

### **Together in Dance Festival Proposal for 2021**

The Together in Dance Festival is a multicultural festival celebrating the diversity and unity of cultures in Hamilton through dance. We aim to create a lasting impact and create a sense of cultural awareness and belonging in our community as a response to the pivotal need for appreciation and respect for multicultural values and heritage. HCA Dance Theatre as the presenter, is committed to aiding the community of Hamilton in the development of a more positive, pluralistic and vibrant social and culturally sustaining environment for all citizens through the development of community arts events.

The Together in Dance festival in its pilot year, was developed as a one-day festival with an unlimited potential for growth following the successful completion of the season. The event was hosted on Family Day weekend at Mohawk College, it encompassed a unique program of engaging activities; dance performances, workshops, networking and a communiTEA guided by the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council. The highlight of the 2020 festival was the dance performances by eight local companies/cultural organizations with 150 dancers and over 600 audience members in attendance. The feedback received was that they wish it would continue all weekend! Our partners were; The Hamilton Regional Indian Centre, School of Serbian Folklore (SLOGA), Shreya Bollywood, Mahasti Bellydance, Suzuran Odori Group through the Canadian Japanese Cultural Centre, Schiehallion Dancers and guest performer Compania Carmen Romero. Our partners served as a committee to work in tandem with HCA Dance Theatre to create a format which suited their needs and the festival needs.

In 2021, HCA Dance Theatre is creating the festival as a virtual event. We plan to have a similar format, allowing our audiences to experience and participate in dance from their homes due to the unforeseen Covid-19. Our timeline will be longer due to the filming and editing process which will take us into April 2021. We would like to continue our outreach through performances and scheduled pre-show workshops.

#### **Performances**

We will be pre-filming each dance piece with professional director William Yong, he produced the 2020 version of Dusk Dances and is a professional dancer in addition to a film director. This year will feature short segments of both professional and non-professional groups and companies that celebrate dances from traditional styles to contemporary styles from across the world. In addition to local outreach, we will also be including a guest company to perform which we are currently working through negotiations with.

#### **Dance Workshops**

We would like to invite audience members during the pre-show as well as throughout the premiere weekend to take a dance workshop. We hope to allow people to learn new steps, improve skills, and increase their knowledge in traditional dances from various countries all from home. All workshops will be taught through live-stream and will provide experiential learning and positive interaction.

The festival is a pay-what-you-can entry fee to reduce financial barriers within the community and allow for greater participation. We anticipate a wide range of outcomes throughout the festival that we hope to continue to develop each year including but not limited to the promotion of equal opportunities in the arts for individuals of all origins, the promotion of dance and culture in local communities, building bridges to understanding between & amongst communities, reducing barriers to access, participation and inclusion and create participatory content for those at home being affected by Covid-19. Most importantly, the Together in Dance festival committee has become a community that supports one another through challenging times and we hope to expand it.

We will ensure the recruitment process offers equal opportunity for all multicultural artists/groups to apply and our Artistic Director, Festival Producer and Film Director will work closely with the participants to develop a program that is balanced, inclusive, and true to the artists' culture, identity, and artistic goals. The Together in Dance Committee will continue to work together with HCA Dance theatre to design the festival appropriately from different perspectives and identify future goals.

The Arts Advisory Commission's Support along with City Councillor Jason Farr in 2020, made it possible for HCA Dance Theatre to continue the festival and develop partnerships with many community organizations including the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council. Creating a virtual edition is a crucial part of the growth we hope to achieve and continue bringing people together through the arts throughout this time.

Thank you for your consideration and support.

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