



Kaha:wi Dance Theatre Celebrates Its 15th Anniversary

June 23, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Six Nations/Toronto, ON - Kaha:wi Dance Theatre has reached a milestone and is thrilled to announce the celebration of our 15th Anniversary. The 15th Anniversary celebrations will take place throughout the year with an online retrospective, including performance streaming, artist talks and photo series.

Founded in June 2005 by Six Nations own, Kahnyen'kehàka Artistic Director, Producer and Artist Santee Smith / Tekaronhiáhkwa, Kaha:wi Dance Theatre is one of Canada's foremost performing arts companies. The translation of Kaha:wi from Kanien'kéha is "to carry" and is a traditional name within Smith's family. Renowned nationally and around the globe for exquisitely produced, powerful and transformative performances, the company represents Indigenous presence: body, voice and creative force.

Santee Smith has been the driving and creative force behind the company and explains, "Kaha:wi Dance Theatre's works are interdisciplinary, intergenerational and inter-cultural. Our performances question, re-story, centre Indigenous experience and truth. Honouring Indigenous artistic and cultural process, connection to land, story and spirit of place, we transform, educate and uplift."

Due to COVID-19, the company has postponed most of the upcoming 2020/2021 Season's live performances and welcomes this time of seeding new ideas, being in a creation and reflection mode. As a part of the 15th Anniversary, Kaha:wi Dance Theatre will be sharing a live stream performance of *Blood Water Earth* at Celebration of Nations, FirstON Performing Arts Centre on September 12, 2020.

Over an artistically generative and inspired 15 years, Kaha:wi Dance Theatre's body of work includes productions, commissions, co-productions and touring. Major productions include: *Here On Earth* (2005); *The Threshing Floor* (2006 co-choreography with Michael Greyeyes, co-presentation Indigenous Performance Initiatives, Trent University); *A Constellation of Bones* (2007) - international Indigenous collaboration New Zealand; *A Story Before Time* (2007) co-production, Banff Centre for Arts & Creativity; *A Soldier's Tale* (2008) commission, Theatre Aquarius; *Susuriwka – willow bridge* (2011) co-production, Yokohama Arts Foundation, Planet IndigenUS/Harbourfront Centre; *Medicine Bear* (2011) co-production, Woodland Cultural Centre; *TransMigration* (2012) co-production, Planet IndigenUS/Harbourfront Centre; *The Honouring* (2013) commission City of Toronto, Fort York; *NeoIndigenA* (2014) solo performance; *Re-Quickening* (2016) triptych series international Indigenous collaboration; *Blood Tides* (2018) triptych series

international Indigenous collaboration and *Blood, Water Earth* (2018). The company remounts and tours Smith's independent works *Kaha:wi* (2004) and *The Mush Hole* (2018). KDT short works include: *Sacred Spring* (2006) commission The Orchestra of Brantford; *Tripped Up Blues* (2009) - Indigenous youth commission, Canada Dance Festival; *The Creator's Game* (2011) co-production with Public Energy, O'Kaadenigan Wiingashk; *Tkaronto Bounce* - commission Toronto2015, Pan Am Games (2015); *Powwow Bounce* (2016); *Kinship* (2017) youth commission for Celebration of Nations, FirstON Performing Arts Centre. Upcoming productions include: *Skén:nen* (2021) and *Homelands* (2021/2022).

KDT has been recognized for its artistic contributions with nominations and awards including TAPA's Dora Mavor Moore Award nominations in various categories for the productions *A Story Before Time* (2009), *TransMigration* (2012), *Susuriwka ~ willow bridge* (2013); *The Honouring* and *NeolndigenA* (2014). Santee Smith is the recipient of a Dora Mavor Moore Award for Best Choreography – *Susuriwka ~ willow bridge*. In 2019, *Blood Tides* won two Dora Mavor Moore Awards for Outstanding Production and Outstanding Performance Ensemble in Dance. This Friday June 29, 2020, Kaha:wi Dance Theatre and presenter Young People's Theatre will be tuning into the 2020 Dora Mavor Moore Awards - Virtual Edition to celebrate *The Mush Hole's* 6 nominations in the category of Theatre for Young Audiences.

Kaha:wi Dance Theatre acknowledges and extends Nia:wen / thank you to our core company sponsors; Canada Council for the Arts, Ontario Arts Council and the Toronto Arts Council. The company acknowledges past sponsors including the K.M Hunter Foundation and performing arts presentation partners such as Ontario Presents and CAPACOA. Thank you to all of the staff, board members, collaborators, audiences, friends and family for contributing to our 15 years of notable growth and meaningful interconnections.

Kaha:wi Dance Theatre's Board of Directors demonstrates exemplary Indigenous leadership. Board President Janis Monture states, "For the past 15 years Kaha:wi Dance Theatre has redefined Indigenous choreography. It is a pleasure to see the vision of Santee Smith come alive on stage through Indigenous narratives and movement. The Board of Directors looks forward to another exciting 15 years for the company."

Kaha:wi Dance Theatre is charitable organization and seeks public support to foster the development of our vision and emerging youth artists. 15th Anniversary donations can be made online at [Canada Helps](#).

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