



## **St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association Community Meeting**

**Held on Wednesday, June 29, 2022 from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.**

**Hosted on the Zoom Videoconferencing Platform**

Vice-President Marketing Sharon McMillan welcomed community members and delegates to the June 2022 June SLNA Community Meeting.

### **TO Live Presents 2022 Program – Fall**

**Any questions – please contact [www.tolife.com](http://www.tolife.com)**

Josephine Ridge, Vice-President of Programming, explained the purpose of TO Live as amplifying the role of performance spaces as a force for social engagement, cultural exchange and creative innovation. It reveals their meaning and explores their implications in a tangible and impactful way that actively connects us with the public, with artists and arts organizations, as well as with our many partners, supporters and stakeholders. TO Live is focused on the role that they can play as contributors to the communities in which they are located.

The priorities they have in order to fulfill that purpose are the following:

- A distinctive, relevant and inspirational season of Canadian and international work with local resonance
- Reflecting TO Live's commitment to Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access
- Creative support and presentation opportunities for local artists in Toronto, and providing pathways for them in order to achieve their potential

- Partnerships and collaboration
- Events and activities that promote community engagement and discussion
- Continued progress towards a holistic approach to TO Live venues as fully activated community cultural centres

Our dream for Meridian Hall and the St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts is that they transition into true community cultural centres that are loved, enjoyed and useful for the residents for the St. Lawrence neighbourhood.

To achieve that aim we work hard to understand the needs, desires and aspirations of the residents and to respond with activities and programs that are relevant, inspirational and compelling. The range is from pure entertainment and fun to educational content.

**Svaha! Bluma Appel Theatre, September 16-18.** Tickets are now on sale, and they will be presenting the world premiere of Svaha!. This is the creation of a local dancer/choreographer named Nova Bhattacharya and TO Live has been supporting the development of this ambitious piece of work for the last three to four years. The creative team of the 23 dancers embodies diversity. While Nova's heritage is South Indian, Svaha! is also in many ways a contemporary piece.

**Rite of Spring/Common Ground(s) - Meridian Hall, October 14-15** is a double bill, the result of the collaboration of a contemporary dance company called Ecole des Sables based in Senegal and the Pina Bausch Foundation devoted to maintaining the legacy of the work of German Pina Bausch who was one of the greatest choreographers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and Sadler's Wells in London, a really important centre of dance in the U.K. It will be performed by 32 dancers from 14 African countries which have been brought together by this collaborative effort. Common Ground(s) was created by Ecole des Sables' Artistic Director Germaine Acogny, often called the Mother of African Dance, together with Malou Airaud from the Pina Bausch Foundation.

**Kid Koala – The Storyville Mosquito and World of Bugs – Bluma Appel – October 20 – 23.** Kid Koala is a multi-talented Montreal-based artist, as well as a DJ, a filmmaker, a theatre producer and creator, and in this instance he is besotted with mosquitos. This is puppetry captured in life film, with live music led by Kid Koala. It is accompanied by a **workshop program called World of Bugs – St. Lawrence Centre Rehearsal Hall, October 16** and there will be three workshop sessions, appropriate for kids 10 years and up and the kids get the opportunity to create their own film.

**Joker - Live in Concert – TO Live Orchestra & Film – Meridian Hall – November 17 – 18.** This will be an astonishing and riveting cinematic experience, the film came out in 2019.

**Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows – Meridian Hall – December 1 – 3.** Live Orchestra and Film, with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra playing the score.

A new production - **Trey Anthony – ‘Da Kink In My Hair – co-presented with the Soulpepper Theatre Company – Bluma Appel – December 6 – 23.** Trey Anthony is a local playwright and musician and was first seen in the Toronto Fringe Festival and in Mirvish Theatres, this will be its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. There is a live band on stage for this production.

In addition to the shows on stage we provide a lot of residencies and workshops, we provide research opportunities and rehearsal space and are prepared to throw open our doors to the public as much as we can.

### **Rachel Robbins, TO Live Director of Education and Engagement – Upcoming Events**

**Presented by TO Live and Nova Dance in partnership with Baycrest@Home – Discover Dance.** Free monthly lunch-hour presentations featuring local dance artists.

Editions:

- In-person at Meridian Hall
- Livestream for general public
- Livestream for older adults with memory changes – registration is via Baycrest@Home

**Wed, July 13:** Raoul Wilkie

**Fri, July 15 and Sat, Julie 16:** Nova Dance, David Crombie Park

**Wed, August 17:** Irma Villfuerte

**Wed, September 21:** Dhruv Naik

**Wed, October 19:** Sam & Mel

**Wed, November 16:** Belle Jumelles

**Wed, December 14:** Ravyn Wngz

### **Xenia Concerts in partnership with TO Live**

Free, family-friendly relaxed performances geared towards neurodiverse audiences and adults with Alzheimer’s – **coming soon – October 2022 and December 2022**

### **Xenia sound.colLAB**

A unique collaboration that celebrates the musicianship of select creator-participants who identify as neurodivergent. The world premiere of a brand-new piece will be introduced on **Sat, July 16 at 11:00 am – Meridian Hall Lower Lobby**

**Presented by TO Live – COMMUNITY CLASSES** (back after a hiatus of two years).

Opening TO LIVE venues to the community with free classes featuring performing arts and wellness activities. **Tuesday evenings at Meridian Hall – enter at Yonge Street Door! Usually at 6 pm but timing may change**

- Bollywood
- Beyography
- Afrofusion
- Meditation
- Mindfulness
- Yoga
- And more!

**TO LIVE – Masterclasses, Open Rehearsals and Talks – no specific timing as yet.**

Opportunity for local artists and audiences to engage with visiting performers, Artistic Directors and Choreographers. More information on [tolive.com/Community-Introduction](http://tolive.com/Community-Introduction) as well as [education@tolive.com](mailto:education@tolive.com)

### **Leslie Lester – Update on St. Lawrence Centre Reimagination Project**

Three years ago the St. Lawrence Centre was put in front of City Council to consider for Reimagination. Last month we put a proposal in front of City Council and they approved, after a lot of public consultation, what was essentially a building program and the project has now been advanced to a design competition. This project started as a building program, but it has grown very much through the consultation process into the idea of what does it mean how does this building connect to Meridian Hall, for example, its sister building, how does it connect to Market Street, and also creating a connection to Berczy Park. It is not just the centre, it is the connection to the entire district and having the building open to the neighbourhood. It should be open to the public 24/7, free, a building to go to hold meetings, etc. We are trying to understand what this building could be, to make it much more flexible and open, assure sustainability, everything to do with technology and future-proofing and essentially creating public spaces that people feel connected to. People should get to know the building and not just walk by it.

At this point we are working on the process for the competition, we are going to go out to the international design community and award a winning architect, hopefully by January 2023. Throughout this process, when we receive the shortlisted group of architectural teams, there

will be a lot more public engagement, this process is meant to be extremely open and transparent.

At this point we are working on a RFP for the design competition, a short-list for the fall, Sept/October. We anticipate that the winning team will be in place the following January. Construction will probably take another three years before a starting date.

Question from the audience - will the community be involved in some of the planning? There will certainly be more engagement throughout the fall. The BIA has also been quite involved in this process. There is a lot of interest in the neighbourhood to be connected.

There is going to be a job fair in August at Meridian Hall for front of the house jobs, anything from ushers to concession stands, etc. on August 10 between 11 and 6, and another one the following week at the Meridian Art Centre. The information will be in the next SLNA newsletter.

## **Ryan Evershed, Manager of Community Engagement and Client Programming, Homes First**

Homes First is a non-profit organization since the mid-Eighties, and provides housing, shelters and support services to the homeless across the city, and they are the service providers at 45 The Esplanade. [www.homesfirst.on.ca](http://www.homesfirst.on.ca)

232 residents are living at the 45 The Esplanade shelter at the moment, the hotel has 241 rooms, and capacity of over 280. Summer is generally a very busy time and staff and residents from all of the shelters were invited to go to the Pride Parade and 45 The Esplanade did their own BBQ at the beach.

In terms of housing, 48 individuals were able to find housing, with perhaps a few more who will be moving at the end of the month. This does not sound like a large number, but every move to permanent housing is a win and huge success for Homes First. Additional staffing has been secured for follow-up teams who are checking to make sure that the moves are a success.

A newsletter gets delivered to every resident, and covers the waterfront regarding community reminders, such as housing checks, income tax preparation, housing benefits, etc. etc. A newsletter is produced every week, complete with a newsletter of various activities. Also, on the website there are regular updates, including detailed resident stories and peer programs.

Home First's latest initiative is Home Full Toronto – [www.homefulltoronto.ca](http://www.homefulltoronto.ca) designed for Toronto's most vulnerable seniors. With over half of the residents at age 50 and up the Homefull Seniors campaign addresses the three key needs of seniors in Home First's housing facilities: food security, health care access and social connection. The key to achieving that is to develop systems for senior clients to access nutritious food; to develop internal capacity to deliver frozen-ready meals to residents with the greatest food insecurity challenges – this will be achieved through their Centralized Food Program (CFP); and to facilitate community connections for residents seeking external supports such as foodbanks and food/nutritional education.

**Healthcare Access:** Covid-19 has changed the way we all access primary healthcare. In order to help adapt seniors to deal with this new environment, we plan to develop a specialized team to assist seniors with booking virtual healthcare appointments, including helping to schedule in-person follow-ups.

**Social Connection:** Host digital literacy workshops to increase virtual connectivity and help senior to reconnect with family and friends. Provide workshops to increase understanding of on-line services such as banking, grocery shopping and accessing government documents. Increase partnerships with senior activities in the area to provide affordable and free physical activity and social programs for clients. Build community through enhanced social and recreation programming to lower isolation.

Lastly, Ryan covered Community Education Workshops called Art of Neighboring (a virtual program) – which will provide a deeper connection and a safe space to work on issues. Week 1 covers Myths and Causes of Homelessness as well as Cycle of Trauma; Week 2 concentrates on Building Compassion, Core Beliefs and Understanding Privilege, and Week 3 covers Triggers, De-escalation, the Feelings Wheel and H.E.A.R.T. (Hear, Emphasize, Apologize, Respond, Thank). Week 4 is called Building Rapport, and is a follow-up with tools which help building rapport and trust, such as using positive body language, taking an interest, showing understanding, listening carefully and believing in success. Signs of trauma are covered, such as emotional and psychological symptoms as well as physical symptoms.

Group Activity exercises follow, such as the following scenario: person is yelling, undressing, walking into traffic, holding what looks like a long metal object. The person appears to be unstable and disassociated. How would you respond and support this individual?

In partnership with Dixon Hall, Parkdale Queen West, and Toronto Shelter Network, they do offer a more condensed version one day training of community training.

**The next Community Meeting will be held on Wednesday, July 27, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. There will be no Community Meeting in August.**