

February 28, 2023 - Please include in your news items and editorial plans

**Native Earth Performing Arts
presents the Ontario Premiere of
CHAPTER 21
by Starr Muranko**

A Raven Spirit Dance production, presented by Native Earth Performing Arts

Raven Spirit Dance and **Native Earth Performing Arts** are happy to present the Ontario Premiere of **Chapter 21**, a full-length dance and theatre piece about moving through grief by **Starr Muranko**, from March 23-26, 2023 at Aki Studio in Toronto. This Ontario Premiere is programmed in honour of World Down Syndrome Day on March 21.

Chapter 21, choreographed by **Starr Muranko** and directed by **Yvette Nolan**, is a nonlinear show named with devastating accuracy. After several pregnancy losses, **Starr** learned her son would be born with Trisomy 21, also known as Down syndrome. Just a few weeks later, she was diagnosed with breast cancer with a chemo treatment regime every 21 days. **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, with a new baby boy; Chromosome 21; the big “C” diagnosis, 21 days between treatments, and 21 days to re-pattern beliefs; Courage; Faith; Resilience.

Raven Spirit Dance creates and produces contemporary dance that is rooted in Indigenous worldviews and honours the communities and artists they work with. Incorporating expressions such as traditional dance, theatre, puppetry, and multimedia to tell stories, Raven Spirit works from the following values: generosity, openness, engagement, integrity, and honouring. ravenspiritdance.com

Native Earth Performing Arts is Canada’s oldest professional Indigenous theatre company. Currently in its 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. nativeearth.ca

Chapter 21
March 23-26, 2023

OPENING NIGHT: Thursday, March 23
Talkback, facilitated by **Cole Alvis** to follow the opening performance
Thursday – Saturday @ 7:30 PM
Sunday @ 2 PM
Aki Studio, Daniels Spectrum
585 Dundas Street East, Toronto

Pay-What-You-Can Tickets: \$10, \$20, \$30
Available online at nativeearth.ca, or by phone at 416.531.1402

Choreographed & Performed by **Starr Muranko**
Director **Yvette Nolan**
Composer **Edgardo Moreno**
Lighting Design **Jonathan Kim**
Stage Manager **Amanda Parafina**
Costume Design **Jeanette Kotowich**
Mentors **Alvin Tolentino** and **Michelle Olson**
Videographer **Sophia Wolfe** and **Yasuhiro Okada**
Photo Credit **Melanie Orr** and **Erik Zennström**

For more details: <https://www.nativeearth.ca/shows/chapter21/>

Media Contact: Damien Nelson, damien@wantandable.ca

Company Bios:

Starr Muranko

Starr Muranko is dancer/choreographer, Mother and Co-Artistic Director with Raven Spirit Dance - a contemporary Indigenous dance company based in Vancouver, BC on the unceded and Ancestral territories of the x̱w̱məθḵw̱əy̱əm (Musqueam), Sḵw̱x̱w̱ú7mesh (Squamish), and Seḻíḻw̱iṯuḻh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. As a choreographer she is most interested in the stories that we carry within our bodies and Ancestral connections to land that transcend time and space. Her work has been shared locally and nationally including the Dance Centre, Talking Stick Festival, Coastal Dance Festival, Dancing on the Edge, Weesageechak Begins to Dance, Impact Festival and InFringing Dance Festival. Featured choreographic works include Chapter 21, Spine of the Mother and before7after as well as recent collaborative work Confluence.

A proud company dancer with the Dancers of Damelahamid since 2005, she has toured across Canada and internationally and trained under the guidance and mentorship of the late Elder Margaret Harris. She has facilitated workshops through ArtsStarts,

Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre, the Native Education College, Vines Art Festival and was commissioned as one of the 2022 guest choreographers for the National Ballet School's Sharing Dance program alongside choreographer Aïcha Bastien N'diaye. She is currently the Artist-in-Residence at Ballet BC and has facilitated choreographic labs with the company over the past two seasons with colleague and collaborator Margaret Grenier. She holds a BFA in Dance from SFU's School for the Contemporary Arts and honours and celebrates her mixed Ancestry of Omushkegowuk Cree (Moose Cree First Nation - Treaty 9), French and German in all of her work.

Yvette Nolan

Yvette Nolan (Algonquin) is a playwright, director and dramaturg. Her works include the play *The Unplugging*, the dance-opera *Bearing*, the libretto *Shawnadithit*, the short play-for-film *Katharsis*, the Play-2-Perform@Home *The Fifth Setting*. She co-created, with Joel Bernbaum and Lancelot Knight, the verbatim play *Reasonable Doubt*, about relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities in Saskatchewan. She recently directed the world premiere of Donna-Michelle St. Bernard's *The First Stone* in Toronto, which will be remounted in Ottawa in April. From 2003-2011, she served as Artistic Director of Native Earth Performing Arts in Toronto. Her book, *Medicine Shows*, about Indigenous performance in Canada was published by Playwrights Canada Press in 2015, and *Performing Indigeneity*, co-edited with Ric Knowles, in 2016. She is currently pursuing her Masters in Public Policy at Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy.

Edgardo Moreno

Edgardo Moreno is a Canadian-Chilean composer that has been commissioned for projects in Canada, Venezuela, Mexico, Sweden, Argentina, Colombia, England and USA. He has worked extensively with indigenous contemporary dance choreographers and artists including Penny Couchie, Justin Manyfingers, Alejandro Ronceria, Olga Barrios, Norma Araiza, Rulan Tangen, Starr Muranko, Tasha Faye Evans, Jeanette Kotowich, Carlos Rivera, Sara Roque. He is presently working in creating video and live sound pieces that are part of his Fireflyproject.

Jonathan Kim

Jonathan Kim (he/him/his), better known as Jono, is a Korean-Canadian artist born and raised on unceded traditional Coast Salish territories, who currently works and lives on Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh territories (Vancouver). He holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Production and Design from Simon Fraser University. Jono is a member of the Associated Designers of Canada and Chimerik似不像, an interdisciplinary collective. His recent lighting design works include: *Kim's Convenience* (Arts Club Theatre Company); *The Mountaintop* (Pacific Theatre); *Passages of Rhythms* (Co.ERASGA); *Marjorie Prime | Pass Over* (Ensemble Theatre Company); *Maamawi: Together Through the Fire* (O.Dela Arts and Pepper's Ghost New Media & Performing Arts Collective); *The Five Vengeances* (Affair of Honor); *Redbone*

Coonhound (Arts Club Theatre Company); Murder on the Orient Express (Vertigo Theatre); Metamorphoses (Studio 58); You Touch Me (Arash Khakpour and Emmalena Fredriksson); and Starwalker (Urban Ink).

Amanada Parafina

Amanda Parafina (she/her) is a second-generation Filipino settler, born and raised on the unceded and ancestral territories of the Kwantlen, Tsawwassen, Musqueam, Squamish, and Tseil-Waututh First Nations. With a BFA in Theatre Design & Production from UBC, Amanda finds joy and gratitude in her work and is committed to providing support and care for each artist. Amanda is the Managing Director of Vines Arts Festival, General Administrator of Co.ERASGA Dance, and occasional stage manager in Vancouver's theatre and dance communities.

Jeanette Kotowich

Originally from Treaty 4 territory Saskatchewan, Jeanette Kotowich creates work that reflects Nêhiyaw/Métis cosmology within the context of Indigenous performance, Indigenous futurism and contemporary dance. Her creations have been presented at theatres and festivals across so-called Canada, including Kwê at Matriarchs Uprising and The Dance Centre's Dance In Vancouver. In the summer of 2020, she conducted land-based research in her home province of Saskatchewan, fusing interdisciplinary collaboration, de-colonial practices and embodied research towards the creation and premiere of Kisiskâciwan which toured fall 2022 in Vancouver, Montreal and Toronto. She resides as a guest on the Ancestral and unceded Skwxwú7mesh, Səlilwətaʔ/, and Xʷməθkʷəy̍əm territories, colonially known as Vancouver.

Alvin Tolentino

Alvin Erasga Tolentino's work spans three decades interpreting, creating and contributing contemporary dance for Vancouver. He founded Co.ERASGA in 2000 and since then has brought full-length memorable works as; SOLA, Bato/Stone, Orientik/Portrait, Field, Paradise/Paradis, ADAMEVE-Man/Woman, Shadow Machine, EXpose and recently Colonial to name a few. An accomplished international dance artist whose works have reflected identity, gender, inter-culturalism and cross-cultural collaboration that have reached four continents. His touring engagements and cross-cultural collaboration has taken him and Co.ERASGA to over 50 diverse cities and in countries as France, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Japan, Singapore, Philippines, Venezuela, Dominican Republic, Thailand, Uruguay and across Canada. In 2010 he received the Vancouver's Mayor Arts Award for his contribution to the performing arts in Dance. Tolentino continues to expand his cultural work at home and globally, utilizing dance as a source of empowerment and generating creativity in the life of people; reflective, connected and engaged.

Michelle Olson

Michelle Olson is a member of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation and the Co-Artistic Director of Raven Spirit Dance. She studied dance and performance at the University of New Mexico, the Aboriginal Arts Program at the Banff Centre and was an Ensemble Member of Full Circle First Nations Performance. Michelle works in areas of dance, theatre and opera as a choreographer, performer and movement coach and her work has been seen on stages across Canada. Selected choreography/theatre credits include Gathering Light (Raven Spirit Dance), Salmon Girl (TYA – Raven Spirit Dance), Map of the Land, Map of the Stars (Gwaandak Theatre), Frost Trees Exploding Moon (Raven Spirit Dance), Mozart's Magic Flute (Vancouver Opera), The Ecstasy of Rita Joe (Western Canada Theatre/National Arts Centre), Death of a Chief (Native Earth Performing Arts/National Arts Centre) and Evening in Paris (Raven Spirit Dance). She was the recipient of the inaugural Vancouver International Dance Festival Choreographic Award. She graduated as a Certified Movement Analyst from Laban/Bartenieff and Somatic Studies Canada and is currently teaching at Langara's Studio 58.

Sophia Wolfe

My name is Sophia Mai Wolfe (she/her/hers), I am a queer, Japanese-Canadian independent artist whose practice is ever-changing. My practice moves and connects me to live performance, video documentation, curation, festival programming, editing, filmmaking and directing. I am a grateful guest of what is colonially know as Vancouver on the territories of the xʷməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səl̓ílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tseil-Waututh) Nations. My dance practice has led me to performing and touring internationally with companies and independent choreographers such as Company 605, Co-Erasga, Chick Snipper, Cindy Mochizuki, Lisa Mariko Gelley, Kelly McInnes, Antonio Somera, Zahra Shahab, The Only Animal and New World Theatre. I hold an MA in Screendance with Distinction (2022) from the London Contemporary Dance School, and is the founder and Artistic Director of F-O-R-M (Festival Of Recorded Movement), and have curated screenings for New Blue Dance Festival (Toronto), Vancouver Art Gallery, DOTE (Vancouver) and Body+Camera (Chicago).