

TORONTO FRINGE REVEALS FULL LISTINGS FOR NEXT STAGE COMMUNITY BOOSTER

The Power of Partnership Fuels the COVID-era Next Stage Experience

January 21-24, 2021 at fringetoronto.com

January 8, 2021. (Toronto, ON) The Next Stage Community Booster replaces the 14th annual Next Stage Theatre Festival, which was cancelled due to COVID-19. **This four-day event will be a boost of energy, ideas, creativity, and friendship for those enduring an isolated pandemic winter.** The event will feature digital performances from acclaimed indie artists, a half-day conference for the indie theatre community, livestreamed conversations on urgent topics, a special interactive fundraiser event, a digital Self-Care Hub, audio experiences, and more.

Smorgasbord of Digital Offerings

In true Next Stage fashion, audiences can select from a smorgasbord of offerings for every budget and every interest. Theatre lovers will want to catch **Theatre Shorts**, co-presented by **TO Live**, featuring 6 creations professionally filmed on stage at the Jane Mallet Theatre. Catch work from Fringe veterans **Ryan G. Hinds**, **Rebecca Perry** and **Steven Elliott Jackson** (*The Kindness of Murder*), indie music fave **Cat and the Queen** and **Sasha Singer-Wilson** (*Begin Again*), and the powerhouse acting chops of **Debra Hale** and **Heather Charron** in the tense two-hander, *Mary Henderson*. [Full listings of Theatre Shorts can be found in the Next Stage Community Booster digital brochure.](#)

Audiences will also want to catch **Storytelling with Steam Whistle**, a series of 9 live-to-tape videos shot on location at Steam Whistle Brewing's Locomotive Hall. Each of these solo works showcases a dynamic performer with an incredible tale in a beautiful location. Enjoy stories from Fringe regulars **Johnnie Walker** (*The Send-Off*), **Aliya Kanani** (*Someone Will Save Us?*), **Graham Isador** (*Blind Confidence*), and **Thea-Fitz James** (*Miracle on Avenue du Parc*). [Full listings can be found in digital brochure.](#)

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All content listed above was filmed in accordance with the Ontario and City of Toronto Public Health recommendations in December 2020 and January 2021.

Bake Your Heart Out with Morro & Jasp

Those looking for a live theatre experience will be excited to join **Morro & Jasp** for *Bake Your Heart Out with Morro & Jasp*. A one-night-only performance on **Saturday, January 23 at 8:30pm.**

About the Event: Our favourite clown sisters are attempting to bake all their troubles away and get through isolation from their respective homes, and you're invited. This Zoom-based, interactive, and participatory baking extravaganza will lead the audience through a few delectable recipes that will fill your belly and warm your hearts. Audiences may purchase these in-demand tickets at two price levels [here](#). On sale now.

A Partnership Success Story

The digital theatre pieces that will premiere at the Next Stage Community Booster would not have been possible without the collaboration of **Steam Whistle Brewing** and **TO Live**. These two long-time partners were not willing to let their commitment to indie theatre be stopped by the pandemic, and stepped up to help the Toronto Fringe support artists in these difficult times.

Partnership continues to be the prevailing theme in the non-performance aspects of this event as well. Many artists and organizations have paired up with the Toronto Fringe team to make this event sustainable and grounded in the voices of the community. Toronto Fringe looks forward to showcasing urgent conversations from **Paprika Festival** (Access in the Arts, Crip the Script), **Phoenix the Fire** (ASL for Fringers), Ryerson University's **Creative Innovation Studio** (Micro-Conference), **TENT Alumni** (Surviving and Thriving), **Intermission Magazine** (Digital Theatre panel) and **Metcalf Foundation** (Audience Engagement).

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Self-Care Hub to Boost the Community

Alongside our ticketed performance offerings, the Next Stage Community Booster will feature a digital Self-Care Hub on fringetoronto.com. Patrons may access this portal with a tip to the Toronto Fringe at the level they are comfortable with. (\$0 is fine as well.) Fringe wanted to ensure the hub was financially accessible to those (particularly artists) struggling to make ends meet this year.

In addition to useful resources, there will be lots of fun! Enjoy dance classes with Next Stage alumni (**Ashley Perez, Byron Abalos and Andrea Mapili**), mindfulness meditation with Edmonton Fringe's Artistic Director (**Murray Utas**), calming calligraphy with Fringe's former Development Manager (**Cody McCallum**), and a daily livescream – yes we said live SCREAM – with current Development Manager (**Morgan Norwich**). [Full listings for the Self-Care Hub can be found in digital brochure.](#)

Live Digital Events Offer Connection and Clarity

When the 2021 Next Stage Theatre Festival was cancelled due to COVID-19, the Toronto Fringe created a community survey to ask: What do you need from us? How can we best serve you in this difficult time? In addition to the need for art, friendship and fun, **the community spoke about an urge for connection and clarity.** Many of them felt alone, isolated, and confused about the state of the industry. Many issues were being discussed by artistic leaders in closed-door sessions, but indie artists were feeling left out.

The Live Digital Events during the Next Stage Community Booster have been programmed to offer connection and clarity to the indie theatre community. They will be a chance to come together, to discuss urgent topics, and to clarify the pathways forward in the post-pandemic era. [Full listings of the Live Digital Events can be found in digital brochure.](#)

Audio Offerings – Coming Soon!

In the coming days, Toronto Fringe will be releasing further information about an audio series as part of the Next Stage Community Booster. Stay tuned to our website for details.

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How Audiences Can Enjoy the Community Booster

There are many ways to enjoy the Next Stage Community Booster. Full details can be found on [our ticketing page](#).

Toronto Fringe has tried to offer something for every budget, while also balancing its belief in fairly compensating artists for their work. Artists in this festival have already been paid a commission fee, and the proceeds from ticket sales will reimburse Fringe for this upfront investment in the artists.

Those hoping to support Toronto Fringe and indie artists may consider purchasing a **Community Booster Membership for \$100**. This allows patrons to seamlessly navigate the website to view all content in the Community Booster, including: Theatre Shorts, Storytelling with Steam Whistle, Audio Offerings, *Bake Your Heart out with Morro & Jasp*, and the Self-Care Hub.

From Executive Director, Lucy Eveleigh:

“We have four jam-packed days of delightful programming for you - from important conversations, a micro-conference, and exciting workshops to super talented artists sharing their stories. We hope you get a chance to experience as much content as possible and feel a little bit more connected to the community in these disconnected times.”

Important Facts about Next Stage Community Booster

Date: January 21 – 24, 2021

Location: Fully online, at fringetoronto.com

Next Stage Community Booster Digital Brochure: [View here](#).

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Cost:

Community Booster Membership (For full access) - **\$100**

Theatre Shorts (6 unique mini-productions) - **\$25**

Storytelling with Steam Whistle (9 ten-minute story performances) - **\$25**

Audio Offerings (Details announced soon!) - **\$15**

Bake Your Heart Out with Morro & Jasp (Live interactive theatre experience) - **\$30/\$60**

Self-Care Hub (Digital hub of 11 workshops and resources) - **Tip What You Can**

Live Events (Livestreamed workshops and panels) - **FREE**

[Full ticketing details.](#)

Access: ASL interpretation is included at many live events. All videos will be Close Captioned. Livestreamed events will have Auto-Transcribed Captions or Live-Transcribed Captions. Those with specific access requests should reach out as soon as possible by emailing Suzanne at intern@fringetoronto.com and the Toronto Fringe will do its best to accommodate. To learn more about Accessibility at Next Stage and Fringe, visit our [website](#).

Media Accreditation: Limited media accreditation will be issued for this event. Please contact Communications Manager Claire Wynveen to inquire.

COVID Safety: All content was filmed in accordance with the Ontario and City of Toronto Public Health recommendations in December 2020 and January 2021.

For Media Inquiries:

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(No phone calls please – working remotely)