



**MAY 31, 2019 - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**The Official Launch of  
*Tohio! The Art of African Storytelling - La Tradition Africaine du Conte***

**A Storytelling Album by  
Award-winning Storyteller, Comfort Iyase Ero**

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On June 7th Comfort Iyase Ero and Storytellers of Canada will celebrate the release of Comfort's first album of recorded stories, along with an audio documentary called *Comfort Ero: Come Quickly! I Have a Story to Tell* about Comfort's life and work in storytelling, and inspiring young people through the power of story. The album and podcast were generously supported by the Canada Council for the Arts.

**Fredericton, New Brunswick** - StorySave, a program of Storytellers of Canada - Conteurs du Canada (SC-CC), is celebrating the national launch of its 20th storytelling album, ***Tohio! The Art of African Storytelling*** an album recorded in both English and French by award-winning, Nigerian-Canadian storyteller Comfort Iyase Ero. Comfort is originally from Udo, Nigeria, and now makes her home in Surrey, British Columbia.

Each year, StorySave's programming committee selects one accomplished elder teller who has a unique repertoire, and whose work should be recorded. This is the second year that the StorySave team has also produced an audio documentary about the teller to accompany the album. The documentary delves into Comfort's early life in Nigeria, the inspiration from her family and community, and her work with African-Canadian youth using the life-changing power of storytelling.

The documentary *Comfort Ero: Come Quickly! I Have a Story to Tell*, will be available on CD Baby as a free download, or can be streamed on Comfort's StorySave webpage, on the Storytellers of Canada website.

The documentary and Comfort's album *Tohio! The Art of African Storytelling* will both have their official Canadian launch celebration during the Storytellers of Canada - Conteurs du Canada's annual conference, on Thursday June 7th at 10:00 am at The University of New Brunswick's Faculty of Education, Marshall d'Avray Hall, 10 MacKay Drive, Fredericton, New Brunswick.

**About the Album**

Comfort Iyase-Ero was born and raised in Udo, a strong, historical town in the ancient Benin Kingdom now known as Edo State, Nigeria. Her father was the respected head chief, and the



first head chief to have a western education. He regularly told Comfort and her siblings the history of their people, their epics and legends and animal fables with important moral lessons.

In Edo, *Tohio! Hia, hia kpo!* means “Come quickly, I have a story to tell!” This album shares some formative stories from Udo, and highlights African storytelling. Recorded in both English and French, and as it was meant to be performed with music, and encouraging dance, *Tohio!* celebrates one of the very rich Nigerian cultures.

StorySave Program Manager, Marion Gruner says of *Tohio! The Art of African Storytelling - La Tradition Africaine du Conte*, “Comfort’s album is a vibrant, celebratory recording. The stories are filled with wonder and humour, and Comfort’s storytelling entwines with music and sound to build a rich listening experience. Everyone at StorySave and Storytellers of Canada were delighted to support this project.”

### **Interactive Outreach Through Story**

A social media-based aspect of Comfort’s project is planned to begin in summer 2019. The stories on Comfort’s album have valuable moral lessons and are meant to start conversations, and so a Facebook page will provide a moderated forum for listeners to discuss issues that are raised by the stories on the album. Questions will be posed around storytelling, self-worth, and navigating a difficult world. Comfort’s work with her theatre company, African Stages focuses on teaching storytelling to young people as a way to express themselves and confront challenges like bullying, racism, and other issues, and this social media aspect of the project is designed to extend that work into a virtual setting and connect with a broader audience.

### **StorySave**

The StorySave Program was established by SC-CC as a means of enhancing storytelling’s living contribution to Canada’s oral and literary heritage, through the recording of voices of elders from the Canadian storytelling community for reproduction and distribution through multivolume CD sets, and digital downloads. Tellers selected for inclusion are those who tell out of very particular repertoires, and have something unique to offer.

For more information on this and other StorySave projects please go to the SC-CC website and visit the StorySave pages: <http://www.storytellers-conteurs.ca/en/featured-storytellers.html>

### **Media inquiries or to reach Comfort Iyase Ero:**

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Comfort’s project was made possible through funding from the Canada Council of the Arts. Storytellers of Canada is supported by the Canada Council for the Arts and the Ontario Arts Council.



Listen up and be amazed: That's the art of storytelling  
Écoutez et laissez-vous émerveiller: voilà l'art du conte

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## BACKGROUND

The purpose of Storytellers of Canada / Conteurs du Canada (SC-CC) is to function as the national representative for those involved in maintaining and practicing the oral tradition of storytelling across the country. SC-CC is dedicated to furthering the art of storytelling and bringing the diverse peoples of Canada together through story. SC-CC seeks to promote, support, and contribute to the growth of storytellers' work, and to ensure the continuing development of the art of storytelling as an integral part of Canadian culture. Most of SC-CCs work is carried on by highly dedicated and hardworking volunteers from all across Canada, working on a very limited budget and supported by a small paid staff.

**The StorySave Program** was established as a means of enhancing storytelling's living contribution to Canada's oral and literary heritage, through the recording of voices of elders from the Canadian storytelling community for reproduction on and distribution through multi-volume CD sets, and the audio website. Emphasis is on the creation of finished products of a highly professional standard. Tellers selected for inclusion are those who tell out of very particular repertoires, and have something unique to offer. StorySave's long-term objective is to ensure a permanent and vital production list which is fully representative of the art of Canadian storytelling at its best.

Each year nominations are welcome from all storytellers who have made a significant contribution to the storytelling world. Only those nominees who have developed a marked personal style to the craft of storytelling, including but not limited to their vision, technique, interests, history, and specific repertoire will be considered. To date, StorySave has recorded the voices of 18 tellers. Donations help StorySave to record tellers and keep their voices vibrant and heard.