

#NiagaraPerforms

A new online performance series to shine a spotlight on Niagara artists

St. Catharines, 16 April 2020 – The FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre is set to launch a new online series to help further connect audiences and artists during this unprecedented time of physical separation. **#NiagaraPerforms** will provide a platform and professional artist fees for local artists to share performances with online audiences as a home-grown take on the National Arts Centre’s #CanadaPerforms series.

“We are pleased to join this national movement through a local lens,” says **Sara Palmieri**, Programming and Marketing Manager. “We want to continue to find ways that connect our local artists and arts organizations with audiences and the online space is definitely a place where we can all still meet.”

The first batch of #NiagaraPerforms artists were selected by the programming team from previous editions of the popular *Hear! Here! Niagara Music Series* as well existing partnerships with local arts organizations. The online series will be announced two weeks at a time as the FirstOntario PAC continues to monitor the changing realities of the COVID-19 crisis.

#NiagaraPerforms kicks off on Sunday 19 April at 4pm with a performance from the home studio of musician and producer extraordinaire Mark Lalama, to commemorate what would have been the final *Hear! Here! Niagara Music Series* performance of the 19/20 HOT TICKET season. The first two-week line-up includes:

Sunday 19 April, 4pm – **Mark Lalama**, celebrated local producer, musician and hosting artist of the *Hear! Here! Niagara Music Series*.

Thursday 23 April, 7pm – **Gordon Cleland**, principal Cellist for the Niagara Symphony Orchestra and Music Department Instructor at Brock University’s Marilyn I Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts.

Sunday 26 April, 4pm – **Laurel & Hulley**, local *Hear! Here!* alumni Laurel Minnes and her musical partner Taylor Hulley will bring their blend of vocal harmonies and laid-back grooves.

Thursday 30 April, 7pm – Some quarantine comic relief with **Suitcase in Point**, known around the FirstOntario PAC for their hilarious holiday sketch comedy cabarets.

The FirstOntario PAC's new online series will feature live concerts from Niagara musicians every Sunday at 4pm and content from community partners every Thursday at 7pm. Performances will be available for viewing through the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre's **Facebook and YouTube channels**.

Similarly in The Film House we will provide virtual cinema experiences for you to enjoy from your home, with simple screening options, every Wednesday. We kicked it off with a roar this week - or should we say a meow - with **CatVideoFest 2020**.

"I've heard this a few times and it's true," notes Sara Palmieri. "When this is all over it will be the music, films, books and livestreamed concerts and performances that will get us through this. The arts will keep us connected."

For more information, visit FirstOntarioPAC.ca

For interviews, please contact:

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About the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre

The FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre is a 95,000 square foot cultural complex comprised of four state-of-the-art performance venues that host a signature presentation of international and local performing artists. Designed by Diamond Schmitt Architects, the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre plays a vital role in the renaissance of downtown St. Catharines, serving as the catalyst in modernizing the area and reinforcing the brilliance of Niagara region's diverse cultural cluster.

The FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre gratefully acknowledges the support of the Department of Canadian Heritage's Canada Arts Presentation Fund.