



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 24, 2021

Beloved Canadian Spoken Word Artist Shane Koyczan Premieres Brand New Work for Chan Centre Dot Com Series

HIGHLIGHTS:

- All-new poems and material created in response to the current pandemic environment
- Filmed in various arts spaces in Shane's hometown of Penticton, BC all impacted by COVID-19
- First time performing in the Chan Centre series since two sold-out shows in 2014

Vancouver, BC — The Chan Centre for the Performing Arts at the University of British Columbia presents spoken word artist **Shane Koyczan**, part of the virtual Dot Com Series. Recorded in February 2021, the exclusive performance will premiere on Friday March 12, 2021 at 7pm PST with a virtual watch party and live chat, and will remain available for on demand viewing until May 31, 2021.

In this virtual presentation, Koyczan shares all-new material that reflects on the current state of the world as grapples with the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. As the finish line for lockdown continues to move further away, the challenges in maintaining one's mental health grow. We're left to reflect on our wounded world and cling to memories in the vacuum of isolation. Koyczan explores the amplified despair of the times we find ourselves in, and searches for the missing needle of the compass that's left us feeling lost.

"In challenging periods we often look for connection through art and I can't think of a better person to reveal our shared humanity and help bring us together than Shane," says Wendy Atkinson, Programming Manager at the Chan Centre for the Performing Arts. "His work, steeped in emotion and wisdom, has the unique ability to illuminate a path forward from what may feel like a dark place. We are thrilled to welcome him back to the Chan Centre series for the first time since two sold-out performances in 2014 to share more of his inimitable talent with our audience."

Filmed in venues throughout Koyczan's hometown of Penticton, BC, the digital recording celebrates some of the Okanagan community's meaningful arts spaces that have been hit hard by the pandemic: an empty Cleland Theatre, where he has performed many times; The Dream Café, a cornerstone for indie music and culture; the Many Hats Theatre Company, a community theatre unsure of its future; and The Bookshop, a beloved second-hand bookstore catering to the arts.

Arguably Canada's best-known spoken word artist, Koyczan's fiercely honest TED Talk and soul-laid-bare anti-bullying video *To This Day* are shown in classrooms worldwide, his book *Stickboy* was adapted for the stage by Vancouver Opera, and his collaborations with the likes of Tanya Tagaq, Ani DiFranco, and David Suzuki keep him innovating and growing. In 2010, the entire world caught a glimpse of Koyczan's prodigious talent with his presentation at the opening ceremonies of the Winter Olympics in Vancouver. Wherever he puts his seemingly boundless energy, "Koyczan is at the heart of a Category 5 creative hurricane" (*The Vancouver Sun*).

Amidst the interdisciplinary work and international accolades, a powerful connection with his audience remains at the core of who Koyczan is. A commanding presence and a fearless explorer of the highs and lows of the human condition, his poems "touch so deep that emotion crackles in the air around you. And,

sure, there are moments of utter, gut-wrenching sadness, but out of this sadness comes such strength, truth and hope that we want to stand up and cheer” (*Monday Magazine*).

Through his own publishing house Stickboy Press, Koyczan has released *A Bruise On Light*, a Guinness record holder for the most successful crowdfunding campaign for a book of poetry; two graphic novels, *Silence Is A Song I Know All The Words To* and *Turn On A Light*; a collection of poems called *The Basement In My Attic*; and a collaboration with Theytus Books called *Inconvenient Skin*, a journey into Canada’s own troubled history with residential schools and the treatment of Indigenous people. In 2017, Shane delved deep into family trauma with the documentary *Shut Up and Say Something*, an emotional trip through his past as he comes to terms with his estranged father. The film was awarded Most Popular Documentary at Vancouver International Film Festival, moving audiences with its bravery and vulnerability.

About the Dot Com Series

The Chan Centre Dot Com Series launched in September 2020 in light of restrictions on gatherings due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Delivered 100% online, the series features a wide range of remarkable performing artists, both locally and internationally based, bringing Chan Centre audiences exclusive performances filmed both at the Chan Centre for the Performing Arts and elsewhere around the world. Past performers include Jeremy Dutcher, PIQSIQ, Cristina Pato, Brendan McLeod, and the Amir Amiri Ensemble.

About the Chan Centre for Performing Arts at UBC

Since 1997, the Chan Centre for the Performing Arts has earned an international reputation for its striking design, stellar acoustics, and exceptional programming. Artists, critics, and patrons alike are unanimous in their praise of the facility, winning it a place among North America's top-rated performing arts spaces. Featuring three unique venues—the Chan Shun Concert Hall, the Telus Studio Theatre, and the Royal Bank Cinema—the Chan Centre is a vital part of UBC campus and community life where artistic and academic disciplines merge to inspire new perspectives on the world around us. Past performers and speakers include Wynton Marsalis, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Renée Fleming, Dan Savage, Yo-Yo Ma, Jane Goodall, Herbie Hancock, Lila Downs, and Anoushka Shankar.

LISTING INFORMATION

Dates:

Online Ticket Prices:

Address:

Shane Koyczan (online only)

Watch online from March 12, 2021 at 7pm PST

\$0/\$10/\$20 (Supported/General/Supportive)

Chan Centre for the Performing Arts

University of British Columbia

6265 Crescent Road

Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z1

chan.tickets@ubc.ca

Ticket Office:

Website:

chancentre.com

Link to Artist Photos:

chancentre.com/press-downloads/

-30-

For further media information:

Claire Mohun | 604-822-1241

claire.mohun@ubc.ca

Chan Centre for the Performing Arts