

August 15, 2023 - Please include in your news items and editorial plans

Native Earth Performing Arts Announces 2023/2024 Season

Native Earth Performing Arts is proud to announce its 41st season with eight projects including an audio play, live theatre and dance, festivals and collaborations, and the second year of the Animikiig Creators Unit.

The 2023-2024 season is the first co-curated by Interim Artistic Director **Joelle Peters** and Managing Director **Himanshu Sitlani**, and will feature: ***They Know Not What They Do***, an audio play by Tara Beagan; ***Canoe***, an all-new two-act opera, produced by Unsettled Scores in collaboration with The Toronto Consort and Theatre Passe Muraille; the 36th edition of ***Weesageechak Begins to Dance***; ***Omaagomaan*** by Waawaate Fobister, originally scheduled for Spring 2020; ***Women of the Fur Trade*** by Frances Koncan, a new presentation directed by Renae Morriveau, a co-production with National Arts Centre Indigenous Theatre & Great Canadian Theatre Company; ***Paprika Festival***, the 8th year in partnership with Native Earth; and ***2-Spirit Cabaret***, in partnership with Buddies in Bad Times Theatre.

Joint Statement from Joelle Peters & Himanshu Sitlani:

“Welcome to Native Earth Performing Arts’ 23.24 season, the first one jointly curated by us. A new season of stories. Stories that honour our past and show us what the future can look like. This season, we aim to celebrate, to hold space for difficult truths, and to push our audience’s perspectives on what Indigenous art can look like.”

We are showcasing a powerhouse of creativity and talent, which is guaranteed to leave us all in awe. We are thrilled to be working with Indigenous artists not only locally based, but from across Turtle Island. We’re excited to welcome artists both new to NEPA, along with artists that have been with us for years.

We’ve been thinking a lot about the 7 Sacred Teachings with this season. Courage. Tolerance. Strength. Patience. Humility. Wisdom. Generosity. Each story this season holds a bit of the Teachings, and that balance is how our company continues to move forward.

There truly is a bit of something for everyone this season. So, mark your calendars, and join us in cheering on this extraordinary celebration of Indigenous talent.”

NATIVE EARTH PERFORMING ARTS 2023/24 SEASON:

Canoe

Previews: September 12-13, 7:30pm | September 15-16, 2023 7:30pm | September 16, 2pm | No performance September 14

General Admission. Pay what you like: \$65 / \$45 / \$20, Previews: \$10

Trinity-St. Paul's Centre, 427 Bloor Street East in Toronto

An Unsettled Scores production in collaboration with Native Earth Performing Arts, The Toronto Consort and Theatre Passe Muraille

Cast and Creatives:

Libretto/Story by Spy Dénommé-Welch

Music by Spy Dénommé-Welch & Catherine Magowan

Performers: Conlin Delbaere-Sawchuk, Kristine Dandavino, Michelle Lafferty, Nicole Joy-Fraser

Director: Moynan King

Canoe is a tale of transformation that revolves around the lives of twin sisters, Constance and Gladys, and the flood that consumes their world. Canoe blends Indigenous storytelling and music to create a unique operatic experience.

#usCanoe

They Know Not What They Do

September 30, 2023 | 30 Minute Audio Play

Free – available on multiple streaming platforms

Cast and Creatives:

Playwright: Tara Beagan

Director: Desirée Leverenz

Stage Manager: Wei Qing Tan

Sound Designer: Colanthy Humphrey

Performers: Cheri Maracle, Damion LeClair, Cherish Violet Blood

Available on September 30, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, ***They Know Not What They Do***, by Siminovitch Award winner and former NEPA Artistic Director, **Tara Beagan**, follows three separate yet parallel journeys through Residential School. Stories of survival weave through time, and as we hear from Elders in the present day

and moments in their own voices as small children, we are reminded that these atrocities were perpetrated on vulnerable young people. Within these stories of survival live the strength and wisdom of our ancestors, past, present, and future.

#neTheyKnow

Weesageechak Begins to Dance 36:

November 6 - 19, 2023

In person performances: \$15 | Online performances: Free

Aki Studio, 585 Dundas Street East

Festival Team:

Producer: Lucy Coren

Assistant Producer: Yago Mesquita

Stage Manager: Caitlin Farley

The 36th edition of Weesageechak Begins to Dance will bring together 22 Creators from across Turtle Island to develop and showcase their work. Join us for excerpts from these new works in development, and conversations about artistic process, both in-person at our Aki Studio and online. In addition, we will have fantastic ancillary programming during the festival of various performers. We invite you to join us in this amazing celebration of Indigenous theatre, dance, and multi-disciplinary works!

#Weesageechak36 & #W36

Omaagomaan

February 15 – 18, 2024

Tickets: \$10, \$20, \$30

Aki Studio, 585 Dundas Street East

Cast and Creatives:

Choreographer, Performer: Waawaate Fobister

Tech. Dir., SM, Lighting Design: Pierre Lavoie

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 Anishinaabeg worldview and cosmologies, ***Omaagomaan*** forces us to reckon with the ways the maanaadizi (ugly) and the onishishin (beautiful) collide.

#neOmaagomaan

Women of the Fur Trade

April 9 – 21, 2024 | Previews: April 9-10

Tickets: \$10, \$20, \$30

Aki Studio, 585 Dundas Street East

A co-production with National Arts Centre Indigenous Theatre & Great Canadian Theatre Company

Cast and Creatives:

Playwright: Frances Končan

Director: Renae Morriseau

Eighteen hundred and something something. A room in a fort on the banks of a Reddish River. This important history is brought to you by Marie-Angelique (a Métis Taurus), Cecilia (a British Virgo), Eugenia (an Ojibwe Sagittarius), Thomas Scott (an Irish Capricorn), and Louis Riel (a Métis Libra). This new production, directed by Renae Morriseau, will premiere at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, in January 2024, before coming to Aki Studio.

#neWOFT

Paprika Festival 2024

May 13-19, 2024

Aki Studio, 585 Dundas Street East

Produced by Paprika Festival in partnership with Native Earth

Currently in the 8th year of partnership, Paprika Festival is working with Native Earth to present the 23rd 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 paid learning opportunities 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

June 2024

Tickets: \$10, \$20, \$40

Buddies in Bad Times Theatre, 12 Alexander Street

Presented in partnership with Buddies in Bad Times Theatre

A celebration of the strength, beauty, and talent of queer and 2-Spirit Indigenous people, the Cabaret features music, dance, drag, performance art, spoken word, poetry and comedy.

#2SCab

Native Earth Performing Arts is also entering into the second year of the **Animikiig Creators Unit**, a two-year development program for emerging Indigenous creators, which offers participants the opportunity to develop their craft through individualized development plans and resources. The **Animikiig Creators Unit 2023-2024** takes place under the guidance of professional mentors in consultation with the Program Director **Irma Villafuerte**. Continuing with this cohort are 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).

#Animikiig

Native Earth Performing Arts is Canada's oldest professional Indigenous theatre company. Currently in its 41st 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 multidisciplinary art), script development, apprenticeships and internships, Native Earth seeks to fulfill a community of artistic visions. nativeearth.ca

Tickets for **Canoe** are available now at: www.torontoconsort.org/canoe

Tickets for the **Native Earth Performing Arts 2023-2024 Season** will be available in September at www.nativeearth.ca.

Media Contact: Damien Nelson, damien@wantandable.ca