

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Harbourfront Centre Invites Children of All Ages to Experience Curiosity and Adventure at Toronto's Beloved International Children's Festival, JUNIOR**

*Three-day festival enhances accessibility offerings with a wide variety of free, multidisciplinary and inclusive programming*

**TORONTO, ON** – Harbourfront Centre presents Toronto's annual international children's festival, **JUNIOR**, taking place over the May long weekend, from **May 20–22, 2023**. Featuring a full range of performances, workshops and inclusive events for the entire family, ticketed and free programming will take place at indoor and outdoor venues across Harbourfront Centre's 10-acre waterfront location. JUNIOR's 2023 programming invites children of all ages to step off the beaten path to discover the many adventures of growing up. Follow stories of resilience, revel in cultural celebrations and experience the limitless possibilities of movement and creativity, led by local and international artists and storytellers. JUNIOR is co-curated by **Nathalie Bonjour**, Harbourfront Centre's Director, Performing Arts and **Lisa Marie DiLiberto**, an award-winning director, advocate for artist caregivers and Artistic Director of Theatre Direct, one of Canada's leading theatres for young audiences.

"As we grow up, we explore the land on which we live, the stories that surround us, the cultures that educate and speak to us – in short, we discover who we are," says Lisa Marie DiLiberto, JUNIOR co-curator. "JUNIOR offers an unparalleled opportunity for children and their families to explore how expanding our minds and perspectives is life's greatest adventure. The artistically diverse and multidisciplinary festival line-up offers a wide range of free and accessible activities where children can make their own discoveries."

"We are thrilled to welcome back children and families to our annual JUNIOR Festival at Harbourfront Centre this May long weekend," adds Nathalie Bonjour, JUNIOR co-curator and Harbourfront Centre's Director, Performing Arts. "Our central mission is to make JUNIOR a welcoming space for young audiences to ask big questions about life and the world around them through the arts, while leaving lots of room for joy and fun! We are committed to our continued efforts to make the festival more accessible and we look forward to inviting both new and returning families to explore this transformative festival experience together."

Accessibility additions this year include a primarily free program line-up; accessible pricing on ticketed performances; a designated quiet zone; free, professional daycare for families who may need additional support and enhanced accessibility on May 21 on select programming, including ASL/DSL interpretation, audio description, tactile stations and a relaxed performance.

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, culinary arts, storytelling and film. Spotlight performances include the visually stunning **Pinocchio** from Copenhagen's award-winning **Teater Patasket**; the interactive performance **ZOOM**, inspired by the iconic children's book *Harold and The Purple Crayon*, from Australia's **Patch Theatre**; the participatory experience **Bees**, in which Australia's **Polyglot Theatre** will map delicate patterns across the festival grounds in collaboration with its young audiences and the moving video installation **Family Portrait** from Scotland's **Barrowland Ballet**, which follows Artistic Director Natasha Gilmore and her three children through choreographed sequences across Scotland's majestic landscapes.

Additional free programming includes a performance and interactive workshop from dancer and TV star Luca "Lazylegz" Patuelli; a daily parade from the eccentric and entertaining Lemon Bucket Orchestra; a food program from Black chefs commissioned to cook up creations with kids while sharing culinary and cultural knowledge; a giant, interactive map of the ocean; art workshops that explore the Humber River, learn about Tipis before crafting their own, and collaborate on an eye-catching banner; a Jam Zone where kids can try out an array of instruments

including mandolins, banjos and more alongside musicians; demonstrations from Indigenous pow wow dancers, a Persian percussion ensemble and so much more!

JUNIOR's indoor ticketed performances range from \$10 (child) to \$20 (adult) per ticket. Pre-registration is required for some of the festival's free programming, including *Storybook Search* and the Noir Experience culinary workshops. **To learn more about programming and for tickets**, visit [HarbourfrontCentre.com](https://www.harbourfrontcentre.com).

## **JUNIOR FESTIVAL PROGRAMMING:**

### **TICKETED EVENTS**

#### ***Pinocchio*** (Denmark)

Teater Patrasket

May 20–22, 2023 at 1pm, Harbourfront Centre Theatre

Ages 8+

Revisit this well-known tale about the puppet who has to learn to become human and his dangerous journey in a world full of odd characters, temptations and deceptions. A wild, visually stunning and music-filled take on the classic story, with stylized puppetry and humour from Teater Patrasket, Copenhagen's renowned touring theatre company since 1985.

#### ***ZOOM*** (Australia)

Patch Theatre

May 20–21, 2023 at 3pm / May 22, 2023 at 3:30pm, Fleck Dance Theatre

Ages 3+

Unable to sleep, a child goes on an imaginary adventure throughout the universe. Using original music, lasers and projections, *ZOOM* brings the audience on an adventure to help a lost star find its way home. In this immersive experience, audiences are invited to "[bring a piece of dark](#)" from home, to exchange for their own personal light upon arrival. From Patch Theatre, Adelaide's professional theatre for young people and their families since 1972.

### **FREE EVENTS**

#### **PARTICIPATORY THEATRE**

#### ***Bees*** (Australia)

Polyglot Theatre

May 20–22, 2023 at Various Times, Garage Bay and surrounding West Campus

All ages

Inspired by the mysterious life and work of bees, Polyglot Theatre's *Bees* is an interactive experience that explores a buzzing, humming hive of activity, as three human-sized bees busy themselves in the creation of a community alongside children who transform into bees as they play. Polyglot Theatre is a world-renowned contemporary theatre company based in Melbourne, Australia, and is working in partnership with Inlet Dance Theatre to deliver this season.

#### ***Storybook Search*** (Ontario)

Bad Hats Theatre

May 20–22, 2023 at 11:30am and 2:30pm, Garage Bay (home base); Ontario Square & Canada Square (performance)

All ages (pre-registration required)

*Storybook Search* is an immersive, theatrical scavenger hunt that takes audiences through Harbourfront Centre, weaving in and out of stories, games and clues as you join with a group of friends to unlock the "Secret of the Harbour." A hybrid of music, story and puzzles from Toronto's Dora Award-winning Bad Hats Theatre.

## FILM & VIDEO

### ***Family Portrait*** (United Kingdom)

Barrowland Ballet

May 20–22, 2023 at Various Times, Artport Gallery

All ages (max. capacity of 20 per showing)

An interactive video installation across four screens brings striking cinematography and choreography together. The installation captures Barrowland Ballet's Artistic Director Natasha Gilmore with her three children in an intimate portrayal of family life throughout Scotland's many different landscapes and seasons. Barrowland Ballet is one of Scotland's most exciting and successful contemporary dance companies.

### ***Finding the Spirits Short Films Program*** (Ontario)

imagineNATIVE

May 20–22, 2023, at Various Times, Studio Theatre

All ages

Experience in-person or online this series of new short films about young Indigenous identity by imagineNATIVE, the world's largest presenter of Indigenous screen content. imagineNATIVE is recognized around the world for excellence and innovation in programming, and as the global centre for Indigenous film and media arts.

## DANCE

### ***No Excuses No Limits – Performance*** (Quebec)

Luca "Lazylegz" Patuelli/ILL-Abilities

May 20 & 21 & 22, 2023 at 12:30pm, Stage in the Park

All ages

Montreal's Luca "Lazylegz" Patuelli has been dancing (B-boying) since he was 15, developing a unique dance style that incorporates his crutches and the strength in his arms, leading to worldwide recognition. Lazylegz has been featured on *Ellen*, *So You Think You Can Dance Canada*, *America's Got Talent* and more. Experience this amazing hip-hop performer's contagious energy through his "no excuses, no limits" life philosophy.

### ***Everyone Can Dance – Workshop*** (Quebec)

Luca "Lazylegz" Patuelli/ILL-Abilities

May 22, 2023 at 2pm, Market Tent B

All ages

A workshop for people of all ages, all abilities and all different skill levels, led by Luca "Lazylegz" Patuelli. Luca's workshops help raise awareness of the importance of adaptations, and he teaches distinctive techniques for participants to apply what they learned in his workshops in their daily life.

### ***Bollywood Dance Demo*** (Ontario)

Broken Dance

May 20, 2023 at 5pm, Stage in the Park

All ages

Specializing in Bollywood, hip hop, fusion, classical Indian dance and Bhangra, Broken Dance is back with its infectious choreography that fuses South Asian and Western-style dance. The Bollywood-style dance company was a finalist on *Canada's Got Talent*.

**Japanese Yosakoi Dance Demo** (Ontario)

Sakuramai Toronto

May 21, 2023 at 5pm, Stage in the Park

All ages

A lively Japanese Yosakoi-style dance performance and demonstration from Sakuramai, which has performed at community events in Toronto and Montreal since 2008.

**All Nations Juniors + First Fire Dance** (Ontario)

Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre

May 22, 2023 at 4pm, Stage in the Park

All ages

Toronto Council Fire's All Nations Juniors 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 remixes four dance styles: contemporary, break dancing, hip hop and traditional hoop dancing.

**MUSIC**

**49 Going on 50** (Ontario)

Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra

May 20, 2023 at 11am, at Concert Stage

All ages

Listen to young talented musicians open the festival at Harbourfront Centre's big outdoor stage, and celebrate the Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra (TSYO) as it concludes its 49th season. Hear the best highlights of the TSYO through the turbulent music of Beethoven's Coriolan Overture and Brahms' Tragic Overture, followed by De Falla's El Amor Brujo telling the stories of love.

**Lemon Bucket Orkestra** (Ontario)

May 20–21, 2023 at 2:30pm (performance) and 4:30pm (parade) / May 22, 2023 at 12pm (parade) and 2pm (performance), Concert Stage (performance); roaming campus (parade)

All ages

Toronto's original guerilla-folk super band brings its 12-piece, genre-bending music back to JUNIOR for a dance-your-socks-off live show and parade. Mixing their self-described Klezmer, Gypsy and Party Punk styles into raucous performances, Lemon Bucket Orkestra has toured worldwide.

**Naghmeh Percussion Ensemble** (Iran; Ontario)

May 22, 2023 at 11am, Stage in the Park

All ages

A performance of rhythmic pieces on Tonbak (Iranian goblet drum) and Daf (Iranian frame drum), including a demonstration of the effects and techniques of hand drumming, along with some popular Iranian classical and folk music played on Tar (Iranian long-necked lute) with accompanying vocals. Naghmeh Farahmand is a Persian percussionist who has performed with many well-known Iranian traditional bands in Iran and festivals worldwide and has been a performer and instructor in Canada since 2010.

**CIRCUS**

**A Simple Space** (Australia)

Gravity & Other Myths

May 20–22 at 3pm, South Lawn  
All ages

From one of Australia's most acclaimed circus companies comes *A Simple Space*, which brings the thrill of seven acrobats pushing their physical limits up close and personal. Audiences are brought in close to surround the stripped-back stage, evoking visceral reactions. Supported by live percussion, this performance is simultaneously raw, frantic and delicate.

## STORYTELLING

### **Fay & Fluffy's Storytime** (Ontario)

Fay and Fluffy

May 20–21, 2023 at 2pm / May 22, 2023 at 2:30pm, Tent C

All ages

Drag stars Fay Slift and Fluffy Soufflé have been doing drag story times across Toronto and beyond since 2016. Through a supportive and inclusive environment focused on fun, culturally diverse books, songs and lots of laughs, Fay and Fluffy welcome everyone to enjoy storytime together.

## CULINARY ARTS

### **Noir Experience Food Workshops** (Ontario)

May 20–21, 2023 at 12pm and 3:30pm / May 22, 2023 at 12pm and 3pm, Lakeside Terrace

All ages (pre-registration required)

Noir Experience is a Black chef collective showcasing the cuisine of the Black diaspora, from the Caribbean to Africa. The collective partners with local businesses, artists and musicians to create unique culinary experiences.

**May 20:** Chef Latonya Bentley (Jamaica) – Quiche Florentine with Plantain and Different Garnishes

**May 21:** Chef Adisa Glasgow (Trinidad & Tobago) – Trinidadian Doubles

**May 22:** Chef Yohannes Asres (Ethiopia) – Lentil Sambusa

### **About Harbourfront Centre** ([harbourfrontcentre.com](http://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**

### **Harbourfront Centre presents JUNIOR**

Dates:

May 20–22, 2023

Price:

Ticketed Events \$10 (children) to \$18/\$20 (adult)

Additional FREE programming (pre-registration sometimes required)

Venues:

Various venues at Harbourfront Centre  
235 Queens Quay West  
Toronto, ON

Tickets & Website:

[HarbourfrontCentre.com](http://HarbourfrontCentre.com)

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