

Harbourfront centre

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Harbourfront Centre Presents Toronto Premiere of Elle Sofe Sara's Potent Work on Indigenous Reclamation and Identity in *Vástádus eana – The Answer Is Land*

Sámi choreographer Elle Sofe Sara's work inspired by spiritual practices and environmental activism

Toronto, ON — Harbourfront Centre presents the Toronto premiere of the politically-charged and spiritually-centred work, *Vástádus eana – The Answer Is Land*, on stage **March 6 and 7, 2024**, at **7:30pm** at **Fleck Dance Theatre** - as part of its **2023/24 international contemporary dance series, Torque**. Choreographed by **Elle Sofe Sara**, the full-length work is a powerful exploration and reclamation of Sámi cultural identity, community and kinship between people and nature.

Vástádus eana – The Answer Is Land speaks to the near-total oppression the Sámi people have experienced through the residential school system, suppressing their native language and cultural heritage. The work embodies an essential message on the formative attachments built through community and culture and offers a return to dignity, healing and the possibility of a new relationship between the Sámi people and the natural world.

“We’re honoured to present this significant work, coming off its international tour, and now here in Canada,” says Nathalie Bonjour, Director, Performing Arts at Harbourfront Centre. “This piece seeks to amplify the long-repressed voices of the Sámi people, inviting audiences to participate in the performers’ healing and restorative journey.”

Hailed by NRK – Norway’s public broadcaster – as “powerful in a quiet yet magnificent way,” *Vástádus eana – The Answer Is Land* is choreographed as a theatrical concert, beginning outside in Ontario Square, taking the audience through a protest before the cast and audience will travel together into Fleck Dance Theatre for the remainder of the show.

On stage, seven women performers, dressed in traditional headwear, will combine ritualized movement with polyphonic yoiks (traditional mountain songs) backed by the hypnotic rhythms of composer **Frode Fjellheim**. Co-choreography is by **Alexandra Wingate**, dramaturge by **Thomas Schaupp**, costume design by **Line Maher**, set design by **Elin Melberg** and light design by **Øystein Heitmann**.

Hailing from Guovdageaidnu, Norway, Elle Sofe Sara is a choreographer, director and filmmaker. Sara’s work uncovers a space in which the past and the present coincide, giving voice to often overlooked areas of Sámi physicality and unspoken rituals. She has collaborated internationally with artists in China, Finland, and Greenland, among others. She is also the co-founder of DÁIDDADÁLLU,

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a Sámi contemporary art collective. She holds an MA in choreography from the Oslo Academy of Arts and studied dance at the LabanTrinity School in London, UK.

A Q&A will follow the performance on March 7, which will be hosted by Nicole Inica Hamilton.

To purchase tickets and for more information about *Vástádus eana – The Answer Is Land* and the complete Torque 2023/24 season, please visit [HarbourfrontCentre.com](https://www.harbourfrontcentre.com).

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 10-acres 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.

About Torque

Torque is Harbourfront Centre's international contemporary dance series, inviting audiences to immerse themselves in the world of exceptional contemporary dance performed by artists from both international and Canadian backgrounds. Since its inception in 2018, Torque has been presenting an annual season featuring five to six performances, taking place from October to May. These performances are thoughtfully curated to showcase the talents of internationally diverse and Indigenous choreographers. Torque further extends its support to Toronto choreographers through commissions, residencies and presentations, nurturing the creation of new dance works. Through the expressive medium of dance, Torque initiates meaningful conversations surrounding our histories, lands, cultures and traditions.

LISTING INFORMATION

Harbourfront Centre presents Elle Sofe Sara's *Vástádus eana – The Answer Is Land*

Dates:	March 6 and 7, 2024 at 7:30pm
Ticket Prices:	\$29–\$79
Address:	Fleck Dance Theatre, 207 Queens Quay West (3rd Floor)
Box Office:	HarbourfrontCentre.com
Website:	HarbourfrontCentre.com

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