

For Immediate Release

Media Contact: Gwen Kallio, [sisuproductions@telus.net](mailto:sisuproductions@telus.net), 60004-215-2345



**As part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the TALKING STICK FESTIVAL Season of Four Fires  
SPRING AWAKENING**

Free online at [www.talkingstickfest.ca](http://www.talkingstickfest.ca)

**April 29 – May 1, 2021**

For the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Talking Stick Festival in 2021, Full Circle: First Nations Performance calls to the Four Directions and All Our Relations to gather around Four Fires, in each season: winter, spring, summer, and fall. It began earlier this year with *The Winter Lodge: Sitting with our Ancestors* – performances and teachings presented online from February 18-27, 2021.

Coming up, from **April 29-May 1**, Talking Stick invites you to the warming fire of **Spring Awakening**. It's a season where new ideas bloom - a celebration of Indigenous performance and culture online with music, dance, spoken word, teachings and more.

**Thursday, April 29 at 6pm: Plant Walk with Cease Wyss and Margo Kane**

T'uy't'tanat Cease Wyss is an ethno-botanist, media artist, educator, and activist of Skwxwu7mesh/Stó:lō/ Hawaiian/Swiss ancestry who has been traditionally trained by Indigenous Knowledge Keepers and Elders. On a recent sunny spring day, she led festival Artistic Managing Director, Margo Kane, on a journey of botanical discovery through Stanley Park. Cease shares her extensive plant and forest knowledge, talks about medicines, traditional teachings and the interconnectedness of nature and the forest.

**Friday, April 30 at 7pm: PIQSIQ with special guest Francis Baptiste in concert**

Recorded at the Historic Theatre at the Cultch, Inuit-style throat singing sisters Tiffany Kuliktana Ayalik and Kayley Inuksuk Mackay, the duo **PIQSIQ**, perform ancient traditional songs along with those taking inspiration from the world around them. It's a singular singing style born of a hard-won skill perpetually galvanized by the winter darkness and haunting northern beauty of Nunavut and their Yellowknife home, blended with their love of haunting melodies and otherworldly sounds. PIQSIQ performances, in alignment with throat singing's original and spontaneous form, are truly enthralling and unique to every show.

Opening the concert is Syilx/Okanagan singer-songwriter **Francis Baptiste**.

Currently working on his debut solo album, Francis incorporates his language, N'syilxčn - currently spoken fluently by only 150 people - into his songwriting.

Suzette Amaya, radio host, producer, speaker and role model, is the evening's MC.

*Presented by Talking Stick in partnership with the Vancouver Folk Music Festival*

**Saturday, May 1 at 7pm: the Spring Fling Ab-Cabaret**

This lively event, one of the favourite parts of Talking Stick Festivals over the years, features **V'ni Dansi**, a Vancouver-based traditional Métis and contemporary dance company; up-and-coming Indigenous singer/songwriter, **Michelle Heyoka**; alternative R&B and soul artist, **Zach Saunders**, and: **Eagle Ex Machina**, a local Vancouver alt rock band led by fiddle master Matt Cook-Contois (Cree). The cabaret is hosted by rising Indigiqueer pop artist, **Nimkish**.

**INDUSTRY SERIES**

On both **Friday, April 30** and **Saturday, May 1**, the Talking Stick Industry Series presents a variety of workshops, panels, discussions, videos and teachings on subjects of use and interest to both up-and-coming and veteran Indigenous artists in a range of disciplines. Topics include writing for the stage, artists' personal and community development-related issues, legacy building, songwriting and music publishing. (*Full schedule on the Talking Stick website*)

**Join Talking Stick around the warming fire of Spring Awakening - a call to the stories, songs, and dances that sustain and renew us, that birth a spirit of hope and healing.**

***And, coming in June – a month-long summer edition of Talking Stick Festival 2021.***

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