

Celebration of Nations – Celebrating creativity, diversity and resilience

29 August 2018 –Celebration of Nations is a gathering of Indigenous arts, culture, and tradition in downtown St. Catharines and the 2nd annual event takes place **7-9 September 2018** and is presented by **The FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre** and **Kakekalanicks Indigenous Arts & Consultancy**.

Celebration of Nations is an opportunity for Niagara residents and visitors to actively participate in an inclusive and engaging community gathering that provides cultural and historical insights infused within entertainment and social activities that forge connections and strengthen the bonds of community.

“This gathering of Indigenous art, culture and tradition has inspired cross-cultural learning and understanding. As we continue our journey of truth and reconciliation, our community is learning and growing through the storytelling and diverse programming at the PAC, which showcases the value of the arts as a tool for learning,” says **St. Catharines Mayor Walter Sendzik**.

Guided by that philosophy, **Artistic Director Michele-Elise Burnett (Métis, Algonquin)** and **Artistic Producer Tim Johnson (Mohawk)** have curated a robust program with more than 20 compelling performances, interactive activities, speakers and more with support from the Celebration of Nations Advisory Council and PAC programming staff.

"As a collaborative cross-cultural partnership Celebration of Nations has found a welcome reception at the crossroads of Indigenous history in St. Catharines, and particularly on **St. Paul Street**, the route of an ancient and enduring Indigenous trail," said **Tim Johnson (Mohawk)**, the gathering's Artistic Producer. "In particular, by holding this annual gathering where the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre now stands, we honour our shared legacy while expressing mutual respect and affirmation during an era of truth and reconciliation."

Comedian and actor **Howie Miller** will perform a hilarious stand-up set with openers Franklyn McNaughton and Gary Parker. Miller, a descendant of the Cree Nation born and raised in Edmonton, Alberta. He has been bringing laughter to audiences around the world for over a decade. Miller's routine features stellar impressions and will have audiences laughing from start to finish. Laughter is

the medicine. // **Friday 7 Sept at 8pm in Partridge Hall. \$20 or free with all-access pass.**

Martha Redbone (Cherokee/Shawnee/Choctaw descent) is one of today's most vital voices in American Roots music. A multi-award-winning musician, the charismatic artist is celebrated for her tasty gumbo of roots music embodying the folk and mountain blues sounds of her childhood in the Appalachian hills of Kentucky mixed with the eclectic grit of her teenage years in pre-gentrified Brooklyn. // **Saturday 8 Sept at 7:30pm in Partridge Hall. \$20 or free with all-access pass.**

The gathering offers a free dance party for all ages with award-winning producer and DJ **Classic Roots**. Armed with a sense of cultural freedom, this Thunder Bay native is establishing himself throughout the electronic music community. Drawing inspiration from his life and culture, Classic Roots builds his style by integrating traditional Anishinaabe sounds with electronic dance music. // **Saturday 8 Sept at 9pm in Robertson Theatre. A Free event!**

Kahawi: Dance Theatre's Santee Smith (Mohawk, Turtle Clan) presents a haunting dance production that acknowledges the lives and spirits of Mohawk Institute residential school survivors. **The Mush Hole** weaves memories of two generations of residential school survivors reliving traumas, school life, loss of culture, personal discovery and finding home. // **Saturday 8 Sept at 2:30pm in Cairns Recital Hall. \$20 or free with all-access pass.**

The Fireside Roundtable is a recreation of a historic series of discussions that took place in the late '80s and early '90s in Niagara Falls, NY. These historic discussions were hosted, recorded and published in ***Turtle Quarterly Magazine***. Some 30 years later, Celebration of Nations will host three Indigenous academic intellectuals to draw out knowledge, perspective and wisdom on the concept of **Fireside: On What I've Learned**. // **Sunday 9 Sept at 3pm in Partridge Hall. A Free event!**

The esteemed scholars include:

- **Oren Lyons (Joagquisho)** is an American Indian icon and probably the most widely heard orator of traditional Haudenosaunee philosophy and practice. A faithkeeper of the Onondaga Nation Council of Chiefs and of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, Lyons has been a traditional "runner" and consistent spokesman for the elders of one of the oldest continuously operating Native governments in the Western Hemisphere.
- **Rick Hill**, former coordinator of Deyohahá:ge: Indigenous Knowledge Centre at Six Nations Polytechnic, Ohsweken, Six Nations of the Grand River is a historian and advisor for the Niagara Falls Museum and numerous organizations conducting projects and programs involving Haudenosaunee culture and art.

- **Larry McDermott (Algonquin)**, a senior advisor to Friends of Laura Secord, is executive director of Plenty Canada, an Aboriginal non-government organization devoted to the protection of Mother Earth, building healthy communities, and promoting cross-cultural awareness of the value of Indigenous ways of knowing to achieve a sustainable environment for future generations.

The weekend will include free and ticketed events, as well as an affordable all-access weekend pass that gives access to every ticketed event and registration to workshops for just \$30. Weekend passes are free for children under 13 years.



For full schedule and ticket information visit the website: <http://celebrationofnations.ca>

Kakekalanicks's mission is to promote Indigenous art and artists to broad-based audiences and acts to educate the public about the deep-rooted beauty and uniqueness of each Nation's culture, heritage, and traditions through the medium of the Arts.

The FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre aims to provide meaningful opportunities to bring our community together in a place of mutual understanding, empathy, and respect through the arts.



Special thanks to all our partners: Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre, The Métis Nation of Ontario, Niagara Region Métis Council, Niagara Regional Native Centre,

IGNITE: The Spirit of Education Foundation, Indigenous Education at Niagara College, the Province of Ontario, Niagara Tourism, Niagara Community Foundation, Brock University, the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts, District School Board of Niagara and the City of St. Catharines. And a special thank you to our friends of Celebration of Nations donors: Gales Gas Bar and Beechwood Doughnuts.

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About the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre

The FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre is a 95,000 square foot cultural complex comprised of four state-of-the-art performance venues that host a signature presentation of international and local performing artists. Designed by Diamond Schmitt Architects, the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre plays a vital role in the renaissance of downtown St. Catharines, serving as the catalyst in modernizing the area and reinforcing the brilliance of Niagara region's diverse cultural cluster.

For additional information, please contact:
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