

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

YPT Presents Toronto Premiere of  
*The Mush Hole*  
Honouring the Survivors of Canada's Residential School System

October 16 – 25, 2019

Toronto, Oct. 1, 2019 - [Young People's Theatre](#) (YPT) is pleased to present the Toronto premiere of [The Mush Hole](#) – a groundbreaking theatre and dance performance exploring the devastating intergenerational impact of Canada's Residential School system. From award-winning choreographer, director and producer [Santee Smith](#) and the internationally acclaimed [Kaha:wi Dance Theatre](#) comes a story of truth, acknowledgement and resilience. *The Mush Hole* will be presented on the Mainstage from October 16 to 25.

"*The Mush Hole* is a story about hope and finding light in dark places," said Santee Smith. "As much as it speaks to intergenerational trauma it screams resilience. Every single element represented on stage comes from Survivors sharing their experiences with us."

This compelling dance work explores the impact on children sent to the Mohawk Technical School in Brantford, Ontario. Known as "the mush hole" owing to the watery gruel served at every meal, the Mohawk Institute is Canada's oldest Residential School.

"My ancestors attended the Mohawk Institute and like most people, I grew up not knowing about the atrocities that occurred inside the Canadian government and Anglican Church-run Residential School," said Smith. "After years of silence, Mohawk Institute Survivors are courageously moving past shame and sharing their story. *The Mush Hole* is their truth on stage."

Each production in YPT's 2019.20 Season explores one of the [Seven Ancestral Teachings](#) of the Anishinaabe (Wisdom, Love, Respect, Bravery, Honesty, Humility and Truth), with *The Mush Hole* focused primarily on Truth. "I wanted to open the season with this powerful, beautiful work knowing it reflects on difficult things to see and hear," said Allen MacInnis, YPT Artistic Director. "Facing the Truth is uncomfortable, but the Truth really does set us free to be and do better."

**THE MUSH HOLE | Toronto Premiere**

**MAINSTAGE • Oct. 16-25, 2019 • Recommended for Ages 11 & up • Runs approx. 65 min.**

Created, Directed and Produced by **Santee Smith**

Remount produced by **Kaha:wi Dance Theatre**

**MEDIA OPENING: Wednesday, October 16 at 1PM. RSVP to Clare Hill: [chill@youngpeoplestheatre.org](mailto:chill@youngpeoplestheatre.org)**

**Performances:**

Wed. Oct. 16, Thurs. Oct. 17 & Fri. Oct. 18 at 10:15AM & 1PM | Sat. Oct. 19 and Sun. Oct. 20 at 2:30PM  
| Tues. Oct. 22, Wed. Oct. 23 & Thurs. Oct. 24 at 10:15AM & 1PM | Fri. Oct. 25 at 10:15AM

**Relaxed Performances:**

Sun. Oct. 20 at 2:30PM and Tues. Oct. 22 at 10:15AM

**Tickets:** \$10-\$39 (plus HST & service charges) | **Online:** [youngpeoplestheatre.org](http://youngpeoplestheatre.org)

**Box Office:** 416.862.2222 x2

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**Photos:** login [yptmedia](#) | password [yptphotos](#)

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**THE MUSH HOLE**

Artistic Producer/Director/Performer: **Santee Smith**

Cultural Advisors: **Geronimo Henry, Thohahoken Michael Doxtater, Roberta Hill**

Performers: **Julianne Blackbird, Jonathan Fisher, Raelyn Metcalfe, Montana Summers**

Composition/Arrangement: **Jesse Zubot**

Additional Composition: **Adrian Dion Harjo**

Video Tech/Director: **Ryan Webber**

Set/Original Lighting Designer: **Andy Moro**

Costume Designer: **Adriana Fulop**

Additional Costumes: **Leigh Smith**

Set Construction: **Great Lakes Scenic Studios**

Production Support/Videographer: **Shane Powless**

Tour Production Manager/Tour Lighting Designer: **Evan Sandham**

Stage Manager: **Kennedy Brooks**

Voice-over: **Rob Lamothe**

Creation Performers: **Kennedy Bomberry, Brandon A. Oakes**

Production Support: **Thru The Red Door, Art Gallery of Guelph, and Banff Centre for the Arts & Creativity.**

### **Santee Smith**

Santee is a multidisciplinary artist, award-winning producer and Artistic Director of Kaha:wi Dance Theatre. She is from the Kahnyen'kehàka Nation, Turtle Clan, Six Nations of the Grand River. Her passion is creating performance from an Indigenous lens and process. Her training includes: Canada's National Ballet School; Physical Education and Psychology degrees from McMaster University and a M.A. in Dance from York University. Kaha:wi Dance Theatre is an internationally renowned company with 14 major works including the recent *Blood Tides* which garnered two Dora Mavor Moore awards in Dance. Santee's independent commissions include collaborations with National Arts Centre Orchestra, Fall for Dance North, Canadian Opera Company, among others. Santee is the Chancellor of McMaster University.

### **Julianne Blackbird**

Julianne is from the Mohawk Nation, Turtle Clan from Six Nations of the Grand River Territory, and attends McKinnon Park Secondary School in grade 12. Julianne has been dancing since age 3, in all genres including jazz, tap, hip hop, lyrical, contemporary, ballet and pointe. In 2014, Julianne danced in *The Gift* in Toronto for Mercedes Bernardez. She was an extra in the documentary *A Desert Between Us & Them: Raiders, Traitors, and Refugees in the War of 1812* in 2013. Julianne has performed with Santee Smith at the opening ceremonies of the 2017 North American Indigenous Games, 2017 World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education closing ceremonies, 2018 Indspire Awards, *The Mush Hole* (2017-2019), Junior Harbourfront Festival 2018, and *Blood Tides* 2018 and 2019. Julianne performed in *Saia'tatokénhti: Homage to Saint Kateri* with the McGill Chamber Orchestra in October 2018, directed and choreographed by Alejandro Ronceria.

### **Jonathan Fisher**

Jonathan has been acting professionally for the past 27 years. Selected theatre credits include: *Almighty Voice and His Wife* (Native Earth Performing Arts); *The Rez Sisters*, *400 Kilometres*, *The Hours That Remain* (Magnus Theatre); *Dry Lips Oughta Move To Kapuskasing* (Red Roots Theatre); *fareWel* (Prairie Theatre Exchange); *A Trickster's Tale* (Theatre Direct); *Copper Thunderbird* (National Arts Centre); *Tales of an Urban Indian* (Talk Is Free Theatre); *Night* (Human Cargo); *Elle* (Theatre Passe Muraille); *The Berlin Blues*, *Ipperwash* (Blyth Festival); *Reckoning* (Article 11); *Home is a Beautiful Word* (Persephone Theatre); *Weaving Reconciliation: Our Way* (Vancouver Moving Theatre Company); and *Bystander* (Gwaandak Theatre).

### **Raelyn Metcalfe**

Raised in Vancouver and based in Toronto, Raelyn is Plains Cree from Saskatchewan. She is a graduate of The Conteur Dance Academy. Her love of performing began with ballet and transitioned her into other styles, including musical theatre. She has trained with The Richmond Academy of Dance, MOVE: the company, and The Conteur Academy. In 2015 Raelyn had the pleasure of working with Conteur Dance Company, a preview development show under the direction of Artistic Director Eryn Waltman. Raelyn

has also worked with Aria Evans who is artistic director of Political Movement. In 2017 Raelyn performed Evan's work *Voice of a Nation*, commissioned by the Toronto Concert Orchestra. Revisiting her identity and background, Raelyn had the opportunity to perform as a dancer at the 2018 Indspire Awards along with Santee Smith, the founding artistic director of Kaha:wi Dance Theatre. Following her passion of performing both on stage and on film, Raelyn is a dedicated dance artist who wishes to continue her inspiration for others.

### **Montana Summers**

Montana is from the Oneida First Nation of the Thames. Montana began training in the exploration of indigenous and contemporary dance when he was accepted into the Indigenous Dance Residency (2015) and Kaha:wi Dance Theatre's Summer Intensive (2016). Montana has also had the chance to work with Kaha:wi Dance Theatre's Artistic Director Santee Smith with other performances and projects including *The Honouring* (2015-17), *Medicine Bear, I Lost My Talk* – National Arts Centre Orchestra (2016) and for the Opening of the North American Indigenous Games (2017). Additionally, Montana joined Backyard Theatre for his first acting performance in *The Other Side of the River* (2019). Montana now focuses on creating and teaching workshops/classes for young ages in his home city of London, Ontario.