

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

National Theatre School of Canada celebrates successful first year of Accessibility and Inclusivity Program (AIP), sponsored by TD

Montreal, September 5, 2023 - The National Theatre School of Canada (NTS) is pleased to enter the second year of its Accessibility and Inclusivity Program (AIP), sponsored by TD. Comprised of two transformative initiatives, **New Pathways** and **Stage Découverte(s)**, the AIP aims to break the cycle of exclusion for IBPOC artists and improve access to theatre training for underrepresented youth.

The Stage Découverte(s) was created in 2021 to give Francophone youth from across Canada an immersive introduction to the world of theatre. Each year, around 20 participants aged 15 to 20 years old are invited to spend three days at NTS, where they will engage in every facet of theatrical creation, all free of charge and under the guidance of experienced professionals. The most recent edition of the Stage Découverte(s) was held in Montreal from August 17 to 19, 2023, welcoming 23 participants from as far afield as Pessamit and the Iles-de-la-Madeleine.

“The Stage Découverte(s) allows us to inspire and nurture a passion for theatre among young people who, for geographic or socioeconomic reasons, may otherwise lack meaningful exposure to the performing arts or access to high-quality facilities and instruction,” says Fanny Pagé, CEO of the National Theatre School. “The three-year commitment from TD ensures that we will be able to continue to offer this unique program for years to come.”

“The Stage Découverte(s) allowed me to further explore my options in theatre education and see the endless possibilities NTS had to offer,” says Sephora Nkosi, a 2022 Stage Découverte(s) participant who joined the Production Design and Technical Arts program this year. “I was able to not only find my place in the community but also see that my specific points of interest were being explored and expanded at the School. I was able to talk with future teachers and even meet future mentors. It was one of my best decisions.”

The other half of the Accessibility and Inclusivity Program, on the English side, is the New Pathways initiative. Through New Pathways, NTS is collaborating with IBPOC-led theatre organizations to create bridges between specific communities and the School. Once a partnership is established, the collaborating organization selects an artist from their community to enter a professional training program, without having to go through the traditional selection process.

Two new New Pathways students will be joining NTS this fall, in addition to a returning student entering her third year. All three were selected by Native Earth Performing Arts, Canada’s oldest professional Indigenous theatre company, to join the School’s Production Design and Technical Arts program. At NTS, these Indigenous students will study production management, technical direction, stage management, lighting design, sound design, and projection design—skills that are in high demand in the performing arts world.

“TD’s commitment to fostering diversity within the arts community aligns perfectly with our vision for the Accessibility and Inclusivity Program,” says Fanny Pagé. “We’re excited to work together on removing barriers to access and increasing the diversity of voices in Canadian theatre.”

“At TD, we believe that by supporting arts and culture events, initiatives and organizations, we are contributing to amplify diverse voices. We are therefore extremely proud to support the National Theatre School of Canada's Accessibility and Inclusivity Program and to offer emerging artists from cultural communities the opportunity to express their talent and unleash their full potential,” says Sylvie Demers, Chair, Quebec Market, TD Bank Group.

About the Accessibility and Inclusivity Program

NTS created the Accessibility and Inclusivity Program (AIP) to address the issue of ensuring access to the School for underrepresented artists. Creating new possibilities for marginalized artists to enter the School is key to breaking the systems of exclusion that undermine access to training in the performing arts. For more information about NTS’s Accessibility and Inclusivity Program and to learn about the Stage Découverte(s) and New Pathways, please visit: www.ent-nts.ca/en/accessibility-inclusivity-program.

About the National Theatre School of Canada

Founded in 1960, the National Theatre School of Canada (NTS) is recognized as a leading institution for anyone wishing to pursue a career as a playwright, director, actor, set and costume designer, or production professional, and offers incomparable training for artists of all kinds. It offers high-level training for artists of all kinds in all aspects of the theatre arts, in both French and English. Many of its 2,300 graduates are among Canada’s most active and versatile artists and designers, and the School’s influence is felt from coast to coast and across the world. Learn more at www.ent-nts.ca.

About TD

TD is a proud supporter of arts and culture in Canada. As part of its corporate citizenship platform, TD Ready Commitment, TD is committed to investing in inclusive and accessible initiatives that provide equal opportunities for all Canadians to participate in and enjoy the arts. Learn more at www.td.com/ca/en/about-td/ready-commitment.

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