

For Immediate Release: June 26, 2019 • Please include in your listings/announcements

Announcing Native Earth's 2019/20 SEASON

TORONTO, ON – Native Earth Performing Arts is proud to announce its 37th season, featuring a dynamic line-up of some of the most remarkable Indigenous voices working in theatre and dance today. Exploring stories of resilience, reclamation, and triumph, Native Earth's season is a riveting showcase of successive generations of contemporary Indigenous artists. The season includes the recently Dora-nominated playwright Yolanda Bonnell, Dora winner Waawaate Fobister, Christine Friday, and the Governor General Award-nominated Drew Hayden Taylor and Keith Barker, as well as artists from across Turtle Island and Australia at Native Earth's annual Weesageechak Begins to Dance festival.

"Stories are medicine. Stories are what we do. It's how we're built. It's how we connect with each other, our communities, and our audience. Stories remind us that others have travelled the same roads we have and we are not alone. Which is why we are excited to share this new season of stories with you. Each one embarks on its own unique journey of forgiveness, of resilience against impossible odds, of reclamation and triumph that transcends the injustice and cruelty of the world. It is a season of truth telling, of hearts breaking with lots of giggles in between. So please come join us on the journey. All are welcome." – Keith Barker, Artistic Director

CAMINOS 2019

A Festival of New Performance Works

Presented by Aluna Theatre in partnership with Native Earth

October 3-13, 2019 | Aki Studio & Ada Slaight Hall

CAMINOS are the roads, paths, or life journeys that take us from one place to the next. Now in its third edition, Aluna's CAMINOS is a biennial curated festival that presents an exciting line-up of new performance experiments on the road to becoming something more. Join local, national, and international guest artists to push the boundaries of theatre, dance, performance art, music, visual arts, installation, and film.

For 2019, CAMINOS adds a special opening weekend presentation by Native Earth of international guest artist **Ghenoa Gela** (Torres Strait Islands). ***Mura Buai (Everyone Everyone)*** showcases Gela's collaborative journey with local Indigenous artists from Big Medicine Studio to the National Arts Centre to Toronto for final showings at the Aki Studio.

For more information, visit alunatheatre.ca. #alunaCAMINOS

WEESAGEECHAK BEGINS TO DANCE 32

Annual Development Festival of Indigenous Work

November 13-23, 2019 | Aki Studio

Taking place over two weeks in Native Earth's Aki Studio, the 32nd annual Weesageechak festival welcomes emerging, mid-career, and established artists from across Turtle Island and Australia to develop and showcase contemporary Indigenous theatre, dance and multi-disciplinary creations. The festival offers audiences an opportunity to experience the richness and diversity of contemporary Indigenous performance. Full artist line-up will be announced on August 1, 2019, followed by a full schedule on September 2, 2019.

Native Earth and Buddies in Bad Times partner once again to present an exciting evening of the **2-Spirit Cabaret** as part of Weesageechak festival. A celebration of the strength, beauty, and talent of queer and 2-Spirit Indigenous people, the Cabaret features music, dance, drag, spoken word, and comedy, curated by

award winning 2-Spirit theatre artist **Michaela Washburn**. Sold out for three years in a row, the fourth edition of the Cabaret will be held on Saturday November 16, 2019 at The Chamber, Buddies in Bad Times Theatre.

The Festival Pass is valid for all Aki Studio performances and is currently on sale at nativeearth.ca/boxoffice. Single tickets for the 2-Spirit Cabaret are on sale at buddiesinbadtimes.com.

THIS IS HOW WE GOT HERE

Written & Directed by Keith Barker

Produced by Native Earth

January 26-February 16, 2020 | Aki Studio

Meet Lucille, Paul, Liset, and Jim. Best friends, sisters, spouses – stumbling in the dark one year after a tragic loss. They struggle to find each other again, when a mysterious fox shows up with a curious gift. Simultaneously heartbreaking and heartwarming, *This Is How We Got Here* is a complex and hopeful story of letting go.

2018 Governor General's Literary Award for Drama FINALIST

"...nothing short of breath catching" – My Entertainment World

"Entirely relatable, heart-wrenchingly frank, and dazzlingly honest." – Tara Beagan, co-founder of ARTICLE 11

BUG

Written & Performed by Yolanda Bonnell

Directed by Cole Alvis | Dramaturgy by Yvette Nolan

manidoons collective co-presented by Theatre Passe Muraille and Native Earth

February 7-22, 2020 | Theatre Passe Muraille Mainspace

The Girl grapples with the obstacles on her path to adulthood. She clings to anything that gives her comfort. As her power grows, so too does Manidoons*, devouring her from the inside. Her struggle to overcome these challenges fuses movement, poetry, and music in a brilliant Dora-nominated performance by Yolanda Bonnell. **Ojibway for bug, insect, or worm.*

2019 Dora Mavor Moore Award NOMINATIONS: Outstanding Production, Outstanding New Play, Outstanding Performance in a Leading Role, and Outstanding Lighting Design

"A riveting solo show" – NOW Magazine

"...the heart and gut wrenching, powerfully beautiful piece...an excellent physical performance." – Canadian Theatre Review

OMAAGOMAAN

Choreography & Performance by Waawaate Fobister

Direction & Dramaturgy by Troy Emery Twigg

Co-presented by Native Earth and Theatre Passe Muraille – World Premiere

April 2-5 2020 | Aki Studio

The Anishinaabe of Grassy Narrows are resilient. They are stitching their fractured landscapes back together from the impact of mercury poisoning.

Using dance, movement, sound, and storytelling, the Dora-award winning Waawaate Fobister embodies Omaagomaan, a two-spirit being, and a manifestation of the earth and man-made poisons that have seeped

into the earth's crust. A fierce shape-shifter inspired by Anishinaabe mythology, Omaagomaan forces us to reckon with the ways the maanaadizi (ugly) and the onizhishi (beautiful) collide.

"Fobister is a dynamic, engaging performer, and you owe it to yourself to listen to his story." – Mooney on Theatre

MAGGIE & ME: A HEALING DANCE

Concept, Choreography & Performance by Christine Friday

Featuring: Penny Couchie, Waawaate Fobister, and Beany John

Dramaturgy by Robert Desrosiers

Co-produced by Friday Creations and Native Earth – Toronto Premiere

April 16-19, 2020 | Aki Studio

Maggie & Me honours the legacy of women as healers in our communities. Through her ancestral gifts and experiences, the dancer receives a contemporary healing dance. Travelling through dimensional realms of existence – spirit, dream, and present – we are invited into the dancer's journey of healing and revitalization of the Anishinaabe culture. With a movement style that is free, lyrical and explosive, she walks into her own power.

Created by Christine Friday, the recipient of the 2018 K.M. Hunter Award for Dance, this breathtaking immersive performance shares the story of how a healing dance can strengthen communities.

"The stage was alive with a resurgence of culture and dancing with ancestors." – Anishinabek News

SIR JOHN A: ACTS OF A GENTRIFIED OJIBWAY REBELLION

Written by Drew Hayden Taylor

Directed by Jim Millan

Produced by Native Earth – Toronto Premiere

April 26-May 10, 2020 | Aki Studio

Bobby Rabbit has some unfinished business with Canada's first prime minister. He convinces his friend Hugh to accompany him on a "sojourn of justice" to dig up the bones of Sir John A and hold them ransom. When Bobby learns that his grandfather's medicine bundle lies mouldering in a British museum, taken long ago from him at residential school, he enlists his friends to secure a bargaining chip and execute a heist so epic in scale none of them may ever see the light of day again.

Multi-award winning Ojibway playwright Drew Hayden Taylor serves up an uproariously funny and sharply inquisitive new play exploring the possibility of reconciliation while urgently questioning past and contemporary forms of Canadian colonialism.

"A smart, punchy story that's bolstered by sharp satire, a quirky musical score...and a refreshing dose of humour." – Ottawa Citizen

PAPRIKA FESTIVAL 2020

The 19th Annual Youth-Led Performing Arts Festival

Produced by Paprika Festival in partnership with Native Earth

May 25-31, 2020 | Aki Studio

For the fifth year running, Paprika Festival is partnering with Native Earth to present the 19th annual youth-led performing arts festival. Following a year of professional theatre training and mentorship programs, Paprika Festival showcases creations from the next generation for one full week in Aki Studio.

Paprika programs are free of cost for participants and offer exceptional training in playwriting, performing, directing, producing, collective creation, and design and arts administration. Through the support of Native Earth and other industry partners, Paprika Festival launched the Indigenous Arts Program in 2017 to support and present work by young Indigenous artists. Previous artists include Theresa Cutknife, Cole Forrest, Pesch Nepoose, Joelle Peters, and Jesse Wabegijig. For more information, visit paprikafestival.com.

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

ANIMIKIIG CREATORS UNIT

2018 – 2019

The Animikiig Creators Unit (formerly *Young Voices*) is a two-year development program for emerging Indigenous creators, offering them the opportunity to develop their craft through individualized development plans and resources under the guidance of professional mentors in consultation with the Program Director Diana Belshaw.

For Animikiig's ninth season, we have theatre artists **Jenn Forgie** (Métis), **Frances Koncan** (Anishinaabe), **Smith Purdy** (Mi'kmaq), **Quelemia Sparrow** (Musqueam Nation), and multidisciplinary artists **Natalie Sappier-Samaqani Cocahq** (Wolastoqiyik), **Olivia Shortt** (Anishinaabe/Irish), and **Ty Sloane** (Ojibway/East Asian/Irish/Iberian).

MSKOMINI GIIZIS RESIDENCY

Summer 2019 | Aki Studio

For the third round of Mskomini Giizis Residency, through Metcalf Foundation's Creative Strategies Incubator, Native Earth welcomes Dora-award winning performer **Waawaate Fobister** (Anishinaabe), interdisciplinary artist **Aria Evans** (Mi'kmaq/Black/settler heritage), and emerging playwright **Christopher Mejaki** (Ojibway).

2019/20 TICKETS AND SEASON OFFERS

Theatre Package (*This Is How We Got Here* | *Sir John A*) \$45 (incl. HST)

Dance Package (*Omaagomaan* | *Maggie & Me*) \$45 (incl. HST)

Season Bundle (*This Is How We Got Here* | *Sir John A* | *Omaagomaan* | *Maggie & Me*) \$80 (incl. HST)

Single tickets for 2019/20 performances range from PWYC to \$38.00, with discounts available for students, seniors and arts workers, and will be on sale Fall 2019. Single tickets for *BUG* will be on sale at passemuraille.ca.

Weesageechak Festival Pass \$60 (incl. HST). Discounted rate of \$50 is available until October 20, 2019. The Festival Pass is valid for all Aki Studio festival performances. Single tickets to the 2-Spirit Cabaret are on sale at buddiesinbadtimes.com.

Call Aki Studio Box Office at 416-531-1402 ext. 34, or purchase online at nativeearth.ca/boxoffice.

ABOUT NATIVE EARTH

Native Earth Performing Arts is Canada's oldest professional Indigenous theatre company. Currently in its 37th year, Native Earth 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), script development, apprenticeships and internships, Native Earth seeks to fulfill a community of artistic visions. It is a vision that is inclusive and reflective of the artistic directions of members of the Indigenous community who actively participate in the arts.



For more information on our productions and development programs, visit nativeearth.ca.

Facebook: [@NativeEarth](https://www.facebook.com/NativeEarth)

Twitter: [@NativeEarth](https://twitter.com/NativeEarth)

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

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