



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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TOES FOR DANCE Invites Audiences to Revel in the Joys of Movement at the 5th Annual Common Ground Dance Festival

Free outdoor dance festival features wide range of genres, from hip hop and flamenco to Indian dance styles, Bharatanatyam and Garba, and more

TORONTO, ON – TOES FOR DANCE (TFD) proudly presents the fifth anniversary edition of the vibrant, intercultural Common Ground Dance Festival (CGDF), at **Lee Lifeson Art Park** (223 Gladys Allison Place) in North York, from **September 18 to 20, 2025**.

The free outdoor festival features a diverse lineup of evocative site-specific and mainstage performances, artist talks, and interactive workshops for all dance levels, presented by emerging and established artists with roots in Toronto, across Turtle Island, and beyond. To mark the festival's milestone year, the opening night will present a retrospective program, bringing together past and present festival artists to explore CGDF's evolution, and inspire reflection on the significance of intercultural dance dialogues in public spaces. And to further welcome diverse audiences in 2025, the festival's mainstage program will be co-hosted in Farsi (Sept. 19) and Mandarin (Sept. 20).

"We are delighted to welcome new and returning audiences to the fifth anniversary edition of Common Ground Dance Festival," says **Tanveer Alam**, Festival Co-Curator and Producer. "This year, we're thrilled to celebrate the art form of dance in its various forms and interpretations, through multifaceted works that are grounded, elegant, thought-provoking, and highly dynamic. As we move through our quick-paced lives, it feels particularly significant to be able to offer a moment of respite and inspiration – to be moved, uplifted, and comforted by the unique experience of dance."

CGDF's fifth anniversary programming promises a joyous celebration of movement and community from a diverse range of Toronto artists and community members. This year's festival highlights include: a Hoop dance performance and workshop from champion Grass and Hoop dancer **Beany John**; a Dora Award-nominated duet with live music featuring Irma Villafuerte and Nickeshia Garrick of the **CinnaMoon Collective**, a mesmerizing exploration of rhythm and improvisation by Flamenco artist **Carmen Romero** with percussionist **Miguel Medina**, a striking Bharatanatyam performance by **Shivani Shivakumar**, a highly charged western contemporary dance duet by **Gisele Ardosa**, a dynamic Garba-based ensemble dance work and workshop by

Anjali Tanna, an exciting emerging artist showcase by **Groove Collective**, and a number of performances by local dance students.

“Common Ground Dance Festival began as a silver lining of the pandemic’s dark cloud and was precipitated through questions like: ‘Why does dance matter?’ and ‘What can dance do for us, that is both essential and irreplaceable?’” says **David Norsworthy**, Festival Co-Founder and Director. “Since the festival’s modest beginnings in 2021, we’ve deepened our intercultural practice and have learned a lot about what it means to foster appreciation, understanding, and mutual respect across differences of identity, lived experience, and artistic values. To be embraced by the local community as a cherished annual tradition has been our greatest accomplishment; and we are looking forward to cultivating the beautiful relationships that have emerged for many years to come.”

2025 Common Ground Dance Festival Program:

Site Performance and Workshop

Thursday, September 18 | 6-7 PM

The Awakening by Beany John and a Hoop dance workshop

An ode to Hoop dancers and the healing that has been awakened throughout Turtle Island, from champion Grass and Hoop dancer Beany John (Plains Cree and Taino from Kehewin, Alberta). Each movement, each step, each spin represents a story or a lesson passed down through generations. Following a short performance, Beanie will lead a Hoop dance workshop open to all levels.

Festival Launch + Fifth Anniversary Celebration

Thursday, September 18 | 7-8 PM

A retrospective celebration, the evening will feature a short solo piece from an artist to represent each year of the festival’s five years. The evening will conclude with a collaborative choreographic offering that weaves together memories of past festival moments, and responses to the festival’s outdoor setting at Lee Lifeson Art Park and its sculptural installations.

Site Performance

Friday, September 19 | 6-6:30 PM

Surrendered Spirits by CinnaMoon Collective

An inter-multidisciplinary duet with live music that explores memories of childhood fractures and joys, through the political lens of Afro-Caribbean and Central American womxn of queer identity. Inspired by the impact of familial displacement, this contemporary dance-theatre piece delves into childhood stories that have shaped the artists’ perception of the world and family, guiding the performers and audience through collective healing.

Mainstage Mixed Program

Friday, September 19 | 7-8:15 PM

Co-hosted in English and Farsi

Riaquita by Carmen Romero

A mesmerizing exploration of rhythm and improvisation, flamenco artists – dancer Carmen Romero and musician Miguel Medina – embark on a spontaneous dialogue, seamlessly switching instruments and pushing the boundaries of their art – inviting the audience to experience the vibrant pulse of flamenco in a fresh and innovative way.

Sundara Mohana Murali Dhara: Expressing Krishna's Charm Through Dance by Shivani Shivakumar

A Bharatanatyam – Indian classical dance – performance, Shivakumar's work celebrates Lord Krishna's divine beauty and playful charm, showcasing Krishna's mischief with rhythmic footwork and graceful movements. The dance work progresses to reveal Krishna's divine strength and wisdom, embodying the full spectrum of Krishna's divine persona.

All You Ever Do Is Rain by Gisele Ardosa

A contemporary dance duet by choreographer Gisele Ardosa, the work is a forced confrontation between the artists and audience, exploring fractured relationships within our personal lives and the world. An examination of the frustration of being misunderstood, the work teeters between a seething stillness and a volatility on the brink of explosion.

Taan by Anjali Tanna

An ensemble work rooted in Garba – an Indian folk dance style – *Taan* celebrates rhythm as both a personal expression and a shared cultural heartbeat. Blending traditional Garba movements with contemporary storytelling, *Taan* uses circular patterns, dynamic footwork, and tipani (wooden sticks) to create a vibrant, living soundscape.

Performance by local dance students to be announced at a later date.

Workshop

Friday, September 19 | 8:15-9 PM

Intro to Garba - ritual folk dance from India

Site Performance

Saturday, September 20 | 2-2:45 PM

Surrendered Spirits by CinnaMoon Collective and Artist Talk/Q&A

Site Performance and Workshop

Saturday, September 20 | 3-4PM

The Awakening by Beany John and a Hoop dance workshop

Emerging Artist Showcase

Saturday, September 20 | 4-4:30 PM

In My Groove by Groove Collective

The Groove Collective is an initiative that aims to create, produce and provide opportunities for emerging dance artists to collaborate, create, and present their work with support from process to stage, led by mentors Kelly Gammie and Queenie Seguban. The showcase series will spotlight three emerging artists selected through an open call and mentored throughout a mini creative process.

Mainstage Mixed Program

Saturday, September 20 | 5:00-6:15 PM

Co-hosted in English & Mandarin

Riaquita by Carmen Romero

Sundara Mohana Murali Dhara: Expressing Krishna's Charm Through Dance by Shivani Shivakumar

All You Ever Do Is Rain by Gisele Ardosa

Taan by Anjali Tanna

Performance by local dance students to be announced at a later date.

CGDF is made possible with funding from the City of Toronto, Toronto Arts Council, Canada Council for the Arts, and the Government of Canada. We gratefully acknowledge additional support from Arts in the Parks, North York Arts, Yonge North York BIA, Willowdale Central Ratepayers Association/Willowdale Arts Collective, TO Live, and the Toronto Transit Commission.

For detailed programming information and to RSVP in order to receive updates and potential scheduling changes related to the weather, please visit: toesfordance.ca

About TOES FOR DANCE (toesfordance.ca)

Founded in 2012 by Kristen Carcone and David Norsworthy, TOES FOR DANCE (TFD) is an artist-run non-profit dance organization based in Tkaronto. As of 2024, the organization is now co-led by Chantelle Good and David Norsworthy. Our mission is to share art and connect people through workshops and performances; fostering a community inspired by shared values of curiosity and collaboration. We contribute to the well-being and vibrancy of our society by creating unique and valuable platforms for artistic development, creative process, and public engagement. Our programming spotlights the current, while acknowledging the importance of working within lineage, and with respect to history and context.

LISTING INFORMATION

Common Ground Dance Festival 2025

Dates:

September 18 to 20, 2025

Venue: Lee Lifeson Art Park
223 Gladys Allison Place, North York

Website/Info: Free (online RSVP recommended)
toesfordance.ca

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For further media information, contact

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