



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TRANSFORM Festival Returns, Weaving Together the Distinct Voices and Perspectives of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Artists

Music, theatre, dance and drag collide in an explosive cabaret-style festival at the Vancouver Playhouse

VANCOUVER, BC – Urban Ink’s TRANSFORM Festival returns, in collaboration with The Cultch, for its sixth year with its biggest and boldest lineup yet, on stage from **November 6-8 and 14 & 15, 2025**, at the **Vancouver Playhouse**. Curated by Urban Ink Artistic Director **Corey Payette**, this year’s festival spans five nights of electrifying performances over two weekends.

The 2025 edition of the TRANSFORM Festival features an all-star lineup of Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists across multiple disciplines, breaking boundaries through collaboration and experimentation. Highlights include: both the ***Opening and Closing BASH!*** hosted by season 5 ***Canada’s Drag Race*** star and 2SLGBTQIA+ community advocate, **Jaylene Tyme**; ***The Starwalker Experience***, a multi-disciplinary concert that blends live band, drag performance, and film clip integration in celebration of the music from the award-winning film ***Starwalker***; the first live performance workshop production of ***Wolf Cull***, a new Indigenous one-act thriller by playwright **Cheyenne Scott**; a highly anticipated vocal performance by **Rebecca Strong**, the first Indigenous woman to win ***Canada’s Got Talent***, in 2024; and the return of JUNO-nominated cellist and composer **Cris Derksen** with the world premiere concert ***Where The Rivers Meet***.

“TRANSFORM Festival’s 6th edition carries the theme ‘Braiding Worlds.’ For me, that image perfectly captures what our festival is all about – the weaving together and interlocking of Indigenous and non-Indigenous voices, of tradition and innovation, of joy and resilience,” says TRANSFORM Festival Curator and Co-Founder Payette. “Each section of the festival carries its own strength, but when they come together, something entirely unique is created. This is an invitation to witness how these bold and striking collaborations can transform us, and how braiding our worlds together can open up space for new ways of imagining the future. I hope you’ll join us.”

TRANSFORM will kick off with the **Opening BASH!** on **November 6, 2025 at 7:30pm** hosted by season 5 ***Canada’s Drag Race*** star Jaylene Tyme and featuring an electrifying fusion of dance, circus, comedy, drag, and mind-blowing performers that defy expectations, with rising opera star Emma Pennell, choreographer Maddi Bulloch, and local award-winning juggler Yuki.

The festival will continue on **November 7, 2025 at 7:30pm** with the workshop production of *Wolf Cull*, an Indigenous thriller by playwright Cheyenne Scott. Set in the near future in an invented Indigenous territory, five young women are drawn by a shared dream to the hunting grounds, where they uncover mysterious tracks that challenge their skills and the group's fragile unity. Featuring performers Kat Maclean, Teniel Whiskeyjack, Danica Charlie, Marion Jacobs, and Winona Myles, the work explores internalized trauma, the knowledge and power of Indigenous women, and the transformative process of healing.

On **November 8, 2025 at 7:30pm**, TRANSFORM will present the world premiere of *Where The Rivers Meet*, a powerful musical journey that celebrates the deep connections between Indigenous cultures and water. Hosted by reality TV star and public speaker Suzette Amaya, this one-of-a-kind concert unites Indigenous composers with non-Indigenous musicians. Cellist and composer Cris Derksen, composer Russell Wallace, composer Sherryl Sewepagaham, and operatic soprano Emma Pennell will collaborate to weave ancient traditions with modern harmonies, creating a unique celebration of resilience, identity, and unity.

TRANSFORM continues on **November 14, 2025 at 7:30pm** with the world premiere of *The Starwalker Experience*, produced by Raven Theatre, a celebratory evening featuring the music of *Starwalker*, an award-winning musical written and composed by Payette. The vibrant, multimedia experience will bring together a live band, featuring vocalists Conor Parnall, Jesse Alvarez, Jason Sakaki, and Vinnie Alberto with film clips and performances by local drag stars.

The festival will conclude on **November 15, 2025 at 7:30pm** with the **Closing BASH!**, hosted again by Jaylene Tyme. The closing celebrations promise to be an unforgettable night with exuberant and eccentric performances, including appearances by celebrated singer Rebecca Strong, who is the first Indigenous woman to win *Canada's Got Talent* in 2024, capturing audiences with her strong, emotional performances of popular pop favourites, and Vancouver-based Indigenous singer/songwriter, dancer, and visual artist, Raven Grenier, who will share a live performance of her alt pop single, *Wolverine*.

For tickets and information, please visit: transformfestival.ca

About TRANSFORM Festival (transformfestival.ca)

TRANSFORM Festival returns for its sixth year, featuring five nights of incredible performances all centrestage at the iconic Vancouver Playhouse! The 2025 festival continues to focus on empowering Indigenous artists and encouraging collaboration with non-Indigenous artists. Featuring local and international Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists in a variety of performance styles including theatre, music, drag, circus, comedy and everything in between.

LISTING INFORMATION

Urban Ink presents TRANSFORM Festival

Dates: November 6-8, 14 & 15, 2025
Venue: Vancouver Playhouse
600 Hamilton St, Vancouver, BC

Ticket Prices: From \$19-\$59
Festival Pass: \$150

Free tickets for Indigenous patrons with code
'INDIGENOUS'

Tickets: transformfestival.ca

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