

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Harbourfront Centre Celebrates the Return of Toronto's Leading International Children's Festival, JUNIOR, with Exhilarating Program Line-up**

***JUNIOR offers a wide variety of multidisciplinary performances, workshops, interactive and inclusive events for kids and their adults at Harbourfront Centre's annual three-day children's festival***

**TORONTO, ON** – Harbourfront Centre announces the highly anticipated, in-person return of one of Canada's largest international children's festivals, **JUNIOR**. Running throughout the May long weekend, from **May 21–23, 2022**, at both indoor and outdoor venues on Harbourfront Centre's spacious campus, the festival offers a variety of free and ticketed activities for the entire family, including four Canadian premiere performances from international artists. Centered around themes of belonging and community, JUNIOR explores what it means to be connected to one another and our communities when the need for personal connection has never been so crucial to our collective mental health and well-being. Designed to engage and inspire the minds of children ages 4 to 14, the festival is co-curated by **Nathalie Bonjour**, Harbourfront Centre's Director, Performing Arts and **Mary Francis Moore**, an award-winning theatre artist and Artistic Director of Hamilton's Theatre Aquarius.

"After two years of disconnection, in which we were unable to gather in person, we are faced with an incredible opportunity to reunite and reflect on our experiences, both individually and collectively," says Mary Francis Moore, JUNIOR co-curator. "As the pandemic has been an especially difficult experience for children, JUNIOR offers kids and their parents an outlet to explore these complex emotions and ask big questions: What does it mean to belong? What is community? Is it a place, a feeling, or a group of people? Through an incredibly diverse program line-up featuring some of the world's most talented creators for young people, JUNIOR will offer new and unexpected opportunities for children to connect with themselves, their families, their peers and, most importantly, have fun!"

"We are incredibly proud to re-launch our annual JUNIOR Festival at Harbourfront Centre this May long weekend," adds Nathalie Bonjour, JUNIOR co-curator and Harbourfront Centre's Director, Performing Arts. "In an effort to further augment our audiences' festival experience in 2022, Harbourfront Centre has committed to enhancing inclusion, accessibility and diversity in our programming, building Indigenous programming, and improving accessibility through ASL interpretation, relaxed performances, audio description and *Pay What You Wish* ticket pricing. We can't wait to welcome families, both new and returning, to experience the transformative power and magic of the arts at JUNIOR."

The multidisciplinary festival program features a comprehensive line-up of ticketed and free performances, workshops and interactive activities, including various disciplines of theatre, dance, music, circus, food, storytelling, film and visual arts. Spotlight performances and activities include the Ontario premiere of *Sky Dancers* from Quebec's **A'no:wara Dance Theatre** about the Quebec bridge disaster of 1907, which killed 33 Mohawk ironworkers; the virtuosic fusion of African live music and circus arts in *Won'Ma Africa* from Quebec's **Kalabanté Productions**; an inclusive and playful orchestral concert from Toronto's **Queer Songbook Orchestra** and a brand-new **Indigenous food program**, curated by 50/50 Performing Arts, with food workshops led by Indigenous creatives, among many other highlights.

The festival will also feature several Nordic Spotlight presentations, including four Canadian theatrical premieres from Denmark's **Kitt Johnson X-act** and **Teatret Gruppe 38**, Greenland's **National Theatre of Greenland** and Finland's **Other Spaces**. Nordic Spotlights, which also includes JUNIOR's first official **LEGO® Zone** from Denmark, is part of **Nordic Bridges**, a year-long initiative that will connect hundreds of creators from Canada and the Nordic Region throughout 2022 in an exchange of art, culture and ideas from coast to coast to coast.

**To learn more about programming and for tickets**, visit [harbourfrontcentre.com](https://harbourfrontcentre.com).

In support of Harbourfront Centre's inclusive *Pay What You Wish* pricing model introduced in 2022, ticket buyers are encouraged to select the ticket price they wish to pay for each individual performance or event. Suggested ticket prices for JUNIOR indoor ticketed performances range from \$15–\$50 for adults. **Ages 14 and under are free** when accompanied by a paying adult. Registration is required for some workshops, with PWYW ticket prices starting at \$0.

## **JUNIOR FESTIVAL PROGRAMMING:**

### **TICKETED EVENTS (Performances)**

***Sky Dancers*** (Kahnawake, Québec)  
A'nó:wara Dance Theatre  
May 21–23, 2022, at 2pm, Fleck Dance Theatre  
Ages 12+

This visually stunning performance explores the impacts of the Québec Bridge disaster of 1907, which killed 33 Mohawk ironworkers from the community of Kahnawake. The work, using both contemporary and traditional practices, will captivate audiences while deepening our understanding of Indigenous people's history.

***Spoiiviiiiing*** (Denmark)  
Kitt Johnson X-act  
May 21–23, 2022, at 11am, The Brigantine Room (May 23 will be a relaxed performance)  
Ages 6+

Kitt Johnson, a world-renowned choreographer and performer, presents a magical expedition into a world full of trash, music and magic with an amusing and playful performance that explores the underground musical world of trash. **Nordic Spotlight, part of Nordic Bridges.**

***A Story of a House That Turned into a Dot*** (Denmark)  
Teatret Gruppe 38  
May 21 – 22, 2022, at 1:30pm, Harbourfront Centre Theatre (May 22 will be an audio described performance)  
Ages 7+

This whimsical and intimate shadow-play work from Teatret Gruppe 38 and starring Artistic Director Bodil Alling, renowned for her influence in the paradigm shift of Danish children's theatre, tells a story about how long the road home is when you run away in anger. **Nordic Spotlight, part of Nordic Bridges.**

***Those Who Run in the Sky*** (Greenland)

The National Theatre of Greenland (Nunatta Isiginnaartitsisarfia)  
May 21–23, 2022, at 11:30am, Studio Theatre (May 23 will be a relaxed performance)  
Ages 10+

*Those Who Run in the Sky* is a coming-of-age story from the National Theatre of Greenland. Adapted from the best-selling novel by Aviaq Johnson, it tells the story of Pitu, a young shaman who finds himself lost in the world of spirits and must use his powers to find his way back home to the world of the living, his family and his one true love. This performance is in close collaboration with Canadian and Greenlandic artists. This piece is performed in Kalaallisut (Greenlandic). English context will be provided. **Nordic Spotlight, part of Nordic Bridges.**

### **TICKETED EVENTS (Workshops)**

***The Great Barrier Reef*** (Finland)  
Other Spaces

May 21–23, 2022, at 11am, Lakeside Terrace  
All ages

In a multidisciplinary experience, children and their adults are invited to explore and embody the coral reef ecosystem through a participatory workshop, a performance and a demonstration. Participants are both viewers and creators of the performance, where they form a “human” coral reef and the various creatures that inhabit the reef, culminating in a public silent demonstration advocating for the protection of coral reefs. **Nordic Spotlight, part of Nordic Bridges.**

## FOOD PROGRAMMING

### **Indigenous Food Program** (Toronto, Ontario)

Candace Esquimax (Candace’s Catering), Douglas Trudeau, Dasmaawaan Bermaadzinjin; Curated by 50/50 Performing Arts Collective

May 21–23, 2022, at 11:30am, 1:30pm and 3:30pm, Food Lab Kitchen and Lower Deck

Medicine-Cured Salmon Workshop (May 21): Ages 6+

Cedar Tea & Wellness Workshop (May 22): All ages

Things We Can Eat from the Outside Workshop (May 23): Ages 8+

Harbourfront Centre’s kitchens come to life with workshops for children that target different age groups, allowing for hands-on learning and storytelling in a fun and creative learning space.

## IMMERSIVE THEATRE

### ***The Storybook Search – Workshop Production*** (Toronto, Ontario)

Bad Hats Theatre

May 21 and 23, 2022 at 12:30pm, 2pm and 3:30pm, West Campus

Ages 6+

An immersive, theatrical scavenger hunt that takes audiences through the Harbourfront Centre grounds, weaving in and out of stories, puzzles, games and clues as they uncover the “secret of the harbour.” Created by Matt Pilipiak and Fiona Sauder, developed with the support of Harbourfront Centre.

### ***Rella’s Cambrian Dream (Prototype)*** (Toronto, Ontario)

The Rella Collective

May 21–23, 2022, at 12pm, 2pm and 4pm, North Garage Bays

Ages 6+

Follow Rella, a tiny lace–crab, on a journey to find a new home and learn about the community of creatures in her ocean. During this prototype, your smartphone transforms the world into an ancient sea. You become a researcher using story, song and technology to discover the first creatures on Earth from 508 million years ago. Blending live performance, audio play and augmented reality, *Rella’s Cambrian Dream* is a science-fantasy adventure.

### ***Wishes in the Wind*** (Toronto, Ontario)

Theatre Direct

May 21–23, 2022, at 11:30am, 1pm and 3:30pm, HarbourKids Tent, Avenue of Trees

Ages 4+

*Wishes in the Wind* is a soulful parade that captures the struggles and resilience of children. Kids are encouraged to make rocks with words of worry and flags with declarations of hope in an initial workshop and then parade them around the Harbourfront Centre campus. Originally created for the National Art Centre’s Grand Acts of Great Hope series.

## STORYTELLING

***Mon histoire est mon nom (My Story is My Name)*** (Toronto, Ontario)

Djennie Laguerre

May 21–23, 2022, at 11:30am, Miss Lou's Room

Ages 8–12

Presented in French by storyteller, actor and teaching artist Djennie Laguerre – aka Madame Bonheur – this storytelling workshop touches on listening to and telling stories to develop connection, communication and resilience within communities.

***TIFA @ JUNIOR 2022: Create Your Own Comics with Althea Balmes*** (Toronto, Ontario)

TIFA Kids

May 21–23, 2022, at 2:30pm, Miss Lou's Room

Ages 8+

Join multidisciplinary visual storyteller and artist Althea Balmes for an interactive workshop exploring the art of comic book creation, including top tips on what makes excellent visual storytelling.

**FREE EVENTS**

**MUSIC**

***Robot Dance Party*** (Montréal, Québec)

Kid Koala

May 21–23, 2022

Robot Build Party at 2pm, Market Tent B

Robot Dance Party at 3pm, Stage in the Park

Ages 5+

*Bleep! Blorp!* It's a robot dance party! Participants are invited to build their cardboard robot costumes (all materials provided) and then hit the dance floor to show their best robot moves as world-renowned DJ Kid Koala spins his favourite electro-vocoder tracks.

***Queer Songbook Orchestra Kids*** (Toronto, Ontario)

Queer Songbook Orchestra

May 21–23, 2022, at 3:30pm, Concert Stage

All ages

A playful orchestral concert that weaves together story and song, presented by a collaborative team of artists from the 2SLGBTQ+ community. The performance is an interactive exploration of identity and acceptance, intended to nurture understanding and inspire discussion, expression, love and acceptance.

***Flora*** (Montreal, Quebec)

May 21, 2022, at 12:15pm, Stage in the Park

All ages

Families will enjoy a mix of Mexican folkloric music, sweet francophone songs and few of Flora's own compositions. Sharing the stage with her father, this talented emerging singer-songwriter is sure to delight you with this vibrant performance.

***Lacey Hill*** (Six Nations of the Grand River Reservation, Ontario)

May 22, 2022, at 12:15pm, Stage in the Park

All ages

An engaging and multi-talented singer-songwriter, Lacey Hill (Oneida/Mohawk) presents her original Indigenous soul music with her band, after previously touring around the globe.

**All Nations Junior Drummers with First Fire Dance** (Toronto, Ontario)

Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre  
May 23, 2022, at 12:15pm, Stage in the Park  
All ages

Toronto Council Fire's All Nations Junior Drummers is a First Nations Pow Wow-style youth drum group that brings empowerment and identity to youth from many different nations and communities across Turtle Island, including Dakota, Ojibwe, Chippewa and Cree. The group is joined by First Fire Dance, which remix four dance styles: contemporary, break dancing, hip hop and traditional hoop dancing.

**STORYTELLING**

**Storytime with Fay and Fluffy** (Toronto, Ontario)

May 21–23, 2022, at 2:10pm, Market Tent C (ASL interpretation on May 23)  
All ages

Drag performers Fay Slift and Fluffy Soufflé return to JUNIOR for more storytelling fun, bigger and better than ever before! With culturally diverse books, a few off-key songs and a supportive and inclusive environment focused on fun, it's an event for all to enjoy. *Fay and Fluffy will also be the Stage in the Park hosts for the full festival weekend.*

**FILM**

**Transmit | Rahyne** (Turtle Island)

imagineNATIVE and Black Speculative Arts Movement (BSAM) Canada  
May 21–23, 2022, at 2:30pm and 4pm, Studio Theatre (post-show Q&A on May 21 at 3:30pm)  
Also available virtually at [harbourfrontcentre.com](http://harbourfrontcentre.com).  
Ages 6+

Transmit features five dynamic short films created by Indigenous filmmakers and presented at the 2021 imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival. An additional short film, *Rahyne*, is presented by Black Speculative Arts Movement Canada.

**DANCE**

**Japanese Yosakoi Dance Demo** (Toronto, Ontario)

Sakuramai Toronto  
May 21, 2022, at 4:30pm, Stage in the Park  
All ages

A lively Japanese Yosakoi-style dance performance and demonstration.

**Bollywood Dance Demo** (Toronto, Ontario)

Broken Dance  
May 22, 2022, at 4:30pm, Stage in the Park  
All ages

After their resounding success in 2019, Broken Dance is back with their infectious choreography that fuses South Asian and Western-style dance. The Bollywood-style dance company was a finalist on *Canada's Got Talent*.

**How It Feels to be Me** (Toronto, Ontario)

Bust A Move Dance  
May 21–23, 2022, at 11:15am, 1:30pm and 3:30pm, Market Tent A (ASL interpretation for May 23 workshops)  
All ages

Kids of all abilities are invited to join in a fun drop-in dance class to experience dance as a powerful vehicle to unleash their spirit and encourage independence, confidence, resilience and empowerment.

## **CIRCUS**

### ***Won'Ma Africa*** (Montréal, Québec)

Kalabanté Productions

May 21–23, 2022, at 1pm, Concert Stage

All ages

*Won'Ma Africa* is a virtuosic circus explosion accompanied by pulsating live music showcasing a diverse range of African artists. Set to a score of authentic African melodies, including instruments like the djembe (hand drum) and kora (like a lute), creator Yamoussa Bangoura and daring acrobats transport audiences to a mesmerizing world where traditional African arts meet contemporary North American circus performance.

### ***The Birds*** (Montréal, Québec)

Les Chasseurs de rêves (The Dream Hunters)

May 21–23, 2022, Roaming Harbourfront Centre's West campus

All ages

Great and graceful birds, escaped from a lost paradise, invite festivalgoers on a whirlwind journey of beauty, poetry and magic, immersing participants in their fanciful world.

### ***Circus! Circus!*** (Toronto, Ontario)

Marsha Kennington

May 21–23, 2022, 11am–6pm (Saturday and Sunday), 11am–5pm (Monday), South Lawn

All ages

In an introductory-level activity, kids and their adults are invited to work with highly experienced circus professionals and instructors to try out beams, hoops, and swings adapted for all ages and abilities.

## **ADDITIONAL PROGRAMMING**

### **Council Fire Tipi Showcase and Activity** (Toronto, Ontario)

Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre

May 21–23, 2022, 11am–6pm (Saturday and Sunday), 11am–5pm (Monday), Market Tent E

All ages

Listen to a storyteller share teachings about the Tipis (also known as a tepee). Traditionally made of animal skins and wooden poles, tipis are intended to protect the families within through the spirit of the trees and buffalo around them. The flap at the top is left open for smoke to escape and connect the people inside with the Sky World. Learn this and more, then make your own tipi to take home!

### **LEGO® Zone** (Denmark)

May 21–23, 2022, 11am–6pm (Saturday and Sunday), 11am–5pm (Monday), Market Tent D

Ages 4+

Everyone's favourite activity has landed at JUNIOR: Welcome to the LEGO® Zone! **Nordic Spotlight, part of Nordic Bridges.**

### **Commitment Clothesline** (Toronto, Ontario)

May 21–23, 2022, 11am–6pm (Saturday and Sunday), 11am–5pm (Monday), South Garage Bays

Ages 4+

Join Harbourfront Centre School Visits in this art-making activity that invites kids and their adults to design two

pieces of art expressing a message for environmental protection.

**Rockin' Robot Craft** (Toronto, Ontario)

May 21–23, 2022, 11am–6pm (Saturday and Sunday), 11am–5pm (Monday), Market Tent B  
Ages 4+

An accessible drop-in activity presented by Harbourfront School Visits, kids will have the chance to create their own rockin' robot figurine, with its own musical instrument.

In an introductory-level activity, kids and their adults are invited to work with highly experienced circus professionals and instructors to try out beams, hoops, and swings adapted for all ages and abilities.

Harbourfront Centre's health and safety protocols – in strict compliance with provincial health orders – can be viewed at: [harbourfrontcentre.com/covid](https://harbourfrontcentre.com/covid)

**About Harbourfront Centre**

Harbourfront Centre is a leading international centre for contemporary arts, culture and ideas, and a registered, charitable not-for-profit cultural organization operating a 10-acre campus on Toronto's central waterfront. Harbourfront Centre provides year-round programming 52 weeks a year, seven days a week, supporting a wide range of artists and communities. We inspire audiences and visitors with a breadth of bold, ambitious and engaging experiences. We champion contemporary Canadian artists throughout their careers, presenting them alongside international artists and fostering national and international artistic exchange between disciplines and cultures.

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**For further media information, contact**

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