

## NEWS RELEASE

## QAGGIAVUUT'S FIRST ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF INUIT THEATRE

March 7, 2018 – IQALUIT (CANADA) – Qaggiavuut Society for Nunavut Performing Arts is happy to announce that Laakkuluk Williamson Bathory has been appointed as Qaggiavuut's first *Artistic Director of Inuit Theatre*. Qaggiavuut Society, with Ellen Hamilton continuing as Executive Director, advocates for a Nunavut Performing Arts Centre, supports, trains and promotes Nunavut performers and creates new Inuit performance works.

One of the new Artistic Director's first tasks is to work with Inuit artists and elders to choose a name for Qaggiavuut's new theatre division. Laakkuluk says, "It has always been my dream to work for Inuit, with Inuit and with creativity. To navigate through the heavy, political times of being Inuit in a colonized environment is a heavy task. Theatre is an incredible tool to be able to search for truths, to be uplifted, transported, questioned and is so important to meet the immense need to continuously own our inner strength as Inuit. I feel so honoured to be chosen for this position."

Vinnie Karetak, Chairperson of Qaggiavuut's Board of Directors says, "If it were not for our stories, songs, memories and great artistic skills, Inuit would not exist today. It is important that we continue to support Inuit performers and the creation of art for Inuit, by Inuit. I can think of no better person to helm this undertaking than my colleague, Laakkuluk Williamson Bathory."

Qaggiavuut has four major productions already scheduled for the 2018-2019 theatre season: The immensely successful *Kiviuq Returns* will travel across the Davis Strait to Nunatta Isiginnaartitsisarfia in Nuuk, Greenland in September 2018 and to the Tarragon Theatre in Toronto, January 2019. The highly acclaimed *Kiinalik: These Sharp Tools*, co-written by Laakkuluk Williamson Bathory and Evalyn Parry will make a homecoming to Iqaluit in December 2018, featuring an Inuit youth mentorship, with one-on-one youth training for everyone in the 8-member, all female cast and crew. Workshops begin for *The Qaumma Project* in September 2018– a collective of stories about the strength of Inuit families, created by Vinnie Karetak. *The Qaumma Project* brings together Inuit actors from Nunavut and Greenland to share stories and skills in the making of original theatre. *Pinnguaqqatigiit* will also begin to workshop – a musical puppet show for Inuit children, featuring the music of Looee Arreak. Lastly, Qaggiavuut is also making plans to bring a contemporary Greenlandic theatre production to perform in Nunavut in 2019.

-30-

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Laakkuluk Williamson Bathory, newly appointed Artistic Director of Qaggiavuut Society's theatre division, with Vinnie Karetak, Chair of the Board of Directors of Qaggiavuut.

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