



COASTAL  
DANCE  
FESTIVAL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
January 27, 2026

## **19th Annual Coastal Dance Festival Gathers Regional & International Indigenous Artists for a Celebration of Living Artistic Practices**

### ***Northwest Coast Indigenous performing arts festival activates museum and theatre spaces across Metro Vancouver***

**Vancouver, BC – Dancers of Damelahamid** presents the 19th annual **Coastal Dance Festival**, honouring Indigenous stories, song, and dance from across Canada and around the world, on stage **March 3, 2026** at the **Anvil Centre** in **New Westminster**, and from **March 4-8, 2026**, at the **Museum of Anthropology (MOA)** at **UBC** in **Vancouver**. Through a dynamic offering of ancestral and contemporary performances from the Northwest Coast and international Indigenous artists, audiences at both venues will be invited to re-envision their relationships with familiar spaces.

Festival highlights include: new guests **Coastal Wolf Pack** (Musqueam, Squamish, Tsartlip, Nanaimo); a preview of **Tasha Faye Evans'** (Coast Salish) full-length piece ***Cedar Woman***; returning guests **Lax Kxeen Tsimshian Dancers**, Sámi singer and activist **Sara Marielle Gaup Beaska**, and Sámi singer and poet **Lawra Somby**; and excerpts from **Dancers of Damelahamid's** existing body of work, including a mountain goat transformation mask dance originally developed for their performances at Jacob's Pillow in 2024.

"Through the Coastal Dance Festival, we're continuing to explore ways of decolonizing existing relationships with spaces such as MOA's galleries and collections through song and dance," says **Margaret Grenier**, Festival Executive & Artistic Director. "By reshaping the lens through which dance regalia and masks are perceived, we invite audiences to better understand these art pieces not as static objects, but as living, embodied practices."

The festival's program at MOA will feature a series of all-ages matinees, festival stage performances, signature evening performances set among the monumental poles of the museum's Great Hall, an artist sharing series, and a screening of the film ***So Surreal: Behind The Masks***, directed by **Neil Diamond** and **Joanne Robertson**.

Matinees on March 4 and 5 will include performances from the **Dancers of Damelahamid** and **Sara Marielle Gaup Beaska** and **Lawra Somby**, who were last presented at the Coastal Dance Festival in 2022, and return to share their deeply rooted yoiking traditions with Vancouver audiences.

Festival stage performances will each feature a distinct lineup of four groups. On March 7, audiences will see returning favourites **Yisya'winuxw** (Kwakwaka'wakw), representing many of the 16 Kwakwaka'wakw tribes of Northern Vancouver Island; the award-winning Inland Tlingit **Dakhká Khwáan Dancers**; **Rainbow Creek Dancers** (Haida), founded in 1980 by Robert and Reg Davidson; and mask-dancing group **Git Hayetsk** (Nisga'a, Tsimshian).

On March 8, Dancers of Damelahamid take the stage alongside dynamic dance group **Chinook Song Catchers** (Skwxwú7mesh, Nisga'a); the **Dakhká Khwáan Dancers**; and the **Lax Kxeen Tsimshian Dancers**, returning to the festival for the first time since their 2017 appearance.

The signature evening performance on March 6 will include Squamish-based **Spakwus Slolem** (Skwxwu7mesh), who share their canoe and cedar longhouse culture; **Yisya'winuxw**; the **Dancers of Damelahamid**; and **Sara Marielle Gaup Beaska** and **Lawra Somby**.

On March 7, the signature evening performance will feature mask-dancing group **Git Hoan** (Tsimshian); the **Dancers of Damelahamid**; **Tasha Faye Evans'** preview presentation of **Cedar Woman**, a dance honouring a legacy of Coast Salish women spanning all the way back to a tree in the Great Flood; and the Coastal Dance Festival debut of **Coastal Wolf Pack**.

The festival's artist sharing series at MOA will run daily from March 4-6 and feature conversations with **Dr. Sarah Hunt** (Kwakwaka'wakw) (March 5); and **Lawra Somby** and **Sara Marielle Gaup Beaska** (March 6). The March 5 sharing will also feature a screening of *So Surreal: Behind The Masks*.

The festival opens with two matinee performances at Anvil Centre (March 3), designed to foster an environment for youth to gain a deeper understanding of Indigenous dance, culture, and stories. The performances will open with a presentation from **Chesha7 iy Iha men** (Skwxwu7mesh, Stó:lō, Tsimshian), a family group of grandmothers, mothers, and daughters; followed by the **Dancers of Damelahamid**, who will perform their popular mask dances from their production *Spirit and Tradition*.

For full festival details and to buy tickets, visit [damelahamid.ca](http://damelahamid.ca)

#### **About Dancers of Damelahamid ([damelahamid.ca](http://damelahamid.ca))**

Dancers of Damelahamid is an Indigenous dance company from the Northwest Coast of British Columbia. The company is founded upon over five decades of extensive work of song restoration. It is the current directive of the Dancers of Damelahamid to redefine their contemporary practice and to honour this history in order that the dances may continue to be tangible and accessible for the next generation. The company has produced the Coastal Dance Festival annually since 2008, presenting Indigenous dance artists from the B.C. coast, with guest national and international artists. The festival's predecessor, Haw Yaw Hawni Naw, was produced in Prince Rupert, B.C., from 1966-1986.

#### **LISTING INFORMATION**

##### **Dates & Venues:**

#### **Dancers of Damelahamid presents 19th Annual Coastal Dance Festival**

March 3, 2026  
Anvil Centre  
777 Columbia Street  
New Westminster, BC

March 4-8, 2026  
Museum of Anthropology at UBC  
6393 NW Marine Drive  
Vancouver, BC

March 3, 2026  
Anvil Centre  
777 Columbia Street  
New Westminster, BC

**Ticket Prices:**

**Anvil Centre**

All-ages Matinee  
March 3, 11am & 1pm

\$23.55 for Adults/Seniors  
\$13.55 for Students/Child  
School Groups: call 1-888-655-9090 to book

**MOA**

All-ages Matinees  
March 4 & 5, 11am & 1pm

General Public: Free, with MOA admission  
School Groups: complete request form to book

Artist Sharing Series  
March 4-6, 3pm

Free, with MOA admission

Film screening  
March 7, 3:30pm

Free, with MOA admission

Festival Stage Performances  
March 7 & 8, 1-4pm

Free, with MOA admission

Signature Evening Performances  
March 6 & 7, 7:30pm

\$40 for Adults/Senior  
\$30 Students/Child

**Website:**

[damelahamid.ca](http://damelahamid.ca)

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