

For Immediate Release: October 17, 2022 • Please include in your listings/announcements

Announcing Native Earth's 2022/23 SEASON

TORONTO, ON – Native Earth Performing Arts is proud to announce its 40th anniversary season, featuring a remarkable lineup of Indigenous dancers, playwrights, and emerging artists from across Turtle Island. Full of powerful stories of joy, humour, and resilience, Native Earth's season is a showcase of generations of contemporary Indigenous storytelling. In celebrating our 40th anniversary and the 35th year of Weesageechak Begins to Dance festival, new Interim Artistic Director Joelle Peters and Managing Director Himanshu Sitlani welcome you to witness a diverse range of Indigenous art at Aki Studio.

"Native Earth Performing Arts began 40 years ago. 40 years of building, creating, learning, and sharing Indigenous stories. And as we look toward our future, it is important to remind ourselves why we do it: Stories are medicine. Stories have the power to heal. Stories help us grow. In these stories, we honour those that came before us, while paving the way for those that will come after. This season we look forward to celebrating and holding space for our storytellers in their joy, triumph, laughter, courage, and strength. Welcome to our 40th season. We're glad you're here." – Joelle Peters, Interim Artistic Director

WEESAGEECHAK BEGINS TO DANCE 35 **Annual Development Festival of New Indigenous Work** **November 10-20, 2022 | Aki Studio and Online**

Taking place in-person at our Aki Studio with also online offerings, the 35th annual Weesageechak festival gathers emerging, mid-career, and established artists across Turtle Island to develop and showcase contemporary Indigenous theatre, dance, and multi-disciplinary creations. The festival offers excerpts from new work in development, musical performances, conversations about artistic process, a mini pop-up market and more. Witness the richness and diversity of exciting new works from over 15 artists including our Animikiig Creator's Unit and some of our 40 Seeds for 40 Seasons artists.

The full artist line-up and festival schedule will be announced on Thursday, October 20, 2022. Tickets for all Aki Studio performances are \$15 and online offerings are free.

FIREWATER THUNDERBIRD RISING **Concept, Choreography & Performance by Christine Friday** **Co-presented by Friday Creations and Native Earth** **February 13-19, 2023 | Aki Studio**

Firewater Thunderbird Rising is the transformative spirit of dance travelling through dimensional realms of existence - ancestors, dreams, blood memory and the land directly connected to our Anishinaabek way of living, awakening the healing of our Nation's future.

A stunning multi-disciplinary, land-based contemporary dance created by Christine Friday, the recipient of the 2018 K.M. Hunter Award for Dance. *Firewater Thunderbird Rising* was nominated for Outstanding Performance by an Individual and for Outstanding Original Choreography at the 2022 Dora Mavor Moore Awards.

CHAPTER 21

Choreographed & performed by Starr Muranko | Directed by Yvette Nolan

Produced by Raven Spirit Dance and Presented by Native Earth

March 20-26, 2023 | Aki Studio

In this dance/theatre piece choreographed by Starr Muranko and directed by Yvette Nolan, *Chapter 21* explores what happens when a vibrant, active artist comes face to face with a crippling collision of events. Chapter 21 is a reflection on the days that have come to pass, and the art of becoming. A new baby boy; Chromosome 21; the big “C” diagnosis, 21 days between treatments, and 21 days to re-pattern beliefs; Courage; Faith; Resilience.

NIIZH

Written by Joelle Peters

Directed by Desirée Leverenz

Produced by Native Earth – World Premiere

April 11-30, 2023 | Aki Studio

"I hope I never forget this place. Even more, I hope that it never forgets me."

A lot can change over the course of a summer. *Niizh* is a coming-of-age story set on a reservation in Southwestern Ontario that explores themes of love, familial ties, identity, and community.

AALAAPI [?][?][?]

Distributed by Niap and Hannah Tooktoo

Produced by Collectif Aalaapi

Original Idea by Laurence Dauphinais and Marie-Laurence Rancourt | Directed by Laurence Dauphinais

Presented by Native Earth, Le Théâtre Français de Toronto, in association with Luminato Festival

June 8-10, 2023 | Ada Slaight Hall Studio

“Choosing silence to hear something beautiful”: that’s the meaning of Aalaapi in Inuktitut. This play combines documentary and radio testimonies to immerse audiences in the daily lives of five young women from Nunavik who share their lives between the North and the South. These intimate portraits, depicted with speech, sound and silences, reveal the richness of their history and the power of their future.

“[A] beguiling piece of documentary theatre... gives voice to the marginalised and opens our eyes and ears to lives far from our own.” —The Scotsman

“Constructed with skill and ingenuity... an absorbing and immersive piece of documentary theatre which demonstrates the true power of representation on stage.” —Le Devoir

PAPRIKA FESTIVAL 2023

The 22nd Annual Youth-Led Performing Arts Festival

Produced by Paprika Festival in partnership with Native Earth

May 16-22, 2023 | Aki Studio

Currently in the 7th year of partnership, Paprika Festival is working with Native Earth to present the 22nd 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. Through the support of Native Earth and other industry partners, Paprika Festival launched the Indigenous Arts Program in 2017 to support and present the work of young Indigenous artists. For more information, visit www.paprikafestival.com

2-SPIRIT CABARET, 7th EDITION

Presented in partnership with Native Earth and Buddies in Bad Times Theatre

June 2023 | Buddies in Bad Times Theatre

The 2-Spirit Cabaret is back for its 7th edition to celebrate, honour, and party with our queer and Two-Spirit relatives. Stay tuned for future announcements about the cabaret date, our host, and line-up!

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

ANIMIKIIG CREATORS UNIT

2022 – 2023

The Animikiig Creators Unit 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 Lindsay Lachance.

For Animikiig's twelfth season, we have theatre artists **Caleigh Crow** (Métis) mentored by **Tara Beagan** (Ntlaka'pamux, Irish), **Danica Charlie** (Nuu-chah-nulth) mentored by **Frances Koncan** (Anishinaabe, Slovene), **Dylan Thomas-Bouchier** (Cree-Dene) mentored by **Deneh'Cho Thompson** (Pehdzeh Ki Nation), **Jennifer Murrin** (Mi'kmaw) mentored by **Donna-Michelle St. Bernard**, and **Montana Adams** (Mohawk-awkwesasne) mentored by **Monique Mojica** (Guna and Rappahannock).

40 SEEDS for 40 SEASONS

2022 – 2023

In celebration of our 40th anniversary, Native Earth is thrilled to support 40 creators to develop 40 new projects across the country, in recognition of each of the 40 years of Native Earth's history. Each artist will receive \$4,000 to develop a first draft or iteration of a new work.

Artists include **Alexa Black** (Nahua Pipil, Maya, Irish), **Amanda Trapp** (Cree, Saulteaux, Austrian), **Aqua Nibii Waawaaskone** (Anishinaabe, Ojibwe, Irish, French), **Barry Bilinsky** (Metis, Cree, Ukrainian), **Bruce Sinclair** (Metis), **Cameron Peal** (Nisga'a Nation), **Celeste Sansregret** (Metis, Ukrainian), **Christine Friday** (Temagami First Nation-Anishinaabe Kwe), **Cole Alvis** (Metis), **Colin Wolf** (Metis), **Damion Alexander LeClair** (Metis), **Danica Charlie** (Nuu-chah-nulth, settler), **Daniel Puglas** (Kwawkwawkw), **Deneh'Cho Thompson** (Pehdzeh Ki Nation), **Denise McLeod** (Anishinaabe), **Dillan Chiblow** (Ojibwe), **Ed Bourgeois** (Mohawk), **Elizabeth Denny** (Metis), **Emily Solstice Tait** (settler, Ojibway), **Frances Koncan** (Anishinaabe, Slovene), **Hailey Verbonac** (Afro-Indigenous, Metis), **Jeanette Kotowich** (Nêhiyaw Métis, settler) & **Kathleen Nisbet** (Metis), **Jill Goranson** (Metis), **John Cook** (Anishinaabe, Metis), **JP Longboat** (Mohawk), **Julia Ross** (mixed), **Kole Durnford** (Metis), **Mara Turenne** (Metis), **Mary-Rose Cohen** (Syilx/Siksika), **Nova Courchene** (Anishinaabe-kwe), **Nyla Carpentier** (Tahltan, Kaska, French, Scottish), **Philip Geller** (Metis, Jewish) & **Justine Woods** (Metis), **PJ Prudat** (Métis/nehiyaw), **Rebecca Cuddy** (Metis), **Reneltha Arluk** (Inuvialuit, Dene, Cree), **Rylee Nepinak** (Anishinaabe), **Shandra Spears Bombay** (Anishinaabe), **Summer Bresette** (Anishinaabe), **Waawaate Fobister** (Anishinaabe), and **Zoey Roy** (Nehithaw-Dené and Michif).

2022/23 TICKETS

Single Tickets for the 2022/23 season are sliding scale from \$10, \$20, 30 for every performance show including previews. We are pleased to offer PWYC Tuesdays for the season for select shows.

Weesagechak Festival tickets are \$15, with online offerings bring free.

Single tickets for *AALAAPI* / ᐱᐱᐱ will be on sale at theatrefrancais.com.

Single tickets to the 2-Spirit Cabaret will be 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 celebrating our 40th 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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