



**WeeFestival**  
ARTS AND CULTURE FOR EARLY YEARS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: APRIL 14, 2024

MEDIA CONTACT: Robert Morrison | [communications@weefestival.ca](mailto:communications@weefestival.ca)

***Toronto's only performing arts festival for very young audiences celebrates its 10th birthday with a special 10-show lineup!***

Tickets are now on sale for the 2024 WeeFestival, a citywide celebration of unforgettable artistic encounters for early childhood taking place in multiple venues across the City of Toronto from May 10 - June 9. The 5-week festival offers 10 unforgettable productions created for young children from as young as 6 months old and features **theatre, music, dance, puppetry, storytelling,** and **sound art** created by artists from across Canada and overseas.

This year's lineup showcases a captivating array of productions meticulously curated to ignite the imaginations of very young children and their families.

**Puppetry at the Festival**

The 2024 edition showcases a dynamic collection of puppetry companies including Quebec's Puzzle Theatre with their productions of **Bonne Nuit!**, a hilarious comedy about one character's efforts to avoid sleep, and **Plastique**, in which an array of colourful plastic bags come to life in the hands of artists Pavla Mano and Csaba Raduly. Also hailing from Quebec is Graam Soul's **Cuckoo (Coucou)** which features a large clock onstage which turns to reveal the inner workings and the life of an over-scheduled young cuckoo clock bird.

WeeFestival's own **Quest for the Moon** which premiered in February, shares the story of friendship between a young fox and the moon using shadow puppetry, music, and storytelling. Finally, a highlight of the festival is the acclaimed Italian shadow puppetry company Teatro Gioco Vita and their moving production of **Sonia & Alfred**, a poignant story about finding refuge and discovering friendship, based on the children's books by Catherine Pinneer.

**Dance and Physical Theatre for Young Audiences**

Dance has a prominent place in the 2024 edition with the return of B.C's Foolish Operations and their participatory work for children 8 - 24 months **Paper Playground**, the French experimental dance company a.k. entropôt's **First Words/mOts Premiers** which uses multilingual text, Hip

Hop and contemporary dance to explore communication, play, and friendship, and finally physical theatre, clown, and object theatre collide as two characters discover and test the laws of gravity with Florshütz & Döhnert's **Rawums (:)**

### **Music Theatre and Performance**

This festival young ears are opened to complex sounds and music performed in compelling stagings and installation environments. The 24 edition lifts off with a stunning vocal performance by Basque artist Kristof Hiriart's latest creation **Up!** in which he honours a child's journey of growth and discovery through music. Musician Emmanuelle Lizère, or "Tigouli" returns to the festival with **Solalie**, an immersive object and sound installation and concert which invites the children into collaboration with the musicians and the sounds of the installation. Finally, the acclaimed ensemble devoted to early childhood, Théâtre de la Guimbarde brings their latest creation and collaboration with Senegalese singer and percussionists entitled **Walangaan**, which celebrates the beauty and importance of water in a captivating Senegalese-inspired performance.

Each production promises to spark joy, curiosity, and a lifelong love of the arts in young audiences, fostering meaningful connections and shared experiences for families across Toronto.

### **Families are encouraged to visit every weekend**

This is the second year the festival has stretched out programming over multiple weeks and for the 24 edition, WeeFestival is offering 5-show and full festival passes for families encouraging caregivers and parents to take time each weekend and take a journey through the festival with their young children.

Artistic Director Lynda Hill says: *"In our 2023 edition, we had a number of families return each weekend with their children and so we've scheduled performances and different post-show experiences to offer families the opportunity to experience everything the programme has to offer. Theatre and live arts offer young children new ways of seeing, imagining, and understanding themselves and the world around them. A feast of experiences in a festival can truly enrich their aesthetic education!"*

*Further, early exposure to the arts has a profound impact on the social and emotional development of young children and experiencing the arts as a family strengthens the bonds between parents and children and creates shared memories that last a lifetime. I'm excited to welcome children and their families over the 5 weeks, to hear about their experience of the festival, and to witness that spark of a lifelong love of arts and creativity in them!"*

In addition to the featured performances, WeeFestival will offer a range of special events including an opening weekend **Baby Rave, Kawennanótha with Krysta -Reading with Krysta**, outdoor storytelling and music with Mohawk artist and Early Childhood Educator Krysta Sero, showings of new Seedling Projects, works in progress by Xin Wang with Michael Murphy (**The Aria Project**) and by Mestre Sérgio Xocolate and Suzanne Roberts Smith (**Capoeria Criança**).

The festival weekdays offer performances for parents with preschool children, school groups, and daycares as well as Creative Skills workshops for Early Childhood Educators. The 2024 edition will once again offer a professional stream of activity engaging artists, theatre studies students, and researchers over three days. Full details of all special events will be available on the festival website by May 1, 2024.

WeeFestival will take place in multiple spaces at Toronto's **Tarragon Theatre** as well as The Spadina Theatre of **Alliance Française**, the **Alumnae Theatre, Dance Arts Institute** in Regent Park's **Daniels Spectrum, The Assembly Hall** in Etobicoke, and on tour to the **Aurora Cultural Centre** and Hamilton's Arts for All **Kinderfest**. Finally, **Le Théâtre français de Toronto**, returns this edition as the WeeFestival's Francophone Programme Partner supporting efforts to reach Francophone and francophile families and students.

### **About WeeFestival and the 10th Edition**

This edition marks the 10th anniversary of WeeFestival's launch in 2014 initially as a biennial event before it became an annual festival in 2019. Other than its Quebec-based counterpart Festival Petits bonheurs, WeeFestival is the only arts festival in Canada dedicated to early childhood and the presentation of sophisticated, contemporary and experimental arts for young children and their grown-ups. A hallmark of the festival is the intimate nature of the experience with performances taking place in small-scale arts venues engaging audiences as few as 10 children and as many as 150.

### **Funding and Presenting Partners**

WeeFestival of Arts & Culture 2024 edition is made possible with the support of The Government of Canada, The Canada Council for the Arts, and The Toronto Arts Council. Presenting partners include the Istituto Italiano di Cultura, le Theatre français de Toronto, Alliance Française, The City of Toronto, and The Toronto Office of the Government of Quebec. Education programme partners include the Toronto Education Workers and the Toronto District School Board Arts Department. Touring Partners include le Reseaux Festival petits bonheurs, Casteliers, Ottawa Children Festival (Sonia and Alfred), Niagara Children's Festival (Cuckoo and

Paper Playground).

Full schedule/details below or at [www.weefestival.ca/2024-weefestival/](http://www.weefestival.ca/2024-weefestival/)

### **2024 WeeFestival Programme in Chronological Order:**

#### **Up!**

Kristof Hiriart, LagunArte (France)

Music/Performance/Installation

Age Recommendation: 6 months - 5 years

May 10 – 12, 2024

Dance Arts Institute - Daniels Spectrum

A captivating solo vocal concert about reaching beyond and growing up.

#### **Bonne Nuit!**

Puzzle Theatre (Quebec)

Theatre/Puppetry/Physical Comedy

Age Recommendation: 3 years +

May 18, 2024

The Spadina Theatre, Alliance Française

A hilarious comedy with puppets and objects about trying to go to sleep.

#### **Plastique**

Puzzle Theatre (Quebec)

Puppetry

Age Recommendation: 4 years +

May 19, 2024

The Spadina Theatre, Alliance Française

Colourful plastic bags are brought to life by puppeteers-comedic chaos ensues.

#### **Paper Playground**

Foolish Operations (BC)

Dance/Interactive Performance

Age Recommendation: 8 months - 24 months

May 21 & 22, 2024

Dance Arts Institute - Daniels Spectrum

A playful and interactive dance performance where children join through drawing, moving, and music making.

### [Sonia & Alfred](#)

Teatro Gioco Vita (Italy)

Co-presented with the Instituto Italiano di Cultura-Toronto

Theatre/Shadow Puppetry

Age Recommendation: 4 years +

May 18 & 19, 2024

Alumnae Theatre

A moving story about newfound friendship and refuge told with exquisite shadow puppetry and theatre.

### [First Words/mOts Premiers](#)

a.k. entrepôt (France)

Dance/Physical Theatre

Age Recommendation: 3 years +

May 25 & 26, 2024

Dance Arts Institute - Daniels Spectrum

Hip Hop and Contemporary dance collide and a new language is found when two strangers meet and try to make friends.

### [Quest for the Moon](#)

WeeFestival (ON)

Puppetry/Music/Theatre

Age Recommendation: 2 years +

May 25 & 26, 2024

Tarragon Theatre - Near Studio

A heartwarming and engaging story about the friendship between a young fox and the Moon – told with the magic of shadow puppetry, music, and theatre.

### [Walangaan](#)

Theatre de la Guimbarde (Belgium & Senegal)

Music/Performance

Age Recommendation: 18 months +

May 31, June 1 & 2, 2024

Tarragon Theatre ExtraSpace

A Senegalese singer and a percussionist invite young children into a music-rich journey of the water cycle from from the drop to the downpour, from the splash to the waterfall.

### [Cuckoo/Coucou](#)

Graham Soul (Quebec)

Puppetry

Age Recommendation: 3 years +

June 1 & 2, 2024

The Assembly Hall (Etobicoke)

A large clock is the stage for this clever puppetry work about an overscheduled cuckoo bird who discovers a whole new world beyond time.

### [Rawums \(:\)](#)

Florshütz & Döhnert (Germany)

Physical Theatre, Clown, Object Theatre

Age Recommendation: 2 years +

June 7 - 9, 2024

Tarragon Theatre - ExtraSpace

The laws of gravity are discovered and tested by two curious characters!

## Solalie

Tigouli (Quebec)

Installation/Concert

Age Recommendation: 12 months +

June 8 & 9, 2024

Tarragon Theatre - Near Studio

A unique sound art installation and concert inspired by the natural world.

---

## **Seedling Projects**

### **Capoeira Criança**

Created by Sérgio Xocolat and Suzanne Roberts Smith

Work in Progress - Dance/Music/Participatory

For Children 8 - 24 months

June 1 & 2 | 14h

Tarragon Theatre

### **The Aria Project**

Created and performed by Xin Wang with Michael Murphy

Work in Progress - Vocal Performance and Percussion

For Children 8 -24 months

June 8 & 9 | 14h

Tarragon Theatre

## **2024 WeeFestival of Arts & Culture for Early Years**

**Dates:** May 10th - June 9th 2024

**Venues:** The Spadina Theatre of Alliance Française: 24 Spadina Rd. Toronto ON M5R 2S7  
The Assembly Hall: 1 Colonel Samuel Smith Park Dr. Etobicoke, ON M8V 4B6  
Tarragon Theatre ExtraSpace: 30 Bridgman Ave. Toronto ON M5R 1X3  
Dance Arts Institute (Daniel's Spectrum) 585 Dundas Street East, Toronto, ON,  
Alumnae Theatre 70 Berkeley St, Toronto, ON M5A 2W6

**Tickets:** \$10 - \$17 (including ticketing and box office fees)

**Passes:** 5-Show Passes \$125/\$200 and limited Full Festival Passes \$300

**Box Office:** <https://weefestival.ca/2024-box-office/>

**Festival Website:** [www.weefestival.ca](http://www.weefestival.ca)

**Promotional Images:** [HERE](#)