mrs. Lush makes sure that no men are allowed in after eight o'clock.

Female 1: Well, I feel lucky to have been one of the first ones to get a CC. It's brand new and I'm fixing it up like a doll house - that is until Joe comes home from work covered in iron ore dust from head to toe, and flops on the couch.

(Female 4 returns with 3 guys. One of the guys says "Hi Girls")

Female 4: Girls, a few of the guys are anxious to meet you. I work with them out on the project. Sam, Pete. Joe this is Sue, a teacher from Kirkland Lake, Ontario; and this is Marie, an engineer from Montreal, Quebec; and this is Peggy, or should I say Mrs. Peggy Maloney from Grand Falls, Newfoundland.

Guy: Would any of you gorgeous ladies like to dance?

Female 3: Why don't we talk for a while? We just got here.

Female 2: I can't believe this town. The school has everything. I only have seven students in my class, with all kinds of resources. The school I did my student teaching in was nothing compared to this.

Female 1: The hospital is state of the art..we even have the company plane at our disposal

for emergencies.

Female 4: Speaking of the company plane, I can get us all on for a weekend down in Sept Isles. We'll have a ball and get our Christmas shopping done at the same time.

Female 3: Well I don't know about the rest of you, but I'm ready to dance. I think Chubby Checker's calling us. Let's go.

(They dance - music up for 30 sec. Music and lights fade.)

SCENE 3 *(Lights on stage right. The Narrator is once again writing a letter home)*

Narrator: March 1st, 1978. Dear Mom & Dad. This letter is long over due, but life is pretty hectic with three kids under 10, working full time and coaching minor hockey. But I'm not complaining, everything is great here. The new mall is almost finished and will open later this month. Mom, I guess I know where you'll be spending your time on your next trip here; when you're not at BINGO that is. HA! Ha! Jenny can't wait. She's been saving the kid's family allowance all winter to buy the kids some new clothes at the Bay.
There's all kinds of rumours around here about a strike but don't worry, we'll get by if it should happen. The men are pretty serious and feel that if the company pushes us any farther, we're going to walk. I guess we got to stand up for ourselves if we're going to get ahead.
The weather is pretty good for March - it's actually mild and the snow is starting to go. Jenny can't wait to take the baby out in the stroller.....

(Lights fade.)

CONVERSATION 1 *(lights up on center stage. Mother and Father, walking with stroller, meet another woman.)*

Woman: My goodness, isn't she sweet! I can't believe how she's grown.

Mother: *(smiles)* Yes, she's already in a size 2. My, where does the time go?

Father: Well, well! You've got some nice colour. You must have been down south.

Woman: Yes, we took the kids to Disney World. We had to take young Paul out of school for two weeks, but what odds! It's not every day you go to Florida.

Mother: Well, that's my dream. We were hoping to go this spring but Tom here wanted his skidoo since we built our cabin down at Shibougamoo. So I settled for a new love seat up at the Bay.

Father: Well, we got to run. Michael has hockey at 4:30, Sandra has to be at gymnastics at 5 and they both have to be at the pool in Wabush by 7.

They part ways.

CONVERSATION 2 *4 Men waiting at the bus stop. One man looks at his watch.*

Man 1: Well boys, the bus should be along in a minute or two.

Man 2: We may not be waiting here next month, if the strike comes on.

Man 3: What's the talk at the pellet plant?

Man 4: Boy, I think they're serious this time! Of course, if we all have a show of hands at the arena, we're sure to vote strike. No one would have the nerve to vote it down.

Man 1: All the same, no one wins in a strike. We could be out for a long time.

Man 2: Sure they got enough stock piled to keep them going through the summer.

Man 3: Good times may be coming to an end around here. It won't be the first mining town to close down. Look at Gagnon!

Man 4: Well boys, here comes the bus. Let's punch in another shift. Maybe we'll be lucky enough to catch a few winks if we're not too busy.

CONVERSATION 3 *1 AM Man enters in bathrobe and paces around stage. Woman enters.*

Woman: What's the matter dear? Why do you look so worried? Why can't you sleep?

Man: Oh girl, I'm worried to death! The company is having a team come in from Cleveland this week. They call themselves Efficiency Experts. That's just a fancy name for people who are giving you the ax! There's strong talk about layoffs. You know I'm pretty low on the seniority list in the mines. I'm afraid I'll be one of the first ones to go.

Woman: You're not serious! We just bought a new trailer. The kids are settled here and they love their new school. What will we do?

Man: Well, I'm afraid the writing's on the wall for us, and a good many more. I'm going to call my brother in Ft. McMurray to see what my chances are up there.

Woman: I might as well make us some coffee..we're not going to be able to sleep now

anyway.

(Lights fade.)

SCENE 4 *(lights up on Narrator on stage right. We hear the sound of wind blowing. A voice says "January 18, 1982.)*

Narrator: Hello Mom! I'm so glad I got through. This is a quick call because they're saying on the radio not to use the phone lines..we're in the middle of the biggest storm we've ever seen. The temperature is dropping fast and gale-forced winds are gusting up to over a hundred miles an hour. I'm afraid we're going to lose our electricity. *(Pause)* I got the four wheel drive. I'm taking Jenny and the four kids up to LCC. The whole trailer court is being evacuated.... parts of town too. I'm part of the "Search and Rescue" now. Me and the guys are helping to make sure that everyone is safe. *(Pause)* Now don't worry. We'll be okay. I'll try to call you tomorrow. I love you.

CONVERSATION 1 *People gathered in LCC gym - evacuated from trailer court. Stage left. The scene opens with two women hugging each other.)*

Woman 1: Thank God, we're here. I was afraid we'd be stuck in our trailer all night. Of course, we would have froze by morning. We had on every stitch of clothes we own in order to stay warm.

Woman 2: We tried to get through to you, but our phone line was dead. The RCMP picked us up at 7 and I've been nearly frantic ever since worrying about you.

Woman 1: Oh, we're OK now, but it sure was crazy there for a while.

Woman 2: Are Max and Cheryl here yet?

Woman 1: Yes, they drove here themselves in their 4 wheel drive. You know Max.... he's just like a kid driving that Bronco. He's gone out now to rescue some people up on Jackson who's got a 15 month old.

Woman 2: Let's see where we're going to bunk up tonight. We'll stay together and maybe have a game of cards later.

Woman 1: Yes girl, might as well make the best of it, this storm could last for days.

(Wind sounds as 2 men enter covered in snow)

Man 1: It's not fit for a dog out there...I've never seen anything like it. You can't see a

hand in front of you.

Man 2: Boy, I'm glad you're driving and not me. I thought for sure you were going to run into that car in the middle of the road. I must have counted 20 vehicles stranded on the way down here.

Man 1: We'd better see what they need here for food and make another run. The Co-op is making up some emergency hampers for the people here at LCC and Menihek.

Man 2: Man. This could get nasty if the lower end of town loses their power too.

Man 3: Ya, let's get on the move while we still can. You never know what tonight will bring.

CONVERSATION 2 (*Willow Drive, stage right. 2 couples greet each other with hugs and hand shakes.*)

Woman 3: Thank God you're here. I was so worried.

Woman 4: (*Puts the baby down and hugs the other woman.*) I was scared half to death. I don't know how they drove us down here. You can't see the road for the blinding snow and there are all kinds of cars froze up solid and left on the roads.

Man 3: Boy I can't believe this wind..I'm sure I heard some of my shingles being ripped off. They're saying that some trailers lost their roofs and had their sides torn off.

Man 4: This is supposed to last well into tomorrow. I hope and pray we don't have to move again. If you lose your heat, we'll have to move into the school with all the rest of the people.

Man 3: Well guys, here's the chicken. We putt it in the oven and had it almost cooked when the electricity went. So I thought I'd bring it down and have some supper ..I'm starved!

Woman 3: Well, I hope everyone is safe and warm like us. Frank lost his electricity but they got a fireplace so I suppose they'll be OK.

Woman 4: Where's Benji?!!!

Man 4: What ? Didn't you take him?

Woman 4: No, I had the baby!

Man 4: He must be still at the house.

Woman 4: Oh sure, you thought about the chicken but forgot the dog! I can't believe you did that.

Man 3: He's a dog.....he'll be OK.

Woman 4: He's a poodle! He can't survive in this cold. He'll freeze to death!

Woman 3: Well, what can we do?

Woman 4: Well, I'm going to bed! I can't stay here eating chicken while Benji is freezing to death! *(Exits)*

Man 4: Well, I'm going back to get the dog.

Woman 3: How can you do that?

Man 4: I'll walk!

Man 3: Are you crazy man? You'll never make it!

Man 4: I'll never forgive myself if anything happens to that dog, and I'm sure she won't! So don't say another word.....I'm going! *(Gets dressed and goes out. Wind sounds as he exits.)*

CONVERSATION 3 *(Back at LCC Gym)*

Woman 1: Fred was telling me that most people turned off their water and drained their pipes before they left. Of course, it's all hindsight with Fred. He was never blessed with those kind of smarts.

Woman 2: Well, be prepared for a fine mess if your pipes freeze. I wonder if the insurance will cover it or will they call it "An Act of God"?

Woman 1: It looks more like the devil to me maid!

Man 1: You know, despite this storm or maybe because of it, my faith is being restored in this community.

Man 2: What do you mean , Max?

Man 1: Well, seeing how everyone is helping each other out after all the layoffs and the

doom and gloom of the past several years makes you realize how strong our community spirit is.

Man 2: I've always said you'd have to go some far before you'd ever find the community spirit that we got here. Sure, whenever someone has a problem, the whole town gets behind them.

Man 1: There's something special about being in this town in the middle of the Labrador wilderness. I've never felt so close knit before as I have tonight. I wish we could bottle this spirit, we'd make a fortune!

CONVERSATION 4 *(Willow Drive. Man 4 enters covered in snow without dog)*

Woman 3: Bill, Tim's back! Where's the dog?

Man 4: *(hanging head down)* The police stopped me up on A P Low parking lot. They weren't too understanding about Benji. In fact, they said I was a fool to be out after a dog at 100 below. They wouldn't let me go any further and brought me back here.

Man 3: Well, you may be a fool but you're a fool with friends.

CONVERSATION 5 *(LCC)*

Woman 1: Joe brought his guitar. We're going to have a sing-a-long to pick up our spirits and keep our minds off the weather.

Woman 2: Let's sing "The Iron Mountain"

(Everyone gives agreement.....all come together and sing the closing song.)

"The Iron Mountain"

A new day is dawning in ol' Labrador
They found there a mountain that's made of iron ore
It stretches for miles through Cain's rugged land
A true gift from God to each working man.

First men came to Carol in fifty-eight
To cut trees, make roads, build a mine was their fate
They sweated, they froze through mud and black flies
The got the job done so hats off to those byes.

By 1960 twelve hundred were here
From around the world both far and near
The men brought their families to this frontier town
Young men with their ladies, still in wedding gowns.

The town it did grow from year to year
We had lots of money, had everything here
New churches and schools, new houses, a mall
We lived through the boom, unprepared for the fall.

The 80's brought layoffs, we saw our friends go
We survived the big storm at 100 below
Through good times and bad wherever we roam
Til they take up the tracks, Labrador is our home.

(Lights fade out)

