

## NATIVE EARTH PERFORMING ARTS

presents

### NIIMI'IWE: Indigenous Dance Double Bill

Aki Studio, Thursday March 30 – Saturday April 1, 2017

*light breaking broken*

a creative collaboration by Margaret Grenier and Karen Jamieson

and

*the NDN way*

a Brian Solomon Electric Moose production

TORONTO, ON (February 9, 2017) – **Native Earth Performing Arts** is proud to present **Niimi'iwe**, their 2<sup>nd</sup> annual **Indigenous Dance Double Bill**. An Ojibwe word meaning “to host dance,” Niimi'iwe is a three night dance series featuring powerful contemporary Indigenous dance works from **Thursday March 30 to Saturday April 1 in Aki Studio**.

Each evening in this DanceWorks CoWorks Series Event offers work by Canada's leading Indigenous choreographers: *light breaking broken*, a creative collaboration between Vancouver-based artists **Margaret Grenier** and **Karen Jamieson** comes to Toronto directly from its world premiere at the Vancouver International Dance Festival; and *the NDN way*, a **Brian Solomon Electric Moose** production presented in partnership with Dancemakers, interpreted by **Brian Solomon** and **Mariana Medellín-Meinke**.

*light breaking broken* is presented at 7pm nightly followed by *the NDN way* at 9pm. Double Bill tickets are \$40 and include both programs; single tickets are \$25 per presentation.

*light breaking broken* at 7:00 pm

a creative collaboration by Margaret Grenier and Karen Jamieson

Peeling back the layers of the unknown, and forging a path to understanding, *light breaking broken* is the personal journey of two artists reconnecting with language, culture and identity. With different cultural perspectives and individual histories, Margaret Grenier (Dancers of Damelahamid) and Karen Jamieson (Karen Jamieson Dance) use their distinct dance styles to push each other's boundaries and find an opening to the light; broken historical narratives leading to contemporary connections of hope.

Grenier and Jamieson identify and draw upon radically different cultural traditions: Indigenous culture and protocols (Gitksan and Cree for Grenier) and Western European culture (Jamieson). Their dance practices embody different world views and contrasting functions of dance and its place in the society as a whole. The work addresses such questions as: How can communication through dance take place between such radically different dance forms? How can they create vehicles for dialogue? This dance work seeks to honour the past, while locating itself in the creative present.

***the NDN way*** at 9pm

**a Brian Solomon Electric Moose production**

Interpreted by Brian Solomon and Mariana Medellín-Meinke

In 1974, then-budding artist Cindy Bisaillon created her first radio documentary for the CBC program Ideas, entitled *The Indian Way*. It was comprised of a single interview with a young Métis-Cree man from Northern Saskatchewan, Ron Evans, a teacher/philosopher living in Toronto at the time. Ron discussed the spiritual philosophy of the Cree nation in powerful, simple and clear language. It made for an unprecedented interview in a changing time for First Nations people, offering a rich and insightful glimpse into a time of awakening across the land.

Inspired by that original recording, Solomon takes Evan's brilliant synthesis of Cree belief structures about medicine, pipe ceremonies, sweat lodges and death and uses it as an 'atmospheric departure point' from which he re-imagines, remixes and interprets the actual recording into a highly theatrical, visceral and visual art-warp collage of abstract imagery, sound and movement. The audience is invited to discover their own dark realities and light-filled truths through this performance by two accomplished dancers, Brian Solomon and Mariana Medellín-Meinke.

## **BIOS**

### **Margaret Grenier (Choreographer/Interpreter *light breaking broken*)**

Margaret is of Gitksan and Cree ancestry. She is Executive and Artistic Director for Vancouver's Dancers of Damelahamid, a dance company dedicated to reviving Gitksan dance traditions and presenting Indigenous dance. Margaret choreographed and produced *Sharing the Spirit* (2007) which toured to New Zealand and the Cook Islands (2008) and the World Expo in Shanghai, China (2010), *Dancing our Stories, Spirit and Tradition* (2010) and *Spirit Transforming* (2012), among others. Margaret holds an MA in Arts Education at Simon Fraser University, a B.Sc. from McGill University, and currently serves on the Board of Directors for The Dance Centre.

### **Karen Jamieson (Choreographer/Interpreter *light breaking broken*)**

After receiving a BA in Philosophy and Anthropology from the University of British Columbia, Karen Jamieson established Karen Jamieson Dance in 1983 in Vancouver as a vehicle for the creation and production of works exploring dance as a mytho-poetic language, engaging in cross-cultural dialogue with Indigenous artists, addressing the spirit of place. She is acknowledged nationally for her groundbreaking work in community engaged and cross-cultural dance. She is a recipient of a Chalmers Award for choreography and her work *Sisyphus* is recognized as one of the top 10 Canadian Choreographic Masterworks of the 20th Century. The company has toured nationally and internationally.

### **Brian Solomon (Choreographer/Interpreter *the NDN way*)**

Dora Mavor Moore Award- and Gemini-nominated dancer Brian Solomon is of Anishnaabe and Irish descent, from the Northern Ontario village Shebanoning-Killarney. He is a graduate of the School of Toronto Dance Theatre, and holds an MA of performance from the Laban Center(U.K.). Solomon has presented his works (Visual Art/Theatre/Dance) across Canada and Europe, including Berlin, Amsterdam and London. Solomon has performed for a multitude of choreographers, directors and companies across Canada, the US and Europe. He has also taught for several arts institutions and companies, including one of Europe's foremost universities for acting, H.F.S. Ernst Busch (Berlin).

### **Mariana Medellín-Meinke (Interpreter *the NDN way*)**

Mariana is a contemporary artist from México and her path has been dictated by the need to relate her expression and insight to the world around her. Mariana is of mixed indigenous descent and moved to Canada

for her dance studies in 2000. Her imagination was first captured by classical ballet, then contemporary art. Mariana creates art to give light to social and political issues that are pressing. Currently she gravitates towards street performance and deep social interactions, especially within communities that are under threat of westernization. She has created art in the streets of México, Canada, Palestine, Israel and Germany and is involved in projects with artists in Palestine. Mariana has been a part of The Dietrich Group, Darryl Hoskins, since 2010.

**Native Earth Performing Arts** is Canada's oldest professional Indigenous theatre company. Currently in their 34<sup>th</sup> year, Native Earth Performing Arts is dedicated to creating, developing and producing professional artistic expressions of the Indigenous experience in Canada. Through stage productions (theatre, dance and multi-disciplinary art), new script development, apprenticeships and internships, Native Earth seeks to fulfill a community of artistic visions.

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Tickets for **NIIMI'IWE: Indigenous Dance Double Bill**

Double Bill Packages are \$40 for the two shows.

Single Tickets are \$25 per show.

Tickets are available online at [www.nativeearth.ca/boxoffice](http://www.nativeearth.ca/boxoffice) or by calling 416.531.1402

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