

MEDIA RELEASE



For Immediate Release

Discover the connections of Indigenous and Afro-Caribbean/African Diaspora through live performance with Arts Commons Presents *Braving Beauty Cabaret*

June 28, 2021 CALGARY – Making its virtual premiere on **Sunday, July 11 at 7 p.m.** *Braving Beauty Cabaret* is the latest in the TD Amplify Cabaret series produced by Arts Commons Presents. Exploring two seemingly distinct communities and their surprising and provocative parallels, *Braving Beauty Cabaret* uncovers shared the cultural roots of the Indigenous Nations of Treaty 7 with those of the African and Afro-Caribbean using in dance, music, poetry, and movement followed by a talkback with audience members.

Co-curated by acclaimed actor, director, podcaster, and drag performer from the Kainai Nation in Southern Alberta, Marshall Vielle, along with artist, curator, and community leader born and raised in Nigeria, Toyin Lamas, *Braving Beauty Cabaret* unites their distinct perspectives to find common artistic and cultural ground using storytelling and music to express commonalities. The past year has been a time of substantial reckoning, from the issues raised from the Black Lives Matter protests of 2020 to the most recent tragedies unearthed at former Indian Residential School sites across Canada. *Braving Beauty Cabaret* allows two communities to take up space, share their truths through the evocative medium of live performance, and assume full control of their narrative.



“Aside from coming from two extremely marginalized groups, there’s a lot of beauty in the sharing of our traditional ways of knowing and what has been passed on to us despite us both living in – and all of us living in - this incredibly colonized world,” says Vielle. *“A big part of the inspiration in bringing this [cabaret] together is understanding that for a lot of marginalized voices, it’s incredibly hard to show up, especially when folks aren’t always welcoming you in the best way. Coming together for Braving Beauty has been really special because it’s been about how we can be brave enough to show off our beauty.”*

The 2020-21 season of TD Amplify Cabarets produced by Arts Commons Presents is the third year of the innovate series meant to elevate the voices of individuals from equity-seeking communities, bringing new perspectives and different forms of live art to the Arts Commons Presents offerings. The final show in Arts Commons Presents 20-21 TD Amplify Cabaret series, *Sissy Fit: The Future is Queer Cabaret* curated by Brett Dahl, premieres on Sunday, July 25 at 7 p.m. at artscommons.ca.

Filmed at Arts Commons under continuing COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, *Braving Beauty Cabaret* is **free to watch** online, premiering Sunday, July 11 at 7 p.m. in a live watch party with the co-curators Vielle and Lamas, as well as fellow cabaret performers **Winner Brave, Stephanie Brave Rock, Alanna Bluebird, Elizabeth Ferguson-Breaker, Samuel Obadero, and Olivia Tailfeathers.**

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This event is best suited for people 16-years and older due to mature content. Tickets are FREE! To book, please call 403-294-9494 or visit artscommons.ca. Curator bios below.

What: TD Amplify Cabaret: *Braving Beauty Cabaret*
When: Sunday, July 11, 2021
Where: Online presentation

For media inquiries, high resolution images, or more information contact:
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Arts Commons is the third-largest performing arts centre in Canada, located in downtown Calgary, with a mandate that includes a commitment to foster, promote, and present the arts. It is home to six gallery spaces, five theatres and the Jack Singer Concert Hall.

Arts Commons Presents invites you to discover the transformative power of the Arts. As the programming arm of Arts Commons, Arts Commons Presents is one manifestation of this mandate, achieved through the programming and presenting of our in-house series: BD&P World Stage, National Geographic Live, PCL Blues, TD Amplify Cabarets, and TD Jazz, as well as the work that we do in the community. Through this work, we are able to do our part to further enrich our city, as well as create opportunities for Calgary-based artists on a multitude of levels.

Toyin Oladele is an experienced performing artist, curator, and arts administrator with a demonstrated history of excellence in programming, community engagement, and arts-based event planning and production. Her professional experience is firmly rooted in her ability to combine the arts with community spaces, which she strives to make connective, inclusive and vibrant through collaborative strategies. Toyin consults for cultural and arts organizations and is an advocate for equity and inclusion in the arts community. Toyin founded the Immigrant Council for Arts Innovation (ICAI) in 2019 and is currently the organization's Executive Director.

While promoting social change through inclusivity and mentorship in the arts, she also finds the time to create artistic projects and perform. Through working with artists from different backgrounds and creative styles, she has gained experience in diverse art forms. Toyin prides herself in her ability to unearth the story in any situation and to share it with the world in the most beautiful way – art is not just an expression, it is a voice that keeps speaking long after you are dead and gone!

Marshall Vielle is an actor, director, podcaster, and drag performer from the Kainai Nation in Southern Alberta. He is a recent graduate from the University of Lethbridge where he received his Bachelors of Fine Arts, specializing in Theatre Performance. He is especially interested in using theatre for community development, having been involved in various projects both locally and internationally aimed at using artistic practices to encourage social change. He works as an advocate for diversity in the performance sector, while also lending his creativity to several Queer and Youth initiatives. His play *Where the Two-Spirit Lives* is a one person show encompassing storytelling, movement, and lots of lip-syncing as a way of celebrating the resurgence of Indigiqueer knowledge sharing paradigms from traditional ways of knowing.

Marshall is the recipient of the 2018 Theatre Calgary Stephen Hair Emerging Actor Award. When he is not acting, Marshall can be seen teaching as an Artist-in-Residence at Trickster Theatre or Improvising with Dirty Laundry, Calgary's longest running completely improvised soap opera. He is very excited to have been part of the curation for *Braving Beauty Cabaret* and would like to thank his family, friends, and artistic mentors for their endless love and support!

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