

## *Launch of Reconciliation Through Theatre Project*

**Winnipeg, March 28, 2019** – Reconciliation is the restoration of friendly relations. It is a simple concept, but challenging to achieve when much reparation needs to be done. Sarasvati Productions believes the arts have an important role to play and are excited to begin their latest community-based project *Seven Visions – Reconciliation Through Theatre*. We will be hosting public presentations from **May 4-9, 2019** to officially launch this exciting initiative.

This project is guided by a dedicated group of Indigenous advisors as part of Sarasvati Productions' Indigenous Advisory Committee. It involves seven organizations working in partnership to offer a creative and supportive space for youth. Using an artistic lens, Winnipeg's Indigenous youth can examine how they interact with the world around them and how the world in turn interacts with them. This collaboration will bring together youth and elders, various artists and a broad audience over two phases.

The first phase includes consultation circles. Throughout April we will be undertaking *Seven Circles*, visioning sessions with youth. Partner organizations will host a chance for youth to brainstorm and decide the parameters for moving forward. We are grateful to Children of the Earth High School, Indigenous Leadership Development Institute, The Knowles Centre, Manitoba Youth Centre, Marymound School, Ndinawemaaganag Endaawaad Inc., and Wahbung Abinoonjiiag for their collaboration.

*"We are very excited to begin meeting with the seven organizations in a week and look forward to learning more about the youth that will be involved and how they view reconciliation within Canada as Indigenous Youth,"* says Indigenous Project Coordinator Nova Courchene.

At the May public launch, visual artist Jaime Black will share what was heard in these visioning sessions through an art installation piece. We will also be hosting a reading of Jo MacDonald's *OUR HOME & Native Land*, winner of the 2017 FemFest Bake-Off. This comedic piece about treaty rights will help to frame discussion and encourage public input. There will be an opportunity for responses and discussion.

We invite the public, organizations and schools to join us for the project launch and discussion. Admission is by donation. It will take place at the **Asper Centre for Theatre and Film** located at the **University of Winnipeg 400 Colony Street** on the following dates:

- **Saturday, May 4<sup>th</sup> at 2pm**
- **Tuesday, May 7<sup>th</sup> at 1pm**
- **Wednesday, May 8<sup>th</sup> at 10am**
- **and Thursday, May 9<sup>th</sup> at 7pm**

Ultimately, this is just the starting point for the project. From June to November, workshops with youth will take place at partner organizations. Then in May 2020 a full public performance of the resulting work will take place. As a true community collaboration, the final performance will come directly from participants working alongside professional artists. The results and lessons learned from the project will also have a long-term impact with changes to Sarasvati's practices moving forward.

*About Sarasvati Productions: Sarasvati Dramatic Theatre Producers and Repertory Inc (founded in Winnipeg in 2000) seeks to inspire artists and audiences through the use of theatre and to provide a place where artists can develop and showcase their skills and celebrate their creativity.*