



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DanceHouse, SFU Woodward's Cultural Programs, and Talking Stick Festival
Present the West Coast Premiere of ILBIJERRI Theatre Company's
— *Blood on the Dance Floor* —

Provocative Indigenous Australian artist Jacob Boehme shines light on the ongoing stigma, discrimination, and silence around HIV/AIDS in Indigenous communities

Vancouver, BC – DanceHouse, SFU Woodward's Cultural Programs, and Talking Stick Festival are honoured to present the West Coast premiere of ILBIJERRI Theatre Company's ***Blood on the Dance Floor*** by Jacob Boehme, on stage **February 6-9, 2019 at 8pm** at the **SFU Goldcorp Centre for the Arts**. Rooted in Aboriginal Dance, theatre, and storytelling, this award-winning work, written and performed by Jacob Boehme, choreographed by Mariaa Randall, and directed by Isaacc Drandic, is based on the deeply personal experience of Boehme, a renowned dancer, writer, and choreographer from the Narangga and Kaurana nations of South Australia. *Blood on the Dance Floor* unapologetically shares Boehme's emotionally honest story of gay, Blak, and poz identities; and explores the struggle, heartache, and enduring spirit of someone living at the intersection of Aboriginal, queer, and HIV-positive communities.

"This work comes at a landmark moment in the history of HIV. With the increasing availability of preventative medication, HIV transmission rates are decreasing and life expectancy for those with the virus is increasing," says Jim Smith, Artistic and Executive Director of DanceHouse. "However, in both Australia and Canada HIV rates in Indigenous communities are sadly on the rise. *Blood on the Dance Floor* is a poignant work that shines a powerful and captivating light on the stigma, the discrimination, and the silence that surrounds HIV/AIDS in Indigenous communities. But the work also embraces our need for community, our deepest fears, our secret identities, and what blood means to each of us — questioning how this most precious fluid unites and divides us."

When Boehme was diagnosed with HIV in 1998, he reached out to his ancestors in search of answers. Through a series of moving theatrical vignettes complete with video and sound design, choreography, and visceral narrative that transverses time, space, and characters, *Blood on the Dance Floor* pays homage to Boehme's ancestors' ceremonies, while dissecting the politics of gay, Blak, and poz identities. From a 'gay elder' grieving young men lost to disease and despair, to the current culture of hook-ups and casual sex, deeper moments sketched between Boehme and his father will underscore the legacy of racism, homophobia, and shame permeating the work with both personal and cultural history.

A Melbourne-based artist, director, and producer, Boehme has been widely praised for his "charismatic presence and easy smile, graceful movement, and the emotional intelligence behind his storytelling," (The Age). He received his dance training at NAISDA Dance College, Australia's premiere Indigenous training college, and graduated from the Victorian College of the Arts with a Master of Writing for Performance (2014), and Master of Puppetry (2007). He is an alumnus of the British Council's ACCELERATE Indigenous Leadership Program and is the former Creative Director of Yirramboi, the Melbourne Indigenous Arts Festival.

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Blood on the Dance Floor is Boehme's debut as a playwright, which was first developed as part of ILBIJERRI's Black Writers Lab. The work premiered in 2016 at the Arts House in North Melbourne to critical acclaim, was awarded Best Independent Production at the 2016 Green Room Awards in Melbourne, and is now on a 2019 Canadian Tour.

Randall is a Bundjalung/Yaegl woman from the Far North Coast of New South Wales, Australia. An in demand teacher, performer, and choreographer throughout Australia, she graduated from NAISDA Dance College, and holds a Diploma in Dance, a Graduate Diploma in Performance Creation, and a Master in Animateuring from the Victorian College of the Arts. Aside from *Blood on the Dance Floor*, Randall is known for her following works: *HALF* (a solo work), *Poetry in Motion* (created in collaboration with second-year dance students at VCAM), *Painting the Dance* (a dance installation), and *Diversity* (premiered at Dance Massive in 2017).

Drandic is an actor, director, and dramaturge who trained in the Aboriginal Theatre program at the West Australian Academy of Performing Arts. He received the Uncle Jack Charles Award at the 2008 Victorian Indigenous Performing Arts Awards, recognizing "best achievement by a Victorian theatre practitioner." In 2012, he was a participant in the British Council ACCELERATE Program. He is also a member of Malthouse Theatre's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee.

Established in 1990, ILBIJERRI Theatre Company is one of Australia's leading theatre companies creating, presenting, and touring powerful and engaging multidisciplinary work by First Nations artists. Praised for exuding "a defiant sense of honesty and a clear determination to create change through story," (Broadsheet Melbourne), their work is provocative and affecting while giving voice to the unique and diverse cultures of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in Australia. They promote discussion and raise awareness of key issues facing the community through the development and touring of theatre that remind audiences of every person's need for family, history, and heritage.

Warning: For audience members age 15 and up. Performance includes *adult concepts (sexual & drug references), coarse language, and loud music.*

For tickets and further information, visit: dancehouse.ca

ILBIJERRI Theatre Company acknowledges the generous support of its funders and supporters:



About DanceHouse (dancehouse.ca)

DanceHouse connects Vancouver audiences and the local arts community to the international world of dance by presenting exceptional companies that are recognized for their excellence, innovation, and international reputation. Since 2008, DanceHouse has presented vibrant and inspiring companies from Canada and around the world. In addition to the performances on stage, DanceHouse offers a suite of engagement opportunities and a chance for the general public and local artistic community to engage with the presented artists and their work.

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LISTING INFORMATION

DanceHouse, SFU Woodward's Cultural Programs, and Talking Stick Festival present ILBIJERRI Theatre Company: *Blood on the Dance Floor* by Jacob Boehme

Show Dates: February 6-9, 2019 at 8pm

Pre-Show Speaking of Dance Conversations – *Post-identity Utopia*
Tuesday, February 5, 2019

For more information visit: dancehouse.ca/speaking-of-dance/

Ticket prices: From \$35

Address: SFU Goldcorp Centre for the Arts
149 West Hastings St, Vancouver, BC

Box Office: dancehouse.ca/tickets/single-tickets/ or call 604.801.6225

Website: dancehouse.ca

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