



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CANADA’S KAHA:WI DANCE THEATRE DEBUTS IN AUSTRALIA

Toronto... Kaha:wi Dance Theatre, the contemporary Aboriginal dance company founded in 2005 by Santee Smith (Mohawk, Turtle Clan) of Six Nations Reserve, Ontario, Canada makes its premiere debut in Australia at **The Dreaming Festival** with performances from June 12 - 14th, 2010. Set in the cultural parkland of Woodfordia, an hour north of Brisbane, The Dreaming is a four night and three day annual multidisciplinary Indigenous arts festival.

KDT is honoured to perform alongside a diverse program of International and Australian Indigenous acts. The company will offer masterclasses and Artistic Director Santee Smith will participate in a panel discussion on the future of Aboriginal dance. The Festival is also screening a short documentary about the making of *Kaha:wi*: “*Kaha:wi*: A Dancing Culture.”

Saturday, June 12		Sunday, June 13		Monday, June 14	
8:00 pm	Performance	6:30 pm	Performance	3:40 pm	Performance
2:45 pm	Masterclass	3:15 pm	Masterclass		
1:15pm	FUTURE TRACKS				
10:35pm	Kaha:wi: A Dancing Culture				

Kaha:wi, which in Mohawk means, “she carries,” is a story of the cycle of life told from an Iroquois perspective. Steeped in tradition-based song and the fusion choreography that marks Santee Smith’s style, *Kaha:wi* tells the story of three generations of women and their community. Smith’s choreography draws inspiration from Iroquoian social dances such as the Gada:trot (Standing Quiver Dance or Stomp Dance), Ehsga:nye:gae:nase: (New Women’s Shuffle Dance), Gayowaga:yoh (Old Mocassin Dance) and the Wa enoti:yo (Stick Dance). Canadian critics have called *Kaha:wi* “**a ravishing mix of styles and spirits**” (Paula Citron, Globe and Mail, 2004) and “**sensual and powerful**” (Susan Walker, Toronto Star, 2004).

To purchase programmes, discounted tickets and view the full programme, go to: <http://www.thedreamingfestival.com> or call +61 07 5496 1066.

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High res photos available for download at
www.kahawidance.org/press.html



FACT SHEET: KAHA:WI DANCE THEATRE

HISTORY

Kaha:wi Dance Theatre (pronounced Ga-HA-Wee) is an artist based company founded by Artistic Director/choreographer Santee Smith (Mohawk, Turtle Clan) and incorporated as a not for profit charitable organization in 2005. KDT creates professional contemporary dance work. Through the work of the company, KDT is committed to increasing awareness and understanding of Aboriginal culture. Kaha:wi Dance Theatre's Artistic Director has become known for her seamless fusion of traditional movement style and contemporary dance elements.

STATEMENT FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Kaha:wi means "she carries" in the Mohawk language. The name Kaha:wi is an ancient traditional name of my family. It is thousands of years old and it was the name of my maternal grandmother and is also the name of my daughter. This name Kaha:wi will be passed on to other individuals in my family for generations to come. The name is timeless...it spans past, present, future. It has sacredness attached to it and the connection to indigenous history. In the generic form, Kaha:wi means "to carry". Therefore, the name implies a connection to ancient Mohawk family ways and the action of carrying. This in a sense is what the organization does carrying culture through dance and dance related activities. It connects to the past, present and future perpetuating the idea of the continuous cycling universe. Creativity and the continuation of cultural knowledge and practice is the foundation of my artistic expression.

KDT's repertoire include several major choreographic works including *A Story Before Time*, *Kaha:wi*, *A Soldier's Tale* and *Here On Earth*. In 2007 and 2008, KDT produced new works: *A Constellation of Bones*, *The Threshing Floor*, *Sacred Spring*, *A Soldier's Tale* (in collaboration with the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra and Theatre Aquarius), *Tripped Up Blues* (a commissioned work for Aboriginal Youth Dancers), and a retelling of the Iroquois Creation Story for young audiences, *A Story Before Time*. The company has completed successful tours of *Here On Earth*, *The Threshing Floor*, *Kaha:wi* and *A Story Before Time* nationally and internationally. In addition to touring and performing, the company offers workshops on Iroquois movement and, in 2009, KDT launched their first ever intensive training program, designed as multi-week annual program to provide aspiring professional dancers with a means of deepening their knowledge of indigenous dance aesthetics. KDT also produces the Living Ritual: World Indigenous Dance Festival, the only festival in Canada to celebrate and promote Indigenous dance.

MISSION/ VISION

Our vision is to be a dynamic force in Aboriginal dance in Canada and a centre for creativity, innovation, artistry and Aboriginal expression that reflects, honours and celebrates the integrity of Aboriginal culture.



Our mission is to create, present and promote Aboriginal artistic expression to diverse audiences through the genre of dance and its associated disciplines of music, storytelling, theatre and design, drawing inspiration from contemporary and traditional Aboriginal dance forms.

***Kaha:wi* has been performed at the following venues: (brief selection listed)**

- 2010** *Kaha:wi* International Tour: 2nd Cultural Indigenous Festival, *Puebla, Mexico*; Two Worlds/Global Dance Fest, North Fourth Arts Center, *Albuquerque, New Mexico*
- 2009** *Kaha:wi* presented by Yokohama Arts Foundation at the Red Brick Warehouse, *Yokohama, Japan*
- Kaha:wi* excerpts presented at the “Opening Spectacle” for Planet IndigenUS Festival, Harbourfront Centre, *Toronto, Ontario*
- Kaha:wi* excerpts presented at Dusk Dances and Dancing on The Edge Festival, Queen Elizabeth Park, *Vancouver, British Columbia*; Chalkham Farm, *Toronto, Ontario*;
- 2007** *Kaha:wi* solo at the Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park, *Siksika Nation, Alberta*
- 2005** *Kaha:wi* presented by Canada Post’s National Aboriginal Day Celebrations, *Ottawa, Ontario*
- Kaha:wi* duet produced by CanDance Network’s Indigenous Dancelands Exchange, presented by Peterborough New Dance, *Peterborough, Ontario*; Tangente, *Montreal, Quebec*; New Dance Horizons, *Regina, Saskatchewan*; University of Lethbridge, *Lethbridge, Alberta*
- 2005** *Kaha:wi* on the **Yoh ha hee yoh International Tour** presented at The Banff Centre for the Arts, Margaret Greenham Theatre, *Banff, Alberta*; High Performance Rodeo, Vertigo Playhouse, *Calgary, Alberta*; Sanderson Centre, *Brantford, Ontario*; Centre for the Arts, Brock University, *St. Catharines, Ontario*; National Museum of American Indian, Smithsonian Institute, *Washington, D.C.*; Hartwick College’s Slade Theatre, *Oneonta, New York*
- 2004** *Kaha:wi* presented by the Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards at the John Basset Theatre, Metro Toronto Convention Centre, *Toronto, Ontario*
- Kaha:wi* experiences its Premiere at the Premiere Dance Theatre, Harbourfront, Centre, *Toronto, Ontario*



BIOGRAPHIES OF THE CREATIVE TEAM

SANTEE SMITH

Artistic Director/Choreographer/ Dancer

Santee Smith is a member of the Mohawk Nation, Turtle Clan from Six Nations, Ontario. She is the founding Artistic Director of Kaha:wi Dance Theatre, which performs nationally and internationally. Santee was an integral member of the Aboriginal Dance Project, Chinook Winds at the Banff Centre for the Arts, 1997-2001. In 1996 she began creating and performing her choreography, which now includes works such as *Kaha:wi, Here On Earth, Midwinter Dreaming, A Constellation of Bones, The Threshing Floor, A Soldier's Tale, and A Story Before Time*. *A Story Before Time* was recently nominated for a Dora Mayor Award in two categories. Santee is the founder of *Living Ritual: World Indigenous Dance Festival*. She is the recipient of the K.M. Hunter Award for dance from Ontario Arts Council, the Victor Martyn-Lynch Staunton Award for mid-career artistic achievement and was the recipient of the first John Hobday Award for Excellence in Arts Administration from the Canada Council for the Arts.

EMILY LAW

Dancer

Emily Law was born in Toronto and started dancing while attending the Etobicoke School of the Arts in 2000. She has many passions including contemporary dance, various styles of street dance, and visual art. She is a graduate of The School of Toronto Dance Theatre, where she formed two collectives. One with Masuyo Higashide, and Jennifer Lécuyer called cube3 and another called Octamerous. She is also a founding member of the Toronto house dance crew Warehouse Jacks and the street dance/ theatre dance company Gadfly. These past few years Emily has Enjoyed working with Kaha:wi Dance Theatre, The Chimera Project, the Parahumans Dance Theatre, Event Horizon Dance, Piotr Biernat and was a resident artists at Sound Travels 2006.

ROBERT B. HALLEY

Dancer

Robert Halley was raised in Unionville , Ontario . His professional training occurred at the School of Toronto Dance Theatre, Arts Umbrella in Vancouver, The Ailey School in NYC, and The School at Jacob's Pillow. From 2002-04 he toured the USA and Caribbean with the Alvin Ailey Repertory Ensemble (AILEY II). In NYC he also danced for Fred Benjamin and Adams Company Dance. Musical Theatre credits include, the Radio City Christmas Spectacular, Copacabana, the Lion King (London, UK), and Cats. He performed works by Roberto Campanella, Robert Glumbek, David Earle, Allen and Karen Kaeja, Kathleen Rea, and Wen Wei Wang. Robert also practices numerous holistic arts such as Nuad Boran, Jin Shin Jyutsu, Spiritual Journey, Life Coaching, and is currently in Kundalini Yoga Teacher's Training.



ARLO BASKIER-NABESS

Dancer

Arlo is a professional modern dancer who comes from Winnipeg, Manitoba. She is Métis from the Cree nation. She graduated from the School of Contemporary Dancers Professional Program in May of 2008. Arlo began dancing at the age of four and has trained in many styles of dance including modern, ballet, jazz and hip hop. Upon graduation she had the opportunity to perform at the Canada Dance Festival in Ottawa along with her graduating class. In December 2004, Arlo performed in Stephanie Ballard's "A Christmas Carol" held in Winnipeg. Her most recent projects include a dance role in the Flin Flon Choir's production of "Evita" the musical and participation at the Indigenous Choreographer's Summit and dance residency in Banff, Alberta, where she worked with choreographers Santee Smith (Toronto), Gaetan Gingras (Montreal), Neil Ieremia (New Zealand) and Frances Rings (Australia). Arlo has recently danced with KDT at their premiere performance in Japan, in the Fall of 2009, as well as in Albuquerque, New Mexico in Spring of 2010.

ROELOF PETER (RON) SNIPPE

Original Lighting Design

Ron Snippe began his professional lighting design career with Toronto Workshop Productions under the direction of George Luscombe. In 1973 he began a long working relationship with the Toronto Dance Theatre creating designs for over one hundred and fifty works in the repertoire. Over his long, distinguished career as a lighting designer, stage manager, and technical director, Mr. Snippe has worked with major dance, theatre, and opera companies across Canada and abroad. They include The National Ballet of Canada, The Danny Grossman Dance Company, Dancemakers, and numerous other Canadian companies and independent artists including, Tedd Robinson, Denise Fujiwara, Claudia Moore and Lata Pada.

CHERYL LALONDE

Original Costume Design

Born and raised in Toronto, Cheryl Lalonde began her career in the arts with Act IV Theatre at Adelaide Court. After two years backstage at Toronto Workshop Productions her design debut was for the premiere production of Thompson Highway's The Rez Sisters under mentor Larry Lewis (director). Splitting her time between stage management and design has allowed her to travel the world as well as collaborate with many companies, including Desrosiers Dance Theatre, The Danny Grossman Dance Company, CORPUS, Eclectic Theatre, The Alberta Ballet, Theatre Smith Gilmour, and Kaeja d'Dance. Ms. Lalonde has been nominated for four Dora Mavor Moore Awards for design and was honoured in 1997 for her design of Eclectic Theatre's Chutzpah a-go-go.



ALAINA PERTTULA
Tour Lighting Designer/Production Stage Manager

Alaina is excited to be working with Kaha:wi Dance Theatre again! She has been working in theatre and dance steadily since 2004. She received her BFA in Theatre - Technical Production from Ryerson Theatre School in 2006 and has kept very busy working in dance, theatre and live entertainment as a stage manager/lighting designer/technician. Recent dance and theatre shows include Lighting Designer for *gas* (Next Stage Theatre Festival) and *dust* (Wildside Festival – Centaur Theatre Montreal) with jsquared Theatre projects, LD/ASM for the Canadian tour of *A Story Before Time* (Kaha:wi Dance Theatre), Lighting Design for *The Corner* and *dust* (2007-08 jsquared Productions). In 2010, Alaina has worked as PSM/LD for Kaha:wi Dance Theatre's International Mixed Programme Tour, as well as LD/SM for *The Sneak* (Blue Ceiling Dance) and Desiraeda Dance Theatre's spring show.