

FALL FOR DANCE NORTH

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Fall for Dance North Invites New and Returning Audiences to Feel the World Move at 11th Annual Festival

Festival presents three signature mixed programs, featuring a rare performance from The Royal Ballet, a world premiere from Artist-in-Residence Esie Mensah and the Canadian debut of India's Nad-Roop Company

TORONTO, ON – Fall for Dance North (FFDN) presents its 11th annual international dance festival, bringing together more than 30 Canadian and international artists across a lineup of evocative mixed programming, from **October 15-26, 2025**. Under FFDN's new leadership of **Co-CEO's, Festival Director Lily Sutherland and Artistic Director Robert Binet**, and co-curated with **FFDN 2025 Artist-in-Residence Esie Mensah** and renowned **Toronto Kathak dancer Tanveer Alam**, the festival features three mainstage signature mixed programs showcasing a diverse range of contemporary and classical dance styles from some of the world's leading dance artists. FFDN 2025 will also introduce two new audience experiences: a uniquely intimate 45-minute dance series with front row only seating, and a dance and visual arts combo at OCAD U with free adjacent programming at the AGO for FFDN ticket holders.

"This year's festival is an invitation to new and returning audiences to experience Toronto as a global city in motion," says Binet. "Dance thrives in Toronto because here artists' identities centre their legacy, their heritage, and their innovation. We are excited to create bold international conversations between Toronto's beloved artists and their international peers and heroes."

Highlights for FFDN's 2025 edition include a performance from the **UK's Royal Ballet**, who present a series of solos and pas de deux from their repertoire danced by company artists, including Principal Dancers Melissa Hamilton and Ryoichi Hirano, and featuring the Canadian premiere of the final pas de deux from Wayne McGregor's *Infra*; the Canadian debuts of UK-based **Dickson Mbi Company** and US artist **Sekou McMiller**; *Reverence* from Toronto's own **Ethan Colangelo**, performed by **The National Ballet of Canada**; and a rare international appearance from India's large, all-female Kathak ensemble **Nad-Roop Company**. The festival will also feature three world premieres: **Esie Mensah's** large-scale commission, *ESHI*, featuring dancers of Mensah's own company and Canada's National Ballet School; a duet that explores the interconnectedness of Africa's global diaspora from Brampton's **Kwasi Obeng-Adjei** and Nigeria's **Ambrose Tjark**; and a duet that examines the composition of two bodies in shared

space from Toronto Kathak dance artist **Tanveer Alam** with his NYC-based dance partner **Barkha Patel**.

The festival's three signature mixed programs will be presented at the Bluma Appel Theatre. Featuring a fresh curatorial approach that weaves a cohesive story across interconnected works, FFDN 2025 kicks off with **AFROFUSION: Signature Programme 1, October 15-18**, bringing together elements of Traditional and Contemporary West African Dance, Street Dance, Afro-Latin Dance, as well as Modern, Jazz, and Salsa. Three distinct works will be presented in this program, including the world premiere of Esie Mensah's new large scale commission *ESHI*, alongside two works by international artists curated by Mensah and Binet – Dickson Mbi (Cameroon/UK) and Sekou McMiller (USA).

HOMEgrown: Signature Programme 2, October 18 & 19, celebrates the global connectivity of Toronto choreographers and artists with the presentation of four works, including Ethan Colangelo's *Reverence* for The National Ballet of Canada, the Dora Award-winning solo *CYMATIX* from international Street Dance sensation Caroline "Lady C" Fraser, Traditional West African Dance from Lua Shayenne Dance Company, and a moving, cross-cultural world premiere from Canadian and Nigerian African Street Dance collaborators Kwasi Obeng Adjei and Ambrose Tjark.

KATHAK & BALLET: Signature Programme 3, the festival's third mixed program, **October 23-25**, will include duets, solos and ensemble works that interweave the virtuosic commonalities between two historic dance forms from eastern and western traditions: the classical Indian dance form of Kathak and the western art form of Ballet. Co-curated by Tanveer Alam, the striking program will feature the UK's The Royal Ballet, who will perform a selection of solos and pas de deux from their repertoire, India's Nad-Roop and Dheerendra Tiwari, and Alam with Barkha Patel.

New this year – visual arts and dance meet at **Up Next** and **Story Creatures, October 25 & 26**, at OCAD University's The Great Hall and the AGO. Timed entry FFDN tickets, with freedom to move through the space, allows audiences to direct their own experience of groundbreaking artists at *Up Next*. The program will feature a rotation of cutting edge works from Esie Mensah with FFDN Scholar-in-Residence Devon Healey, Sekou McMiller, Sydney-based street and club dance choreographer and performer Azzam Mohamed, who will perform *GLAD*, and champion dancers of **FFDN's 3rd annual Tkaronto Open Indigenous Jingle Dress competition**, which takes place on **September 27** at Union Station, in recognition of Canada's National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. All FFDN ticket holders will also gain free admission to Kate Hilliard's *Story Creatures* at the AGO next door.

The festival will introduce a new 45-minute dance series, **Intimate Pairings**, a front row experience for audiences new and returning at **The Citadel: Ross Centre for Dance** from **October 21-23**. The series features two distinct programs over three nights: *Braids & Heritage*, featuring Montreal's Jossua Satinée and Stacey Désilier; and *Gutted* and *Pendulum*, showcasing a pairing of solo works created by female artists Katie Adams-Gossage and

Priyanka Tope. The Citadel will also partner with FFDN to co-present its beloved annual late-night dance series **Night Shift** from **October 16-18**, curated by FFDN 2021-2022 Artist-in-Residence Natasha Powell.

“This festival celebrates the meeting of many dance forms, but, most importantly, it’s about community,” adds Sutherland. “At a time when so many are searching for hope and light, we invite audiences to discover something new together, through the transformative experience that dance can offer.”

A variety of free programming will be offered throughout the festival, including FFDN’s third annual powwow style competition *Tkaronto Open III* at Union Station’s West Wing, co-presented by Union and TO Live. This year’s event will feature Women’s Jingle Dress Showcase: Old Style vs. Contemporary, starting at 1pm on September 27.

Free offerings will also include excerpted performances from select FFDN artists, as part of the COC’s Free Concert Series on October 15 at 12pm; open rehearsals that pull back the curtain on the creation process of *Dancing with Blindness*, with Scholar-in-Residence Devon Healey and Artist-in-Residence Esie Mensah at OCAD University’s The Great Hall on October 21-23 daily at 5-8pm; Open Studio at Union Station’s West Wing on October 22-24, which includes daily workshops from 12-1pm and open rehearsal from 1:30-8pm; and the performance installation of Kate Hiliard’s *Story Creatures* at the AGO on October 25 & 26 from 10:30am to 5:30pm (free for FFDN ticket holders).

Additional workshops and talks will be announced in October.

Fall for Dance North’s 2025 Festival Lineup (Ticketed):

AFROFUSION: Signature Programme 1

October 15, 16 & 17 (7:30pm); **October 18** (2pm) at Bluma Appel Theatre (27 Front St East)

Curated by Esie Mensah and Fall for Dance North, this international program brings together powerful elements of traditional and contemporary West African dance, street dance, Afro-Latin dance, contemporary and modern dance, jazz and salsa across three distinct works.

Duende by Dickson Mbi Company

ESHI performed by Esie Mensah Creations with the Company Life Program students at Canada’s National Ballet School - **World Premiere**

Afro Latin Soul by Sekou McMiller

HEMEGROWN: Signature Programme 2

October 18 & 19 (7:30pm); **October 19** (2pm) at Bluma Appel Theatre (27 Front St East)

Curated by Fall for Dance North, in collaboration with Esie Mensah, this program celebrates the global connectivity of Toronto choreographers and artists, featuring street dance, contemporary

dance, traditional West African dance and African street dance in an exploration of Toronto's vibrant dance scene.

CYMATIX by Caroline 'Lady C' Fraser

Reverence by Ethan Colangelo, performed by The National Ballet of Canada

Journey to the Motherland by Lua Shayenne Dance Company

Echoes of the same tree by Ambrose Tjark & Kwasi Obeng Adjei - **World Premiere**

KATHAK & BALLET: Signature Programme 3

October 23 & 24 (7:30pm); **October 25** (2pm) at Bluma Appel Theatre (27 Front St East)

London's The Royal Ballet and Kathak stars from Canada, India and NYC appear on this program curated by Tanveer Alam and Fall for Dance North. Eastern and western traditions meet for an unforgettable evening of virtuosic artistry.

Shanaasai شناسائی by Tanveer Alam, performed with Barkha Patel - **World Premiere**

Solos and duets featuring Principal Dancers of The Royal Ballet, Covent Garden with live music from The Royal Conservatory's Glenn Gould School

SHIVO-AHAM - AN ODE TO THE SOUL by Dheerendra Tiwari

Chaturang ki Chaupal by Nad-Roop

Intimate Pairings

October 21-23 (6pm & 8pm) at The Citadel: Ross Centre for Dance (304 Parliament Street)

Two distinct programs will be offered in the round, offering every audience member the exhilarating experience of sitting in the front row. At 45 minutes, this up close and personal experience is a fresh way to discover, or rediscover, the magic of live dance.

Program 1: Braids & Heritage by Jossua Satinée and Stacey Désilier

Program 2: gutted by Katie Adams-Gossage and **Pendulum** by Priyanka Tope

Up Next

October 25 (Entry Times: 5pm, 6pm, 7pm) & **October 26** (Entry Times: 2pm, 3pm, 4pm) at OCAD U's The Great Hall (100 McCaul Street, 2nd floor)

Featuring a rotation of works from artists at the forefront of dance, *Up Next* is designed to allow guests to control their own experience, with freedom to move through the space as desired. Performances include:

A solo by **Esie Mensah**, accompanied by Immersive Descriptive Audio by **Devon Healey**

A new Afro Latin Jazz ensemble work for **dance students at The Creative School of Toronto Metropolitan University**, choreographed by **Sekou McMiller**

Jingle Dress champion dancers from Tkaronto Open III (taking place on Sept. 27)

GLAD by Sydney-based street and club dance choreographer and performer **Azzam Mohamed**, also known as **Shazam** (co-presented by Luminato)

Night Shift

October 16-18 (10pm) at The Citadel: Ross Centre for Dance (304 Parliament Street)

Co-presented and produced by Citadel + Compagnie

Curated by Toronto's Natasha Powell, the anticipated return of the annual late-night dance series *Night/Shift* features short works from nine Ontario-based dancemakers:

October 16

Urip by Arma Dharma

переродження (beginning again) by Kass Prus (Кассандра Прус)

Shrishti by Stuti Mukherjee and Vishakha Ghosh

October 17

Abandonment by Aisha Nicholson

Violent delight requiem by Ben King

Woven Presence by Derek Souvannavong

October 18

The Running Project by Ranganathan Rajan

Sâkhitowin/Amore by Rhythm & Sound

Silent Roots, Loud Dreams by Yui Ugai

Single tickets and festival packages are now available at ffdnorth.com. Single tickets are \$25 + fees. The Signature Programme Package, including all three signature programs, is \$65 + fees. Tickets for *Up Next* will be offered on a sliding scale (\$15-\$50).

For FFDN ticketing information and full programming details including free programming, please visit: ffdnorth.com

About Fall for Dance North (ffdnorth.com)

Now under the leadership of Co-CEO's, Festival Director Lily Sutherland and Artistic Director Robert Binet, Fall for Dance North Festival wants to get more people seeing more dance more often. Whether it's your first date with dance or you are in a long-term relationship, dance is a joyful way to experience cultures and perspectives from all around the world, connecting us to our bodies and to each other. Across two weeks of fall festival programming, FFDN increases accessibility for the dance art form, elevates Canadian dance artists on the global stage, and moves with evolving audience preferences. FFDN is inspired by Fall for Dance in NYC.

LISTING INFORMATION

Fall for Dance North 2025

Dates:

October 15-26, 2025

Festival Venues:

Bluma Appel Theatre
27 Front St East, Toronto, ON

The Citadel: Ross Centre for Dance
304 Parliament Street, Toronto, ON

OCAD U's The Great Hall
100 McCaul Street, 2nd floor, Toronto, ON

Union Station
65 Front Street West, Toronto ON

Ticket Prices:

Signature Programme Package (includes 3
signature mixed programs): \$65 + fees
Single Tickets: \$25 (+ fees)

Tickets:

ffdnorth.com

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