

TO LIVE ANNOUNCES 2019-2020 SEASON FEATURING **MANDELA: STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM** AT MERIDIAN ARTS CENTRE

*TO Live releases season programme to engage community and
celebrate local and international creative talent*

TORONTO, ON, June 19, 2019 – TO Live announces 2019–2020 season programming, delivering on its promise to connect audiences and communities reflective of Toronto’s population. Amongst its varied programming, TO Live announces the Toronto premiere of the exhibition ***Mandela: Struggle for Freedom***, a rich sensory experience of imagery, soundscape, digital media and objects direct from the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg, at the **Meridian Arts Centre** (formerly Toronto Centre for the Arts)

“We are proud to present a season of top artists from around the world and around the City all of which reflect the dynamic diversity of Toronto,” said Clyde Wagner, President and CEO, TO Live. *“Our new season builds on our commitment to celebrate, inspire and connect our audiences by showcasing a wide variety of innovative creative expressions.”*

Six months after announcing its long-term partnership with Meridian, Ontario’s largest credit union and the third largest in Canada, the new TO Live season includes diverse programming, along with the return of popular programs across its multiple venues.

Uptown’s **Meridian Arts Centre** (formerly Toronto Centre of the Arts), a hub for arts and entertainment features collaborations from local and global creators. Program highlights include:

Mandela: Struggle for Freedom (October 10, 2019 - January 7, 2020); created by the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in collaboration with the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg, South Africa, ***Mandela: Struggle for Freedom*** explores Mandela’s renowned fight for justice and human dignity in South Africa. Among its many dramatic visual features and original artifacts, the exhibition replicates Mandela’s eight-foot by seven-foot prison cell. When entered, the cell becomes a digital theatre whose walls tell a story of repression and resilience.

The Kingdom Choir (November 5-6, 2019); London’s The Kingdom Choir is best known for its’ show-stopping performance at the Royal Wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, seen by a global audience of over two billion. Their debut recording “Stand By Me” features 15 songs of love, hope, and inspiration including renditions of Beyonce’s “Halo,” John Legend’s “All Of Me,” Stormzy’s “Blinded By Your Grace Pt. 2” in addition to their renowned take on Ben E. King’s “Stand By Me.”

The original presentation of Mandela: Struggle for Freedom at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights was generously supported by The Asper Foundation, TD Bank Group, Travel Manitoba and Air Canada.

These events have been financially assisted by the Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund a program of the Government of Ontario through the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, administered by the Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund Corporation.

Jazz at the George; a collection of spectacular, not-to-be-missed concerts at the George Weston Recital Hall. Performances will feature **Flamenco Legends - The Paco de Lucía Project** (October 17, 2019), created by 10-time Grammy Award®-winning producer and composer Javier Limón, bringing together the group for a celebration of Paco and his legacy, virtuoso pianist **Hiroimi** (April 3, 2020), and winner of the prestigious Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition Award, New Orleans-based vocalist **Quiana Lynell** (February 15, 2020).



Downtown's **Meridian Hall** (formerly the Sony Centre for the Performing Arts) and **St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts** draw on a decades-long history of arts and entertainment to maintain a vital creative hub for the downtown core.

A Man of Good Hope (November 13-18, 2019, Bluma Appel Theatre); created by award-winning South African theatre company **Isango Ensemble**, boasts a feast of music and dance with a thread of fervent political comment woven throughout that will amplify and diversify the patron experience during the ***Mandela: Struggle for Freedom*** exhibition's three-month run.

TO Live's popular Dance Collection, presented by BMO Financial Group, includes *Spirit* from the internationally-renowned Australian company **Bangarra Dance Theatre** (November 8-9, 2019); *Radical Vitality, Solos and Duets* choreographed by **Marie Chouinard** (February 5-9, 2020); and the world premiere of *Crypto* (April 22-26, 2020) choreographed and directed by **Guillaume Côté** all co-presented with Canadian Stage at the Bluma Appel Theatre. In addition, the Dance Collection includes:

Nederlands Dans Theater (March 21, 2020); one of the world's leading contemporary dance companies that was named one of the "Top 10 dance shows that moved Toronto in 2016" by *The Globe and Mail* returns to Meridian Hall in the Spring. The mixed program will feature "The Statement" by renowned Canadian choreographer Crystal Pite, "Vladimir" by Israeli choreographer Hofesh Schecter and "Singulière Odyssée" by Sol León and Paul Lightfoot.

NDT and other dance programs in the 2019/2020 season have been made possible in part by the Government of Canada

Meridian Hall highlights also include the **Films in Concert** series including:

Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince™ in Concert (October 31 - November 02, 2019); The Harry Potter Film Concert Series returns with *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince™* the sixth film in the Harry Potter series. Conducted by Evan Mitchell, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra will perform Nicholas Hooper's incredible score live while the entire film plays in high-definition on a 40-foot screen. Co-presented with Attila Glatz Concert Productions.

and the previously announced musical blockbusters:

Taj Express: The Bollywood Musical Revue (November 23 – December 1, 2019); ***Taj Express*** explodes with the sounds of India, featuring songs composed by Academy-Award winning composer **A.R. Rahman** (*Slumdog Millionaire*, *127 Hours*). Through a fusion of film, dance, and music, ***Taj Express*** takes audiences on a live cinematic journey through modern Indian culture and society.

Bend It Like Beckham – The Musical (December 5-24, 2019); Based on the smash-hit movie that launched the careers of Keira Knightley, Parminder Nagra and Jonathan Rhys Meyers. London's West End hit musical, is a feel-good musical comedy written by original screenwriter Gurinder Chadha. Co-presented with Starvox Entertainment.



The SpongeBob Musical (December 17-22, 2019); explodes with energy and features an original pop and rock-infused score by a legendary roster of Grammy Award®-winning songwriters. Making its Canadian debut, this critically acclaimed, award-winning musical of the beloved animated character is led and conceived by visionary director Tina Landau (2018 Tony Award® nominee) and a Tony Award®-winning design team.

Visit tolive.com to see the full 2019-2020 season programme.

Tickets for all TO Live events are available online at www.ticketmaster.ca, by calling 1-855-872-7669, or in person at the following TO Live box offices:

St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts Box Office 27 Front St. E., Monday-Friday, 12pm – 6pm

Meridian Arts Centre (formerly Toronto Centre for the Arts), 5040 Yonge St., Tuesday-Saturday 1pm - 6pm

Ticketmaster phone lines operate 9:30am – 8pm Monday to Saturday, 12pm to 8pm Sundays and holidays. Online sales operate 24 hours per day.

About TO Live

Previously known as Civic Theatres Toronto, TO Live is one of Canada's largest multi-arts organizations, operating three iconic venues and presenting a full range of performing arts, theatrical and concert events in both downtown and uptown Toronto at the Sony Centre for the Performing Arts (soon to be named Meridian Hall), St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts and the Toronto Centre for the Arts (soon to be named Meridian Arts Centre). With two hubs of creativity and content creation, TO Live has a unique place and perspective in Toronto. The mission of TO Live is to activate creative spaces by inspiring local and international artists, connect audiences and to be the nexus for new ideas, elevate artistic potential, and be the catalyst for creative expression that is reflective of Toronto's diversity.

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