



NIA CENTRE ANNOUNCES BLOWOUT FESTIVAL, A MULTI-DAY BLACK ARTS CELEBRATION

Simcoe Day Long Weekend: Friday, August 4 to Monday, August 7, 2017

TORONTO, ONT (June 14, 2017) – Nia Centre for the Arts has a new addition to their yearly programming: a black arts celebration taking place during the Simcoe Day long weekend—the ***Blowout Festival***. The festival will begin on Friday, August 4 at Nia Centre, continue at the Peeks Toronto Caribbean Carnival Grand Parade on Saturday, August 5; there will be an arts symposium on Sunday, August 6 at Toronto Centre for the Arts, and the festival will conclude on Monday, August 7 with the *Blowout Blocko* at Earl Bales Park.

The *Blowout Blocko* is a part of the City of Toronto’s Arts in the Parks initiative, announced today with Mayor John Tory at Dufferin Grove Park. Nia Centre was a successful recipient of the Toronto Arts Council’s Animating Toronto Parks grant program that provides funding to organizations to support free arts programming in selected Toronto Parks. The summer events are managed by the Toronto Arts Foundation and the Toronto Arts Council, in partnership with the City of Toronto Arts & Culture Services, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, and also community partner Park People.

“We plan to embrace all of the energy, the visitors, and the vibrant culture the weekend provides,” said Nia Centre Executive Director Dwayne Dixon. “We are celebrating our black culture...down to its roots.”

Dixon, who announced the ***Festival*** at today’s Arts in the Park press conference, stressed the importance of the Simcoe Day long weekend as it commemorates the emancipation of slavery, and the original vision of the Toronto Carnival weekend.

The ***Blowout Festival*** will feature arts programming including carnival arts, music, literary, visual, and media, all in recognition of the Afro-Diasporic experience, and in celebration of Canada’s 150th and Toronto Carnival’s 50th anniversaries.

For details about the ***Blowout Festival***, including volunteer and vending opportunities, please visit Nia Centre’s website at www.niacentre.org/blowout-fest-2017. Performers, additional programming partners, and a full schedule for the festival will be announced in the coming weeks.

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