



Geordie premieres  
*Reaching for Starlight*

## Description

### Theatre's latest show is its biggest production to date

Geordie Theatre's highly anticipated *Reaching for Starlight* premieres **April 26, 2019**, at Concordia University's beautiful 380-seat D. B. Clarke Theatre. Written by two-time Governor General Award-nominated playwright **Donna-Michelle St. Bernard** and directed by Geordie's own **Mike Payette**, *Reaching for Starlight* boasts an exceptional cast and a cross-disciplinary infusion of theatre and dance, resulting in a stunning piece of work that addresses the increasingly relevant themes of empowerment, empathy, and the ever-important belief in a genuine capacity for change.



Mike Payette

Geordie's biggest production to date, **Reaching for Starlight** bursts with three years of creative process. Speaking on the lengthy creation, St. Bernard says, "Extended development allows for a deepening, the time and support to go beyond connecting plot points, beyond what is being said, to also look at what is implied, omitted, intended." The playwright explains that she is confident in the ways the cast and crew have been able to infuse their voices in the work, "We have had the opportunity to hear from the many voices that are part of making this story."

*Reaching for Starlight* is the story of Reenie, a young girl motivated by a family legacy of dance. As she and her peers strive for perfection in anticipation of the coveted end-of-year solo, they discover that being the best isn't always about winning, and that winning sometimes has nothing to do with being the best. The play tracks how these dancers learn to support and uplift each other, finding that competition is about pushing each other to be the best versions of ourselves.

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*Reaching for Starlight* is also a story about the journey of young Black women finding their place in a world that, historically, was not built for them. This play is about breaking the barriers and limitations of stereotypes, and about challenging rules that stifle the voices of those who deserve to be heard. The playwright gives us insight into how her Blackness affects her work, saying, "Blackness is a given, embedded in the foundation of my storytelling practice – specifically the pursuit of Black liberation from oppressive structures and crushing expectations."

When asked how this manifests in her work, she explains, "Probably it manifests in consideration of where I need to take space, hold ground, enact compassion, be accountable. In any culture where voices have been silenced, all storytelling is legacy work. My work should be a place where Black people feel seen, heard and valued."



A show

built on the foundation of offering something for all audiences, of all ages and backgrounds, Payette wants “audiences to see themselves in the characters. To be compelled by the questions they are asking and trying to work through, knowing that we may not find all the answers. But allowing all our audience to be taken on a beautiful theatrical journey that also offers a platform for conversations after the show, that is the greatest takeaway.”

‘... a stunning piece of work that addresses the increasingly relevant themes of empowerment, empathy, and the ever-important belief in a genuine capacity for change.’

*Reaching for Starlight* is a powerful reminder of the ways in which young people are capable of so much revolutionary work; how they are motivated to face adversity, stand together, and advocate for genuine, lasting change. Payette says that “young people are constantly standing up for change and having discussions that adults sometimes have trouble articulating. I want us to be reminded of their courage and ability through uncertain times in our world.”

*Reaching for Starlight* collages theatre with ballet, contemporary, and hip-hop dance choreographed by **Véronique Gaudreau**. Closing Geordie’s **Raise Your Voice 2018/19** season, the show uses these elements to create an opulent, sensorial landscape that aptly addresses the capacity young people have to change what they see to be unjust in the world, and create an environment that is inclusive and celebratory of the diverse communities of people on this Earth.

When asked what she wishes audiences will take away from this show, St. Bernard says, “Be good to each other. Find ways to be good to each other.”

**For tickets and more information, visit: <https://geordie.ca/reaching-for-starlight/>**



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Feature image: Donna-Michelle St. E

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*Geordie Theatre is Montreal's leading English-language professional Theatre for Young Audiences, entertaining and engaging the imaginations of children and their families since 1980! Geordie celebrates the art of theatre and its impact by working with emerging and established artists from various disciplines and cultural backgrounds to create theatre that is provocative, relevant and enchanting; inspiring dialogue between communities, children and parents as well as teachers and students of all ages. [geordie.ca/](http://geordie.ca/).*



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