

For Immediate Release

## Young People's Theatre Presents

### ***Travelling Tales***

Produced by Théâtre Motus

Written and Directed by Hélène Ducharme

**Available On Demand Feb. 1-21, 2022**

**Tickets On Sale January 20**

**Toronto, January 19, 2022** – This February, [Young People's Theatre \(YPT\)](#) journeys across cultures and time with [Travelling Tales](#) from Quebec's boundary-breaking **Théâtre Motus**. Available in both English and French for homes and classrooms, this online production features four performers animating West African, Mohawk and French-Canadian tales. The intimacy and ingenuity of traditional oral storytelling is brought to life through an imaginative blend of puppetry, masks, music and song. Recommended for ages 5-9, *Travelling Tales* is available on demand from February 1-21, with tickets on sale January 20, 2022.

"In this age of large superhero movies that thrill audiences with CGI, it is nice to return to simple and effective traditional storytelling," says **YPT Artistic Director Herbie Barnes**. "For thousands of years we have told stories this way and for thousands of years to come we will tell stories this way."

Written and directed by **Hélène Ducharme**, *Travelling Tales* features the stories ***Baobab***, ***Otijera and the Fasting Ceremony*** and ***The Bewitched Canoe/La Chasse-galerie***, with performers **Sharon James, Marco Collin, Jon Lachlan Stewart/Stéphan Côté**. First is an abridged version of the epic West African tale ***Baobab***, which won the 2012 Dora Award for Outstanding TYA Production after a sold out run at YPT. In this story, a young boy must fulfill his mission to return water to the land amidst a relentless drought. Next, in the Mohawk tale ***Otijera and the Fasting Ceremony***, the chief's son, Otijera, embarks on a dream quest to discover his destiny. Lastly, in the French-Canadian folktale, ***The Bewitched Canoe/La Chasse-galerie***, a team of lumberjacks soar through the sky on a flying canoe.

Says Barnes, "Though *Travelling Tales* takes us on a journey with three distinct cultures, each tale shares common themes, exemplifying that we as humans all deal with similar struggles."

#### ***Travelling Tales***

Produced by **Théâtre Motus**

Written & Directed by **Hélène Ducharme**

Featuring **Sharon James, Marco Collin, Jon Lachlan Stewart & Stéphan Côté**

**On Sale January 20**

**Recommended for Ages 5-9 | SK-Gr. 4**

**English & French Versions Available**

### ***Baobab***

In this epic West African story set in the Mandingo region, a magnificent Baobab tree is about to touch the heart of the Earth with its roots! In this sun-filled world, a young boy must fulfill his mission to return water to the land amidst a relentless drought. Performed by **Sharon James**.

### ***Otjiera and the Fasting Ceremony***

In this Mohawk tale, viewers are invited to take their seat around a magical fire and become a spirit of the ancestors. They will accompany the chief's son, Otjiera, on his dream quest to discover his destiny. But they must watch out for Big Bear's daughter! Performed by **Marco Collin**.

### ***The Bewitched Canoe/La Chasse-galerie***

In this traditional French-Canadian tale, viewers will soar through the sky on a flying canoe with a team of lumberjacks who have sold their souls just to attend a party in town with their girlfriends! Performed by **Jon Lachlan Stewart** (English version) and **Stéphan Côté** (French version).

Assistant Director: **Danaëlle Ducharme-Massé**; Scenography: **Normand Blais**; Music & Sound: **Stéphan Côté**, **Nathalie Cora** and **Aboulaye Koné**; Puppets & Masks: **Jean Cummings**, **Sylvain Racine** and **Claude Rodrigue**; Costumes: **Diane Lavoie**; Stage management: **Patrice Daigneault** and **Louka Ducharme-Massé**.

*Travelling Tales* includes a pre-recorded post-show discussion with a cast member. Study guides are also available.

Tickets are \$10. School performances are \$50 per class.

This presentation of *Travelling Tales* has been made possible in part by the Government of Canada.

YPT's 2021.22 season is proudly supported by **BMO as Season Presenting Sponsor**.

### **Hélène Ducharme, Playwright & Director**

Hélène is a playwright, director, actress and puppeteer, and has been Artistic Director of her company, Théâtre Motus, for 20 years. Author in residence for Théâtre Motus, she has written, co-written or co-adapted all of the company's creative projects and staged the majority of them. She develops challenging projects, inviting her young readers and audiences to join her as she explores her passion for puppetry, shadow theatre and the dramatic arts. Blessed with a deep and abiding respect for children, she works closely with them throughout the creative process. Her training and background as a teacher allow her to conceive and design a wide range of performance-related activities. In addition to her work and activities with the company, she has also served on a wide range of boards of directors and committees, including the board of directors of the Centre des auteurs dramatiques (1998 to 2001), where she helped create "Carte Blanche" events for playwrights. From 2004 to 2007, she sat on the artistic committee of the Maison Théâtre, and was president of the board of directors of the Association québécoise des marionnettistes (AQM) from 2008 to 2013. She also served on the selection committee of the International Performing Arts for Youth (IPAY) from 2012 to 2016 and the organization's board of directors from 2014 to 2016. In addition, she has written a variety of dramatic pieces for teenagers and adults, and co-scripted an animated film with Co Hoderman, a National Film Board (NFB) production. In March 2011, she was awarded the Prix à la création artistique en Montérégie, presented by the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec.

### **Sharon James, Performer**

Sharon is a graduate of the acting program of the Collège Lionel-Groulx. Since the completion of her studies, she has played several theatre, film and television roles. She is a multi-talented artist, performing in projects as both an actress and singer. During her robust theatre career, she has worked with many well-known directors such as Brigitte Haentjens, Robert Lepage and Alice Ronfard. She also acted in the musical *Mamma Mia!* directed by Serge Postigo and produced by Juste pour rire. Sharon's next projects include playing next to Didier Lucien in *Au sommet de la Montagne* at Duceppe in February 2022 and being in the cast of the musical *Rock of Ages* directed by Joel Legendre in July 2022 at the Théâtre Capitole de Québec.

On screen, Sharon captures the hearts of young minds with leading characters in the programs *Les Sapiens*, *Marika* and the upcoming show *Famille Magique* to be broadcast on Radio-Canada this winter.

#### **Marco Collin, Performer**

Today, Marco can be found on screen and on stage in a wide variety of productions. He has participated as an actor and host on several programs on the national Aboriginal television network, APTN. He has also been in the cast of several films, including *Mesnak*, *Misericorde* and *The Expendable*, and has acted in several theatre productions. He is currently playing the role of Bill Wabo in the series *Les pays d'en haut*. Marco is also a playwright and has been involved for many years in the Aboriginal radio community.

#### **Jon Lachlan Stewart, Performer**

Jon is a graduate of the National Theatre School's directing program, as well as a graduate of the acting stream of Studio 58 in Vancouver. Working bilingually in Montreal, Jon mostly creates original work as a director and playwright that tours in French and English around the country, and the world. Jon has performed with Théâtre Prospero, Théâtre Motus, and Théâtre INK in Montréal, as well as directing various productions with his company, Surreal SoReal, for Théâtre Prospero, Théâtre Denise Pelletier, and on tour to L'Uni Théâtre, and the Carrrefour International. As a performer Jon has worked in various companies around the country in Toronto, Montréal, Edmonton, Calgary and Vancouver. Jon's textless adaptation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, *Macbeth Muet*, was co-created with Marie Hélène Bélanger, and continues to tour the world. Jon loves work that brings artists from the French and English communities of Canada together.

#### **Stéphan Côté, Performer**

Stéphan is a multidisciplinary artist from Quebec. He is very present in theatre and television, with roles in *L'Auberge du chien noir*, *Ruptures*, *Cheval serpent* and *District 31*, as well as theatre for young audiences, collaborating with Motus for more than two decades. He is also a multi-instrumentalist musician and singer, and can be heard in the musicals *L'Homme de la Mancha*, *Il était une fois...* and *Félix*, his latest project.

#### **About Young People's Theatre**

Young People's Theatre (YPT) is North America's oldest – and Canada's largest – professional producer and presenter of theatre for young audiences. Over the past 56 years, YPT has staged many of the most important plays that form the canon of work for youth in our country. YPT continues to develop new work and create partnerships with theatre companies across the country and around the world. The enriched learning experiences of YPT's Education & Participation Department provide young people with opportunities to develop their whole being. Through Drama School programs, workshops in community shelters and agencies, educational initiatives in Toronto classrooms, and training and apprenticeship opportunities, we place learning at the centre of everything we do. With new online drama-based programming, YPT continues to support the needs of educators, students and families by creating innovative opportunities for online learning. Visit [youngpeoplestheatre.org](http://youngpeoplestheatre.org) to learn more.

- 30 -

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