

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 7, 2023

**Harbourfront Centre Presents the World Premiere of
Kaha:wi Dance Theatre's Powerful and Poetic New Work,
*Homelands***

***Toronto's contemporary Indigenous company premieres an
immersive multimedia experience featuring an interplay of projection,
live dance and music***

TORONTO, ON — Harbourfront Centre presents the world premiere of Kaha:wi Dance Theatre's ***Homelands***, a meditation on the connection between Indigenous women, their lands and waterways since time immemorial. On stage **April 14 and 15, 2023, at 7:30pm at Harbourfront Centre Theatre**, the performance is part of the international contemporary dance series Torque. Choreographed by celebrated Six Nations of the Grand River | Ohswé:ken dancer, choreographer and artistic director of Kaha:wi Dance Theatre, Santee Smith, the striking multimedia performance melds earthy and cinematic media, sound design and performance in celebration of the everlasting kinship connections between Onkwehón:we (people of the way of forever) on A'nowarà:ke (Turtle Island).

"We are honoured to present the world premiere of Kaha:wi Dance Theatre's latest work to Toronto audiences this spring," says Nathalie Bonjour, Director, Performing Arts at Harbourfront Centre. "Commissioned by Harbourfront Centre and developed through the support of a technical residency, *Homelands* is a stunning exploration of the lived experience of Indigenous women within their homelands and waterways. Internationally renowned for her powerful reimagining of Indigenous performing arts, Smith's body of work makes space for Indigenous voices and narratives to be represented on stage in a powerful and resonant live experience."

Journeying through the past from pre-colonial times to the present day, *Homelands* explores themes of environmental conservation, intergenerational ties and Indigenous resilience set within the homelands and waters of Kahnyen'kehàka territory / enhsenonhstate' of upper state New York and around Ohswé:ken (Six Nations of the Grand River). Featuring three Kahnyen'kehàka dancers, including Smith (Six Nations), Julianne Blackbird (Six Nations), and Feryn King (Akwasasne), as well as cinematic video projections and animations, *Homelands* creates an immersive world in which to express the strength and ingenuity of the many generations of Indigenous women who have cared for their lands, waterways, and, most importantly, for one another throughout history.

An Indigenous-led company, Kaha:wi Dance Theatre collaborates with many leading Indigenous creatives locally and internationally. Cinematography is captured by Shane Powless, Katsitsionni Fox, Jaiden Mitchell, Ian Maracle, Ami Kokui Tamakloe, and Santee Smith, with video design by Powless, as well as international Indigenous designer Louise Potiki Bryant. *Homelands* features an original, percussive score by composer and singer/songwriter Pura Fé, featuring the transcendent harmonies of Biine Kwe Elijah, Jennifer Kreisberg, and Santee Smith.

An internationally recognized leader in the performing arts, Smith is a multidisciplinary artist from the Kahnyen'kehàka (Mohawk) Nation and Turtle Clan from the Six Nations of the Grand River, Ontario. Following six years of training at Canada's National Ballet School, Smith studied theatre, psychology and dance at university before returning to dance as a choreographer in 1996 with her first dance work, *Kaha:wi*, a family creation story.

Smith later founded Kaha:wi Dance Theatre in 2005, which means “to carry” in the Kanien’kéha (Mohawk) language. Her programming fosters opportunities for creative exploration of Indigenous methodologies, celebrating the resurgence of Indigenous arts by actively promoting Indigenous voices and artistic practices. Through Kaha:wi Dance Theatre, Smith has developed 14 full-length productions and numerous short works which tour nationally and internationally. Her commissions include choreography for the National Arts Centre Orchestra, Canadian Opera Company, North American Indigenous Games and more.

As part of their contemporary dance series Torque, Harbourfront Centre will host a Torque Q&A immediately following the performance on April 15, 2023.

The *Homelands* premiere will also include a special matinee performance for schools on April 13, 2023 at 12:30pm.

For tickets and further information, please visit: harbourfrontcentre.com

About Harbourfront Centre (harbourfrontcentre.com)

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.

LISTING INFORMATION
Homelands

Harbourfront Centre presents Kaha:wi Dance Theatre’s

Dates: April 14 and 15, 2023, 7:30pm

Price: From \$20–\$59

Address: Harbourfront Centre Theatre
231 Queens Quay W.
Toronto

Box Office: harbourfrontcentre.com

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