

— FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE —

## ARTS CLUB ANNOUNCES DIGITAL FESTIVAL SPOTLIGHTING PROFESSIONAL THEATRE PROGRAMS

**VANCOUVER, B.C. (July 23, 2020)**—The Arts Club Theatre Company is inviting the community into its digital and physical spaces next month to highlight the ways in which it engages with and furthers the artistic endeavours of local theatre artists.

From August 8 to 14, the Arts Club will host **Dialled Up: An Arts Club Community Celebration**. The festival is a blend of virtual and in-person events spotlighting professional development programs and initiatives offered by the company.

“Though we can’t put on live performances just yet, we don’t want that to stop us from honouring the beauty and talent of our community,” said Artistic Director **Ashlie Corcoran**. “Dialled Up is a way for us to gather safely and acknowledge the incredible work being done by theatre artists even during this time of crisis through programs like our Emerging Playwrights’ Unit, Bill Millerd Artist Fund, Company-in-Residence Program, Access Space Grant, and Silver Commissions Project.”

During the week of the festival, Arts Club content across all platforms will be dedicated to this celebration—sharing everything from videos to play readings and roundtable discussions with Arts Club artists.

“We’re thinking of it as a company-wide takeover,” explained Corcoran. “We want it to be clear to anyone opening our website, social media, or newsletters that we’re in the midst of a festival, and for them to experience the warm sense of community that an in-person arts festival creates.”

Dialled Up will kick off with a virtual open mic night, featuring MC **Munish Sharma**, on Saturday, August 8. Actors, artists, and members of the theatre community at large can sign up for a five-minute slot which they may use to share their art in any way they choose, whether that’s singing a song, reading their work, or presenting a monologue. Those who don’t wish to sign up can still attend to socialize and cheer on their peers.

Festival content will include personalized videos from Silver Commissions playwrights and 2019 Bill Millerd Artist Fund recipients, including **Elaine Avila, Aaron Bushkowsky, Gavan Cheema, Mishelle Cuttler, Dave Deveau, Dorothy Dittrich, Dennis Foon, Lucia Frangione, Tai Amy Grauman, Veda Hille, Shizuka Kai, Hiro Kanagawa, Amy Lee Lavoie, Anton Lipovetsky, Shawn Macdonald, Jessica Anne Nelson, Omari Newton, Michele Riml, Jess Amy Shead, Astrid Varnes, Kaitlin Williams, and Marcus Youssef**. The Silver Commissions Project provides funding for two playwrights each season to write a new play with the goal of eventually producing it on one of the company’s three stages, and the Bill Millerd Artist Fund assists B.C. theatre artists with expenses related to opportunities that advance their artistic development, such as apprenticeships and workshops.



Viewers will also hear from participants in the Arts Club's Company-in-Residence Program, which is designed to offer professional development, encouragement, and resources for a Vancouver-based company in its early years of creating and producing theatre. Video profiles of both the current Company in Residence, **rice & beans theatre**, and the incoming one, **Babelle Theatre**, will be broadcast during the festival. Additionally, digital attendees can enjoy a pre-recorded, in-studio showcase of *So Damn Proud*, written by **Justin Neal** and produced by **Holy Crow Arts**—recipients of the Arts Club's Access Space Grant, which provides independent theatre companies with a rental subsidy to use the Newmont Stage at the BMO Theatre Centre as a performance venue. Under normal circumstances, the play would have been performed live at the venue; this pre-recorded showcase ensures that it can still be enjoyed by an audience.

This unique week-long festival will wrap up with a live reading of *Redbone Coonhound* by Amy Lee Lavoie and Omari Newton, who were granted a Silver Commission in 2018. It will take place at the Newmont Stage at the BMO Theatre Centre on Friday, August 14, and will feature actors **Ese Atawo, Bryan Demore, Kayla Deorksen, Chris Francisque, Nancy Kerr, Brian Markinson, and Adrian Neblett.**

The *Redbone Coonhound* reading will be streamed online and accessible to the public via a pay-what-you-can donation. All proceeds will go towards the Arts Club's newly established **Denis Simpson Fund**. This endowment fund was created in honour of the late multitalented performer **Denis Simpson**. It is also part of the Arts Club's Statement of Actions, which outlines the company's commitment to removing barriers to inclusion in its culture, hiring practices, and programming—including those created by systemic racism.

More detailed information on the Dialled Up festival schedule will be shared on the Arts Club's Digital Edition website and social media channels in the coming weeks.

***For interviews, please contact Madison Taylor, Communications Associate, at [publicity@artsclub.com](mailto:publicity@artsclub.com)***

#### **ABOUT THE ARTS CLUB**

The Arts Club Theatre Company, founded in 1964, is Canada's largest not-for-profit urban theatre company. Led by Artistic Director Ashlie Corcoran and Executive Director Peter Cathie White, it offers professional theatre at three venues—the Stanley Industrial Alliance Stage, Granville Island Stage, and the Newmont Stage at the BMO Theatre Centre—as well as on tour throughout the province.