

# canadianstage

## **BRENDAN HEALY AND MONICA ESTEVES ANNOUNCE THEIR INAUGURAL SEASON AT CANADIAN STAGE**

### **INSPIRED AND SHAPED BY OUR GREAT CITY**

Toronto, ON – March 19, 2019 – Canadian Stage, one of the country's leading not-for-profit contemporary performing arts organizations, today announced its 19.20 season, the first under Artistic Director Brendan Healy and Executive Director Monica Esteves. Featuring 14 thrilling works from 5 continents, including 6 world premieres, the 19.20 season honours Canadian Stage's legacy while also forging a deeper connection to the people of Toronto.

“For over three decades, Canadian Stage has made an extraordinary contribution to the performing arts in Canada and I am deeply honoured to be building on this legacy,” says Canadian Stage Artistic Director Brendan Healy. “For my first season, we are bringing together some of the brightest artistic luminaries from home and abroad to paint an authentic reflection of our city and country; one that is creative, curious, caring, and hopeful. In a world that seems to be increasingly ruled by fear, our 19.20 season is an assertion that we, as a people, continue to choose compassion.”

For the 19.20 season, Canadian Stage celebrates the return of some of Canada's greatest artists and the debut of world-renowned performers who will grace our stages for the first time. From the return of world-renowned boundary-pushing choreographer **Marie Chouinard** and Toronto's internationally-acclaimed **Red Sky Performance**, an intoxicating new musical by **Britta Johnson**, an electrifying dance creation by the National Ballet of Canada's **Guillaume Côté**, and commissioned new works by Canada's hottest creative force and bestselling author, **Vivek Shraya** and award-winning playwright, **Susanna Fournier**, these inspiring artists are confronting important issues facing our world with courage, humour and heart.

In addition to local and national talent, the season also features top-tier artists from around the world including Argentina, Australia, China, Rwanda, South Africa, and the United States. From celebrated Rwandan artist and humanitarian **Odile Gakire Katese**, China's rising star of contemporary dance **Yang Zhen**, Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright **Lynn Nottage**, to Australia's world-renowned **Bangarra Dance Theatre**, these artists all have a major presence on the world stage.

**BRENDAN HEALY**, Artistic Director

**MONICA ESTEVES**, Executive Director

**ALEXANDRA BAILLIE & TONY BAYLIS**, Board Co  
Chairs

# canadianstage

The 19.20 season also reinforces the company's ongoing commitment of collaborating with local organizations. The season includes co-productions and partnerships with TOLive, Studio 180, The Musical Stage Company, and Volcano Theatre.

"The Canadian Stage Board is thrilled with the boldness, creativity and relevance with which Brendan Healy has programmed his inaugural season as Artistic Director," say Tony Baylis and Alexandra Baillie, Canadian Stage Board Co-Chairs. "He draws on, shapes and magnifies the elements that make Canadian Stage so distinctive in our city and around the world."

The 19.20 season announcement comes fresh on the heels of the \$2.8 million raised for the company's Transformation Campaign, which will fund strategic artistic and organizational investments throughout the next three seasons, including innovative artistic program development, increased organizational and human resources, best-in-field consultancy with experts such as Michael M. Kaiser, and catalyst contributions to accumulated debt retirement by 2021. Cumulatively, these efforts will inject new energy and structure as the company steps into a bright future.

Canadian Stage Executive Director Monica Esteves says: "The continued, storied and impactful evolution of Canadian Stage is inspiring to me. It has been a Toronto cultural cornerstone for so many: artists, audiences, city builders." "It is a privilege and delight to unveil next season's core program of extraordinary artists and performances, a season truly shaped and inspired by our vibrant city. Buoyed by the unwavering support from our donors, sponsors, subscribers and patrons, we step into the future with great enthusiasm."

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## 19.20 SEASON

**SHAKESPEARE IN HIGHPARK (Canada) - July 4-September 1, High Park Amphitheatre**

**By William Shakespeare**

**Much Ado About Nothing directed by Liza Balkan**

**Measure for Measure directed by Severn Thompson**

*A Canadian Stage Production in collaboration with the Department of Theatre, School of the Arts, Media, Performance and Design at York University*

Our season begins under the stars where every summer over 35,000 people enjoy Canada's longest-running outdoor theatre experience. Returning for its 37<sup>th</sup> season, this year features two adaptations of the Bard's most popular and enduring works. The battle of the sexes is on full display with a comedic tale of love and desire, *Much Ado About Nothing*, and the timeless story of morality and power, *Measure for Measure*.

**BRENDAN HEALY**, Artistic Director

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**THE BOOK OF LIFE (Rwanda/Canada) - September 17-29, Marilyn and Charles Baillie Theatre (formerly the Berkeley Street Theatre)**

**Written + Performed by Odile Gakire Katese**

**Directed by Ross Manson**

**Projections Created by Sean Frey**

*A Volcano Theatre Production Presented by Canadian Stage. Underwritten by Sandra Simpson in recognition of her generous gift to Canadian Stage's Transformation Campaign*

September opens with the world premiere of *The Book of Life* by Rwandan artist and humanitarian Odile Gakire Katese in a ground-breaking collaboration with Ross Mason, one of Canada's most celebrated directors. To commemorate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Rwandan genocide, Katese takes the audience on a remarkable journey of resilience and hope. Filled with music, performance, and letters written to the dead by survivors and perpetrators, *The Book of Life* is a celebration of life and shows us how we can triumph over adversity and forgive. As Canada faces its own reconciliation and truth, *The Book of Life* is a lesson in how cultures can move past trauma to find a new positive future together.

**UN POYO ROJO (Argentina) - October 3-11, Marilyn and Charles Baillie Theatre**

**Directed by Hermes Gaido**

**Choreographed by Nicolás Poggi + Luciano Rosso**

**Performed by Alfonso Baron + Luciano Rosso**

*A Canadian Stage Presentation*

The internationally-celebrated Argentinian comedy/dance sensation, *Un Poyo Rojo*, make their Toronto debut. A hilarious exploration of masculinity, this epic slapstick masterpiece combines contemporary dance with the physical comedic genius of Charlie Chaplin and Abbott and Costello to create a laugh-out-loud masterpiece that is part dance battle, part section and a whole lot of fun!

**MINORITIES (China) - October 17-27, Marilyn and Charles Baillie Theatre**

**Choreographed by Yang Zhen**

*A Red Virgo Production from Beijing Presented by Canadian Stage*

A rising international star of contemporary dance, Chinese choreographer Yang Zhen, makes his first visit to North America with the premiere of *Minorities*. In *Minorities*, Zhen gives a voice to the social condition of a new generation of ethnic minorities in China. Using dancers and performers from the Tibet region, Inner Mongolia, the Uyghur Autonomous Region Xinjiang and Macao, as well as a Korean-Chinese opera singer, this powerful dance, theatre creation examines the constant conflict between

# canadianstage

social prejudice and artists need to express themselves and relate their identities to the world they live in.

**LET'S RUN AWAY (Canada) - October 31-November 17, Marilyn and Charles Baillie Theatre**

**Written + Performed by Daniel MacIvor**

**Directed + Dramaturged by Daniel Brooks**

*Produced by Rework Productions Presented by Canadian Stage*

The dynamic duo of Daniel MacIvor and Daniel Brooks returns to Canadian Stage with the world premiere of *Let's Run Away*. A virtuosic solo work about love, abandonment and the stories we tell ourselves, *Let's Run Away* chronicles the life of Peter, who after finding his estranged mother's memoir following her death, reads aloud the story of his life as told sometimes incorrectly by his mother.

**SPIRIT (Australia) - November 8-9 at the Bluma Appel Theatre**

**Created by Bangarra Dance Theatre**

*A Bangarra Production Co-Presentation by Canadian Stage and TOLive*

Our first co-presentation of the season with TOLive brings Australia's internationally-renowned company, Bangarra Dance Theatre to Toronto with the premiere of *Spirit*. Infusing 65,000 years of Aboriginal and Torres Island culture with exhilarating contemporary movement, *Spirit* weaves together storytelling, theatre, dance and music to create a magical, spiritual, and totally original theatrical experience that transports the audience to a mysterious and sacred space.

**SWEAT (United States) - January 14-February 2, Marilyn and Charles Baillie Theatre**

**Written by Lynn Nottage**

*A Canadian Stage and Studio 180 Co-Production. This production has been generously underwritten by David W. Binet*

Canadian Stage and Studio 180 present the Toronto premiere of the Pulitzer Prize-winning, Olivier Award-nominated play *Sweat* by celebrated U.S. playwright Lynn Nottage. A searing examination of race, politics and friendship, *Sweat* chronicles a group of friends working at a steel mill who decompress at the local bar. When rumours surface that the company is considering layoffs and flyers are hung to recruit non-union workers for less money, the war between community and capitalism begins and tension start destroying not only jobs, but relationships. As Oshawa faces the closure of its General motors plant, this production is a necessary investigation into the impact of industrial decline.

# canadianstage

**RADICAL VITALITY Solos and Duets (Canada) - February 5-9, Bluma Appel Theatre**

**Choreographed by Marie Chouinard**

*A Compagnie Marie Chouinard Production Co-Presentation by Canadian Stage and TOLive*

Marie Chouinard, one of Canada's greatest and most acclaimed dancers and choreographers, delves into her company's vast 40-year repertoire to present reworked solos and duets. A co-presentation with TOLive, *Radical Vitality's* bold, visceral, sexual and experimental dance miniatures reveal Chouinard's unique power and vision. A special opportunity to experience a true genius over her artistic lifetime.

**HOW TO FAIL AS A POPSTAR (Canada) - February 18-March 1, Berkeley Upstairs Theatre**

**Written + Performed by Vivek Shraya**

**Directed by Brendan Healy**

*A Canadian Stage Production Commissioned by Canadian Stage*

Vivek Shraya, Polaris Music prize nominee, visual artist, filmmaker and bestselling author of *I'm Afraid of Men*, makes her theatre debut with the world premiere of *How to Fail As a Pop Star*. Illuminating, raw, honest and hopeful, this solo performance chronicles Vivek's journey to "not quite" pop music superstardom. A reflection on the power of pop culture, dreams, disappointments, and self-determination, this astonishing performance is a triumph in finding one's authentic voice.

**AF (Canada/South Africa) - February 18-March 1, Marilyn and Charles Baillie Theatre**

**Created + Directed by Sandra Laronde and Neil Coppen**

*A Red Sky Performance Production Presented by Canadian Stage*

A leading in contemporary Indigenous performance, Toronto's internationally renowned Berkeley Street Company-in-Residence Red Sky Performance, returns with the world premiere of a daring new work in physical theatre. *AF* casts an Indigenous lens on George Orwell's classic dystopian fable, *Animal Farm*. A collaboration between Red Sky's Sandra Laronde and South African playwright and director, Neil Coppen, this explosive new work will leave audiences breathless.

**ALWAYS STILL THE DAWN (Canada) - April 7-26, Marilyn and Charles Baillie Theatre**

**Written by Susanna Fournier**

**Directed by Liza Balkan, Severn Thompson**

*A Canadian Stage Production Commissioned by Canadian Stage*

Award-winning playwright Susanna Fournier is one of the most significant and inspiring voices of her generation. Following the rousing success of her critically acclaimed trilogy, *The Empire*, Fournier

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presents the world premiere of two plays, *All the Ways You Scare Me* and *Ghosts of My House*. These rebellious works traverse the hilarity and heartbreak of women caught in the powerful interplay between modern and the mythic -- subverting everyday notion of family, addiction, and femininity.

**CRYPTO (Canada) - April 22-26, Bluma Appel Theatre**

**Choreography + Direction by Guillaume Côté**

**Story + Text by Royce Varek**

**Music by Mikael Karlsson**

**Projection + Set by Hub Studio**

*An Anymotion Production Co-Presented by Canadian Stage and TOLive. Co-Produced by Canadian Stage and The Festival Des Arts De Saint-Sauveur with additional support from the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity. Crypto was made possible with the generous support of La Fondation Emmanuelle Gattuso*

The National Ballet of Canada's Guillaume Côté, one of the most electrifying and in demand dancers in the world, takes the leap from dancer to choreographer in the Toronto premiere of *Crypto*. A co-presentation with TOLive, this cutting-edge contemporary dance creation, featuring the music of Swedish composer Mikael Karisson, is infused with theatre and technology to create a dark and erotic work that examines forced displacement and the human need to control and transform beauty.

**KELLY V. KELLY (Canada) - May 15-June 7, Marilyn and Charles Baillie Theatre**

**Book by Sara Farb**

**Music + Lyrics by Britta Johnson**

**Directed by Robert McQueen**

*A Musical Stage Company Production in association with Canadian Stage. Part of The Musical Stage Company's Crescendo Series. Developed with support from the National Arts Centre's National Creation Fund*

Berkeley Street Company-in-Residence, The Musical Stage Company, creators of *Life After*, returns to Canadian Stage with the world premiere of *Kelly v. Kelly*. Inspired by true events from 1915 in New York – when a wealthy mother had her heiress daughter arrested for falling in love with a tango dancer – this riveting new musical reveals the story of a mother and daughter divided by passion, money, female emancipation and the tango. Featuring a lively musical score and mesmeric choreographer, *Kelly v. Kelly* will take you into the imaginations of two of Canada's greatest musical theatre voices.

# canadianstage

19.20 subscription renewals are on sale with four-show packages starting at \$166, seven-show packages starting at \$259, and 10-show packages starting at \$345 (includes HST and all facility fees and service charges). Subscriptions can be purchased online at [canadianstage.com](http://canadianstage.com), by phone at 416-368-3110 or in person at the Berkeley Street Theatre Box Office, located at 26 Berkeley Street.

Single tickets will be on sale June 3. Full details on the productions and Subscription packages are available online at [canadianstage.com](http://canadianstage.com).

Performances take place at the company's three historic venues: The Bluma Appel at the St. Lawrence Centre; The Berkeley Street Theatre (which houses the soon-to-be-renamed Marilyn and Charles Baillie Theatre and the Berkeley Upstairs Theatre); and the High Park Amphitheatre.

**Follow us on Facebook / Twitter / Instagram: @canadianstage**

**To receive further information, please contact  
CATHY PAINE at 416-367-8243 ext. 250 or [cpaine@canadianstage.com](mailto:cpaine@canadianstage.com)**

## **ABOUT CANADIAN STAGE**

Canadian Stage is one of the country's leading not-for-profit contemporary performing arts organizations. Led by Artistic Director, Brendan Healy, and Executive Director, Monica Esteves, the company produces, presents, commissions, and collaborates with multiple partners on cross-disciplinary work with a focus on performance styles that integrate theatre, dance, film, visual arts and more. Sharing innovative and vibrant performance work from Canada and around the world, it stages performances at three Toronto venues: The Bluma Appel at the St. Lawrence Centre; The Berkeley Street Theatre; and the High Park Amphitheatre.