

CanadianStage

Searching for Eastman

Created by the wind in the leaves collective
based on poetry of charles c. smith



NOMADA

Created by Diana Lopez Soto

New Work Development
Lead Donor:

Fabio Mascarin Foundation

Season
Sponsor





Canadian Stage has three homes spread across our great city. The Bluma Appel and the Berkeley Street Complex bookend the vibrant St. Lawrence Market Neighbourhood and run along what was once the shore of Lake Ontario. Our beautiful High Park Amphitheatre is nestled within the grassy mounds and forests of our city's most beloved park. Canadian Stage is grateful to be able to tell our stories on this bountiful land that we all share.

This sacred land has held story for thousands of years: stories that live in the fabric of who we are as a nation. Canadian Stage would like to acknowledge and thank the original caretakers and knowledge keepers of this territory: the Anishinaabe Nations (including the Mississaugas of the Credit), the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and the Wendat and Métis Nations. We give thanks to the Nations recorded and unrecorded, acknowledged and unacknowledged, who also share the responsibility for this territory. We honour the Dish With One Spoon Treaty and our responsibility to peaceably share and care for the resources that surround us. We are honoured to be in this meeting place called Tkaronto that many First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people from across Turtle Island call home.

Created by wind in the leaves collective based on poetry of charles c. smith,
and presented by Canadian Stage

searching for eastman

April 4-7, 2024 | Berkeley Street Theatre

Cast

Abbey Richens
next generation

Bakari I. Lindsay
ancestor

charles c. smith
storyteller/griot

Emily Duckett
black spirit

Julianna Heft
white researcher

Kēīta Fournier-Pelletier
white person

Mafa Makhubalo
black being then

Nickeshia Garrick
black being now

Rumi Jeraj
next generation

***Yui Ugai**
another continent

Abbey Richens
understudy for white
researcher and white
person

Dwauntea Chambers
understudy for black spirit,
black being then, black
being now, ancestor

Jillia Cato
understudy for black spirit,
black being then, black
being now

Katie Couchie
understudy for
next generation

Kevin A. Ormsby
understudy for black spirit,
black being then, black
being now, ancestor

Rumi Jeraj
understudy for another
continent and black spirit

Creative

charles c. smith
Creator, Artistic Director,
Author

***Sharon DiGenova**
Lighting Design/
Production Stage
Manager

Matthew Maaskant
Projection and
Sound Design

Kevin A. Ormsby
Dramaturg

Jillia Cato
Rehearsal Director/
Assistant Stage Manager

Dwauntea Chambers
Assistant Rehearsal
Director

Allison Cummings
Associate Rehearsal
Director

S-Quire Johnson
Promotional, Educational
and Experiential Video
Director

Anita La Selva
Vocal Coach

Projection Panels:
Originally designed
by Cheryl Lalonde
for BoucharDanse's
Production of Histoire
d'amour

Music Credits

Composed by Julius Eastman

Evil Nigger, Prelude to the Holy Presence of Joan d'Arc, Stay On It, Gay Guerrilla

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Lighting and Stage Rentals by Frontier Sound and Light

* The participation of Sharon DiGenova and Yui Ugai is arranged by permission of Canadian Actors' Equity Association under the provisions of the DanceOperaTheatre Policy (DOT). Canadian Stage is a member of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres and engages professional Artists who are members of Canadian Actors' Equity Association under the terms of the jointly negotiated Canadian Theatre Agreement.

Stage Employees of the Berkeley Street Theatres are represented by Local 58 of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees



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Upkar Arora

This production runs approximately
115 minutes with 1 intermission.

NATIONAL CREATION FUND

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The National Creation Fund, at Canada's National Arts Centre, invests in risk, innovation, and great ideas.

By supporting productions like ***Searching for Eastman***, the Fund revels in the dynamism of Canadian creators.

The National Creation Fund is fuelled by National Arts Centre Foundation donors who believe in investing in Canadian creators.



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CENTRE NATIONAL DES ARTS

Canada is our stage. Le Canada en scène.

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wind in the leaves collective credits:

wind in the leaves Administrative Team

Bia Rohde
Administrator

Jenny McCowan
Producer

Claire Whitaker
Jillia Cato
Marketing and
Promotions

Past collaborators with wind in the leaves collective in the development of searching for eastman

Choreographic and performance collaborators

Ben Russell
Michael Mortley
Bakari I Lindsay
Kevin A. Ormsby

Jillia Cato
Deltin Sejour
Dezjaun Thomas
Kelly Juenesse
Laurence Lemieux
Mayumi Lashbrook
Tawiah Ben-Eben
M'Carthy
Ana Groppler
Aria Evans

Claire Whitaker
Mateo Galindo Torres
Morgyn Aronyk-Schell
Shannon Litzenberger
Andrew McCormack
Rehearsal collaborators
Vania Dodoo-Beals
Pulga Muchochoma
Aryana Malekzadeh
Bayley Wyatt

Special Thanks to

Mike Kerwin from Frontier Sound and Light. BoucharDanse for the leasing of their projection panels, Rachel Forbes for her support with costumes, the National Arts Centre's National Creation Fund, the Toronto Festival of Authors, Atlantic Ballet, Laurence Lemieux/Citadel+Compagnie and our funders: Canada Council for the Arts, Ontario Arts Council, Toronto Arts Council, the Community One Foundation Rainbow Grants and Buddies in Bad Times Theatre recommender grant, and the amazing teams at Canadian Stage and the National Arts Centre's National Creation Fund.

Great
performances
live here.



The Inheritance – Part 1 & Part 2
Antoine Yared, Qasim Khan, and Stephen
Jackman-Torkoff. Photo by Lorne Bridgman

BMO



At BMO, we take pride in our local communities, and the performers that contribute to the cultural diversity and creative richness of our cities.

We are proud to be Canadian Stage's **23.24 Season Sponsor** and the **Pay-What-You-Wish Access Sponsor**.

Director's Note

it is quite an honour for the *wind in the leaves collective* to share with you **searching for eastman**, a multidisciplinary performance in 3 acts based on the interpretation of four of eastman's compositions through a choreopoem whose roots trace through the african griot tradition, the harlem renaissance, the black arts movement and defined as "a form of dramatic expression that combines poetry, dance, music, and song...(as) first coined in 1975 by ntozake shange in a description of her work, "for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf."

each act reveals something of eastman's life, from childhood on with particular attention to his being caught between worlds, neither home in black or queer spaces during times of turbulence related to these identities. the first act checks in on how such a persona came to be, the construction of this liminal space in the myopic stasis of 1950s mccarthyism's sanitized suburban america followed by the hot political 1960s' focus on freedom and identities. it also unfolds his core practice, its methods and madness, the controversies he was in at the heart of in the emerging canon of american minimalism, his seeming yearning for martyrdom. the second act is that of his relationships, torrid and engaging, short and destructive, demanding. the final act is his rebellion as warrior guerrilla, abandoned and alone, disappearing into the nebulous world of homelessness, drugs and alcohol.

searching for eastman engages scenarios through the spirit of memories, sketched in poetry and drawn out through movement/dance, digital imaging and music. each act is structured in time with eastman's music to honour his work and the stories he seemed to be telling. the 'place' in which the action happens is in a world beyond the physical and each section forms something of a contribution to a collective eulogy, one built on astonishment at his untimely death along with memories of his greatness and his equally great self-destructiveness.

we thank canadian stage for co-producing this work and are very grateful for the support given to us. we also wish to thank the national arts centre's creation fund for its generous support as well as Canada Council for the Arts, Ontario Arts Council, Toronto Arts Council, the Community One Foundation Rainbow Grants and Buddies in Bad Times theatre recommender grant.

we hope you engage with and find inspiration in this performance. while eastman's life was tragic, his work has given us much to consider, especially his desires to challenge the status quo and to create a better and inclusive world.

all the very best



charles c. smith
artistic director

Cast



Abbey Richens - next generation, understudy for white researcher and white person

Abbey Richens, hailing from London Ontario, is a dance and multidisciplinary artist. She is a community arts facilitator, working with her arts collective Meaningful Movement to build spaces for artists based in Toronto. For Abbey, dance is an important practice for healing and connection. She is a recent graduate of York University's BFA Dance program, a youth dance instructor, and a budding visual artist. Abbey has recently performed with Arts and Water Cultura's Dockside Dances, Hercinia Arts, and is thrilled to be part of Wind In The Leaves Collective for this production. Abbey is actively exploring ways to express her artistic perspective and advocate for artists.



Bakari I. Lindsay - ancestor

Bakari Ifasegun Lindsay, born in Trinidad, has excelled in dance, choreography, singing, music, costume design, and research for over 32 years. Trained at Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and The School of Toronto Dance Theatre, he holds a diploma in Style and Design, a Masters in Dance Ethnology, and a Bachelors in Education from York University. Bakari co-founded COBA Collective Of Black Artists, performing globally with companies like Danny Grossman Dance Company and Jubilation Dance Co. He's renowned for his solo *Ancestral Calling* and appeared in Disney's *The Lion King*. Bakari's diverse work includes dance films and productions, while advocating for equity and arts education, blending artistic practice with cultural values.



Emily Duckett - black spirit

Emily Duckett (she/they) is a Black, queer, dance artist residing in the region originally known as Tkaronto. They're artistic expression is profoundly influenced by they're intersecting identities. Emily's practice is based on the belief that creating and manipulating art is a communal endeavor and the idea that dance is a vehicle for de-socialization, leaving deeply embedded societal constraints behind and instead existing whole heartily in the body. Since graduating from York University with a BFA in Dance and a Specialized Honor in performance and choreography in 2022, Emily has collaborated with esteemed companies such as Mocean Dance, Toronto Dance Theatre, Wind in the Leaves Collective, and ProArteDanza. At present, they're artistic exploration centers on themes of unity, chaos, visceral instincts, pleasure, paradoxes, and risk taking.



Julianna Heft - white researcher

Born in amiskwaciwāskahikan (Edmonton), Julianna Heft (she/her) is a contemporary performance artist currently based in Toronto (Tkaronto). She is a graduate of Dance Arts Institute (formerly The School of Toronto Dance Theatre), where she performed in works by choreographers such as Alyssa Martin, Riley Sims, Heidi Strauss and B. Solomon. Her credits include *Nextfest*, *Art and Water*, and *Mallo Nights*. She was a participant in BIGBANG, where she trained in styles such as acro, contemporary, floorwork, hip hop, and partnering. Her solo choreographic work was a recipient of Goodwomen Dance's space/share residency. Julianna believes in movement as a catalyst for community, collaboration and a liberation of our bodies. She hopes to continue facilitating spaces that explore those values.



Kéïta Fournier-Pelletier - white person

Kéïta Fournier-Pelletier is a queer, Métis, Franco-Manitoban artist based in Tkaronto. They are continuously discovering what these intersecting identities mean to them, and the role they play in their art as a dancer, choreographer and educator. They have performed and choreographed in festivals such as Skylines Film and Dance Series, Toronto Fringe Festival, and SummerWorks Dance Festival. She has an interest in dance-theatre and has collaborated as a choreographer/performer with Theatre Passe Muraille, and lemonTree creations. Most recently their newest work *Pillar of You* was presented at the Citadel Dance Mix and in Hamilton at Aeris Körper's festival "Here&Now". Kéïta is interested in collaborating on works that question power, heteronormativity, and other societal norms that reject her identity.



Mafa Makhubalo - black being then

Mafa's work has been presented at various events, including Ontario Dance Weekend, International Association of Blacks in Dance (IABD) in Toronto, Body Percussion Festival, Dance Immersion ShowCase, Contemporaneity, Edition 1.0, TEADA 2019 CUBA, and FFDN's signature program in 2020, at Theatre Passe Muraille, and TDT Pilot Episode 2021. He is actively involved in community engagements & arts education programs including a mentorship placement with Young People's Theatre as part of the Arts Management post-graduate certificate program at Centennial College, and as a mentor for Vibes Arts, in-residence choreographer with Ballet Jorgen. Mafa is the recipient of the Ontario-Quebec cohort program presented by (La DSR) and La danse sur les routes du Québec and Ontario Presents.



Nickeshia Garrick - black being now

Nickeshia Garrick is a settler on the stolen land of Tkaronto and has performed on this land for over 25 years. They are unapologetically a Black, Queer Artist, who believes in the healing power of breath through raw emotion and movement. Nickeshia received her dance training at the NYIDE (New York Institution of Dance and Education), National Ballet School of Canada (Tkaronto), Toronto Dance Theatre (Tkaronto), and Simon Fraser University (Vancouver). Her classical vocal and theatre training was achieved at Eastwood Collegiate Institute (Kitchener). Nickeshia has had the honour of training with Sean McLeod (New York) to achieve her certification in Sean McLeod's Reinforced Motor Function Technique®, RMF®. Her extensive dance training includes Bakari E. Lindsay, Arsenio Andrade, Rob Kitsos, Peter Bingham, and Christopher House. Nickeshia has received the privilege of performing in pieces by TDT, Tara Butler, Santee Smith, Kaeja d' Dance, Serge Bennathan, James Kudelka, Ballet Jorgen, and the Newton Moraes Dance Theatre. Nickeshia is a Dora Mavor Moore, winning and multi-nominated artist who holds a BFA in Dance from Simon Fraser University and is a Co-Founder of CinnaMoon Collective which is currently working on their premiere piece, Surrendered Spirits.



Rumi Jeraj - next generation, understudy for another continent and black spirit

Rumi Jeraj is an Ismaili muslim hailing from Sherwood Park Alberta (the world's largest hamlet). A Graduate of Toronto Metropolitan University Rumi has worked for dance artists including Hanna Kiel, Daryl Tracy, Heidi Strauss, and Eilish Shin-Culhane. Over the past year he has presented his work at the Hamilton Fringe Festival, Night Shift and Dusk Dances. Outside of contemporary dance, Rumi has a practice as a Tap Dancer often collaborating with local Jazz musicians. He aspires to create and be a part of work which mixes forms in order to better tell stories. He believes there is a perfect balance between words, music, and movement which can communicate intellectually, emotionally and viscerally all at once. He aspires to find this state on stage.



***Yui Ugai - another continent**

Yui Ugai is a dance artist from Hiroshima, Japan, now residing in Toronto, Canada. She has collaborated with diverse dance companies globally, performing on numerous national and international stages. Yui's journey began with drama studies at Takarazuka North High School, followed by intensive training in dance and music at Kobe College, Japan. She holds both a BFA and an MFA in Dance from York University, Toronto, where she serves as contract faculty. Yui's talents extend to acting, debuting in *Summer Days* directed by Nobuhiko Obayashi, and collaborating with Hollywood casting director Yoko Narahashi. She plays a lead role in *Raptura* which premiered at the imagineNATIVE Film+Media Arts Festival at TIFF, her talent has graced screens worldwide, including Netflix, Disney+, and Sony Pictures.



Katie Couchie - understudy for next generation

Katie Couchie is an Anishinaabekwe Ojji-Cree dance artist from Nbisiing, now based in Tkaronto. Katie has worked with companies and choreographers including Kaha:wi Dance Theatre, Barbara Diabo, Human Body Expressions, Alejandro Ronceria, Christine Friday, Peggy Baker, and Jera Wolfe. Most recently, Katie received a Dora nomination for Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble for the production of *Homelands* created by Santeee Smith for Kaha:wi Dance Theatre and is excited to continue working with Kaha:wi Dance Theatre on their next shows, *SKeN:NEN* and *The Mush Hole*.

Creative



charles c. smith - Creator, Artistic Director, Author, storyteller/griot

charles c. smith is a poet, playwright, essayist who has written/edited sixteen books. he studied poetry and drama with William Packard at New York University and Herbert Berghof Studios, drama at the Frank Silvera's Writers' Workshop in Harlem. he won second prize for his play *Last Days for the Desperate* from Black Theatre Canada and his poetry has appeared in numerous magazines, including Poetry Canada Review, the Quille and Quire, Descant, Dandelion, Fiddlehead and others. he has received writing grants from the Toronto Arts Council, Ontario Arts Council and Canada Council for the Arts. charles is Artistic Director of the wind in the leaves collective and his recent books include: *travelogue of the bereaved*, *The Dirty War: The Making of the Myth of Black Dangerousness*, *whispers*, *destination out* and *Searching for Eastman*. his next book of poems is titled *specimens which unearths western medical science's use of black bodies from the early days of enslavement to our times today*.



***Sharon DiGenova - Lighting Design, Production Stage Manager**

Sharon is a Dora award winning lighting designer, who works in a multitude of disciplines in numerous capacities. Her work has been seen in more than 350 cities in 35 countries on 5 continents. She has enjoyed working and touring with companies that include: Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet, Desrosier Dance Theatre, Dance Makers, Esmeralda Enrique Spanish Dance Company, Dance Immersion, KasheDance and her main squeeze for 12 years on the road, Canada's highly acclaimed (and now defunct) Holy Body Tattoo. She has lit and/or stagemanaged Festivals, Bands, Circus and Freak Shows - that include The International Tap Dance Festival, The IABD international conference, a few seasons of bands at the CNE Bandshell, and Circus Orange - to name a few. Her last show at Canadian Stage was Ronnie Burkett Theatre of Marionettes' first tour of *Awful Manors* (100 years ago). She is happy to be part of *Searching For Eastman*.



Matthew Maaskant - Projection and Sound Design

Matthew Maaskant is a clear multidisciplinary, able to splash around the exchange, chatting about everything and nothing: a gold miner, watching the stream drift past, while still completely alert enough to detect pattern and meaning. He brings this to his video work, panning for beauty: ideas, sounds, collaborators and time, scattered bits that wash through his hand and he catches a flash here, a twinkle there and builds delicate structures, held gently together, but always anchored in the material.



Dwauntea Chambers - Assistant Rehearsal Director, understudy for black spirit, black being then, black being now, ancestor

Graduate from the Edna Manley College of Visual and Performing Arts, he received a Bachelors in Performance and Choreography (BFA). He was a dancer with National Dance Theatre Company of Jamaica (NDTC) and performed with the Plié for the Arts Collective while also gaining professional development from artists like Matthew Rushing of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre. He was the Entertainment coordinator (Bahia Principe, Grand Jamaica). During his BFA he spent two years as a teacher in EMCVPA's Summer School Youth Program as a Jazz Fusion. Mr. Chambers demonstrates a nuanced understanding of collaboration in creative processes through leadership, participation, and critical reflection. This is his first Season with KasheDance and is also on the Creative Team for Wind in the Leaves Collective's most recent work *Searching for Eastman* presented by Canadian Stage premiering April 2024.



Kevin A. Ormsby - Dramaturg, understudy for black spirit, black being then, black being now, ancestor

Artistic Director of KasheDance and Curator of Programming at Cultural Pluralism in the Arts Movement Ontario (CPAMO). He delivers EDI programming for clients including the National Ballet of Canada, Canada's National Ballet School, and Luminato Festival et. al. Nominee for the Johanna Metcalf Performing Arts Prize 2023 and finalist in 2021, he is a recipient of Canada Council for the Arts' Victor Martyn Lynch – Staunton Award, and Toronto Arts Council Cultural Leaders Fellow. Faculty member of Centennial College's Dance Performance Program he has been a Guest Artist at U-West Indies (Mona), UW-Madison, Northwestern University, and the UT- Austin. He's on the Boards of Dance Collection Danse, Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts, and previously Canadian Dance Assembly, Prologue to the Performing Arts, and Nia Centre for the Arts, where he was Chair of Canada's first professional multi-disciplinary centre for African-Canadian art.



Jillia Cato - Rehearsal Director, Assistant Stage Manager, Marketing and Promotions, understudy for black spirit, black being then, black being now
Beginning her career in 2003 Jillia Cato actualized her unstoppable passion in creative practices grounded in Caribbean inspired performing arts with her positive, solution oriented personality. She is an afro-indo-

Caribbean artist and is assistant artistic director at KasheDance, program associate at CPAMO, project coordinator and dancer with Wind in the Leaves Collective and an independent artist born in Trinidad and Tobago with experience in music, theatre, dance education, production and stage management. Utilizing her Performing Arts degree (Suma Cum Laude, Valedictorian) and project management from her Engineering degree, she functions also as a Production Stage Manager for a variety of event types within the creative sector. She has danced and toured internationally with Machel Montano and Kes The Band (2008-2019). She's worked with the National Theatre Arts Company of Trinidad and Tobago, Caribbean Arts Festival (CARIFESTA), Centennial College, Etobicoke School of Arts, Kaeja d'Dance, Luminato and Jumblies Theatre.



Allison Cummings - Associate Rehearsal Director

Allison Cummings is a performer/choreographer/art maker, who produces her work under the umbrella name Sore for Punching You. She is based in Toronto, Canada. Her work has been presented at venues and festivals across Canada since 1996 including The Theatre Centre, Hysteria,

Edgy Women/Montreal, Toronto Dance Theatre's 'Four at the Winch', SummerWorks, M:ST Performative Art Festival, 7a -11d, Canada Dance Festival, Fluid Festival, Moving Pictures Festival w/ Trinity Square Video, Older and Reckless, School of the Toronto Dance Theatre, Theatre Passe Muraille, Porch View Dances, Bright Nights (Citadel et Cie), Citadel Live among many more. Internationally her work has been presented in Accra, Ghana, and Chiang Mai, Northern Thailand. She has self-produced her own multidisciplinary full length works, Quiver '02, Clutch '06, Devouring Lions '09, Final Savage Land '13 and Exhale '18 at various venues in Toronto. She is the recipient of multiple arts grants and awards including: The John D. and Susan P. Diekman Fellowship – California – 2012, Toronto Arts Council, Ontario Arts Council, Ontario Arts Council International Residency Grant, Canada Council of the Arts, Chalmers Professional Development, Recipient of The Toronto Emerging Artist Award in Dance – 2000, K.M Hunter Award Shortlisted – 2006 and 2008. She is the Artistic Director of Moonhorse Dance Theatre, a presenting organization that focuses on providing opportunities for established dance artists over the age of 45.



S-Quire Johnson - Promotional, Educational and Experiential Video Director

S-Quire Johnson (he/they) is a multi-hyphenate creator that brings thoughtfulness and passion for cultural identity awareness and inclusion to his work. S-Quire has captured and worked with some of the brightest contemporary artists and produced content for film festivals and broadcast television. Highlights include Jessie Reyez, Ms. Lauryn Hill, CaribbeanTales Film Festival, and Caribbean Vibrations TV. He is a frequent creative collaborator with wind in the leaves collective, Cultural Pluralism in the Arts Movement Ontario (CPAMO), Coco Collective, and Esie Mensah Creations.



Anita La Selva - Vocal Coach

Anita La Selva is an award-winning director, actor, dramaturg and acting teacher. As an actor she has worked for theatre companies across Canada including the Blyth Festival, Centaur Theatre, Thousand Islands Playhouse, Aluna Theatre, The Banff Centre and many more. Her television work includes *Suits*, *The Romanoffs*, *Rogue*, *Orphan Black*, *Running with Violet* and numerous independent films. She has directed and created/co-created several original inter-disciplinary works and is the 2019 recipient of the Gina Wilkinson Award for Emerging Female Director. Anita holds an MFA in Directing from York University and has taught in the York U, Sheridan/UTM and Seneca College Acting programs. She is currently in development with a new inter-disciplinary piece about addiction and mental health.



Bia Rohde - Administrator

Bia Rohde supports the WITL collective with all that calls for administrative, research, communications and marketing skills, putting her 15+ year experience in Toronto advertising and communications agencies to good use.



Jenny McCowan - Producer

Jenny-Anne McCowan, independent artist, producer, choreographer, and educator, brings a wealth of experience to her collaborations. With her background in choreography, education and participatory practices, she has contributed significantly to various projects. Notable work includes her large-scale artworks with Thom Sokoloski in New York, Australia, and Canada including work with Nuit Blanche, Luminato and the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, her work as a producer with Peggy Baker Dance Projects and as the National Educator Coordinator for the Magenta Foundation's Flash Forward Incubator Program. She is grateful for the opportunity to work with extraordinary people in bringing *searching for eastman* to life at Canadian Stage.

**Claire Whitaker - Marketing and Promotions**

Claire She/Her is a freelance contemporary dance artist based in Toronto. After graduating from the Dance Arts Institute (formerly The School of Toronto Dance Theatre), her class did a residency with La Escuela Profesional de Danza de Mazatlán in Mexico. Claire attended the Gaga Intensive at Orsolina 28, TransFormation Danse and most recently Yin Yue's intensive in New York City. Claire has worked with Peggy Baker, Frog in Hand, Kylie Thompson Dance Projects, Citadel + Compagnie, and is a member of the wind in the leaves collective. She toured the Orlando and Vancouver Fringe Festivals with Kylie Thompson and choreographed for the Carnival of Arts Festival in Markham, Ontario in late June. She is currently touring with Citadel + Compagnie in Julie et L'univers.



DanceWorks is proud to be co-presenting NOMADA with Canadian Stage, and has supported its creation through The CanDance Network Creation Fund.

DanceWorks is a community-focused, artist-centered choreographic presentation platform based in Tkaronto, what is colonially known as Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Established in 1977, and led by Founding Dance Curator Mimi Beck until 2023, the organization's artistic vision is now stewarded by Co-Executive Artistic Producers, Dedra McDermott and David Norsworthy.

We curate vigorous and intentional choreographic performances that weave skillful physicality with a dedication to artistic practice and research; inviting the public to encounter new ideas and necessary questions. DanceWorks programming also includes artist residencies, open rehearsals, workshops, artist talks, and community conversations.

You can learn more about DanceWorks and donate to energize our next chapter by visiting:

www.danceworks.ca

@danceworksto

**Dance
Works**

Co-presented by Canadian Stage and DanceWorks

NOMADA

Apr 18 - Apr 20, 2024 | Berkeley Street Theatre

Cast

Diana Lopez Soto

Concept, Rigging Design, Performance Artist, Set Co-Design

Creative

Alejandro RonceriaScript, Director, Dramaturg
& Mentor July 2017-
August 2022**Rebecca Carney**Dramaturg, Rehearsal
Director**Coman Poon**Ritual And Performance
Art Dramaturg**Leonardo Marati****Vargas Carrion**
Knowledge Keeper,
Purepecha Language
Mentor, Regalia
Co-Designer**Diego Marulanda**Composer (First Draft)
Jan 2019- August 2022**Edgardo Moreno**Musician & Composer
(Final Composition)**Erandi Cuiriz Ramos**

Pirekua Composer

Lisa Barry**Gustavo Bernal**
Cynthia Cupples
Ceramic Artists**Rebecca Leonard**

Rigging Specialist

Israel Barrera Hernandez

Rigging Specialist

Patricia LevertProduction &
Tour Manager**Taylor Young**

Stage Manager

Samay Arcentales Cajas

Projection Designer

Arun Srinivasan

Lighting Designer

Andy Moro

Set Co-Designer

Adriana Fulop

Costume Designer

Fernanda Leal**Rebecca Leonard****Ana Prada****Ngui Style****Chris Taylor**
Movement Coaches

Canadian Stage is a member of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres and engages professional Artists who are members of Canadian Actors' Equity Association under the terms of the jointly negotiated Canadian Theatre Agreement.

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This production runs approximately 70 minutes

DanceWorks

Dedra McDermott
Co-Executive
Artistic Producer

David Norsworthy
Co-Executive
Artistic Producer

Neetika Sharma
General Manager

Mallika Wadke
Events & Marketing
Coordinator

Catherine Romano
Education & Outreach
Manager

Mimi Beck
Founding Curator
of DanceWorks

Board of Directors

Mario Fasce
Acting Chair

Belinda Ngai
Secretary &
Acting Treasurer

Alex Hsiao
General Board Member

Thank You to our funders for their generous support:



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Le Conseil ontarien des arts
Le conseil de présentation de l'Ontario



BULMASH-SIEGEL
FOUNDATION



We hope you will consider supporting DanceWorks in our new chapter with the artistic leadership of Dedra McDermott and David Norsworthy by making a charitable donation!

As a presenter of choreographic performance, your donation will support:

- artistic development for artists, with a focus on emerging and historically marginalized voices from Toronto and across Canada
- performances for the general public and student audiences that uplift timely and significant expressions of contemporary lived experiences
- public engagement and education programming that inspires appreciation for various forms of dance while fostering cross-cultural and intergenerational knowledge exchange

And so much more!

Your contribution will allow us to continue an over 40-year legacy of presenting the choreographic voices of local and national dance artists.

Thank you for joining us tonight and we hope to see you again in the future!

Dedra McDermott

David Norsworthy

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Director's Note

"*NOMADA* is the journey of Creator through Sky World, Underworld, and Earth. A daily ritual that maintains the harmony of all earthly and cosmological elements. *NOMADA* is the physical and spiritual act of renewal, affirmation, and restoration of the fragile and continuously changing balance of Earth" synopsis by Alejandro Ronceria

NOMADA is a solo performance that brings together aerial dance, rigging design, installation art and Contemporary Mexican indigenous dance. A journey inspired by personal stories of displacement, rituals of water, cycles of sustainability and the connections of our bodies to land.

Every element of creation and development has involved in-depth research and fieldwork. This production is a restorative process and a gateway to connection; an experience that honors the stories of my family; our Otomi and Purepecha ancestry, our contemporary community, history and relationships to the land and culture of Michoacan, Mexico.

Thanks to the support of knowledge keepers, my mother and elders of the Community of Michoacan; I was able to participate in water rituals and ceremonies, visited family members, butterfly sanctuaries and bodies of water. The sound and video material from rivers, storms, streets, conversations, and celebrations that we gathered during these years of research; are crucial elements in the final sound composition and inspiration of movement.

About Uarhi Creations

Uarhi Creations is a centre for multi and inter-arts research, a generator of experiences, performances and offerings and an incubator of collective eco-initiatives. Uarhi Creations also serves as a conduit for sharing movement practices and alternative learning experiences. We integrate, support, and foster self-directed inquiries in sustainable practices through ritual, process-based work, and site-specificity. Artistic Director, Diana Lopez Soto, is committed to cultivating human and land relationships. She celebrates the reciprocity and restoration of our deep inherited connections to Mother Earth to reclaim ancestral wisdom.

Cast



Diana Lopez Soto - Concept, Rigging Design, Performance Artist, Set Co-Design

Diana Lopez Soto is an award-winning multidisciplinary Mexican/Canadian artist, mother and land caretaker. She has presented and exhibited her work nationally and internationally in France, Panama, Mexico, Costa Rica, the USA, and Canada. She has produced and co-produced site-specific performances, vertical dance, art installations and experimental film for 15 years. Her deep interest inspires her work in sustainability as a process and the responsibility of art practices. Diana's love for material, physics and space also inspired her to design rigging structures, installations and sculptural sets that come to life through her movement explorations. From her grandmother to her mother and herself, Land has always shaped and informed her process. In 2019, thanks to the Canada Council for the Arts, Diana participated in the Guapamacataro Art and Ecology residency and the Vancouver International Vertical Dance Summit. She is a founding member of Norma (performance art troupe recognized in the 2011 Vancouver Mayor's Arts Awards as the outstanding Emerging Artist in Public Art) and a core member of Vanguardia Dance Projects.

Creative



Alejandro Ronceria - Script, Director, Dramaturg, Mentor, July 2017-August 2022

Alejandro Ronceria is an internationally acclaimed and award-winning director/choreographer/producer based in Toronto. As well as personal work, he has directed and produced theatrical productions nationally and internationally. Ronceria is also the founding Artistic Director of the first Aboriginal Dance Program in North America. During his 5 year tenure, the groundbreaking program brought together diverse Indigenous and Inuit performers from across Canada, the USA, Mexico; Greenland and New Zealand. He continues to work today as a director and dramaturge for numerous Indigenous productions in the Americas. Ronceria has also directed films that have premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival and Sundance. Classically trained in ballet in Colombia, he holds a MFA in Dance Dramaturgy from York University.



Rebecca Carney – Dramaturg, Rehearsal Director

Rebecca Carney is a director, producer and actor with experience in theatre, film, dance, and circus arts. She is the founder and director of Circus Orange, established in 1999, a company that combines theatre, dance, circus, stunts with fire and pyrotechnics. Circus Orange has presented work in Ontario, across Canada, Mexico, Japan, Turkey, Australia, Bahrain and the USA. Some featured performances include Tricycle, Aviator and Jump Jet. Her recent acting work has been in Stephen King's *Willi*, award-winning Canadian episodic web series *The Rebeccas*, Gloria in the award-winning *The Ballad of Gloria Sedgwick*, and Dana in *Trigger*. Rebecca performed in character for Cirque Du Soleil, the Daredevil Opera Company with the Rocket and Roxy's Stunt Show. Her education ranges in clown, voice, dance, aerial arts, boxing, yoga, and theatre. Rebecca studied performing arts

at the Actor's Working Academy in Vancouver, Technical Theatre at Humber College of Theatre Arts and Design, and Drama at the University of Waterloo.



Coman Poon - Ritual & Performance Art Dramaturg

Coman is a Tkaronto-based interdisciplinary artist, dance and performance dramaturg, activist, curator and producer working within context of decolonization and intercultural exchange. With Diana Lopez Soto, he co-founded and leads Land Embodiment Lab (LEL). His performance and visual art practice currently explores the 'ritual body' in relationship to shamanic origins of Feng Shui (Chinese geomancy) and ancestral co-knowing.



Leonardo Marati Vargas Carrion - Knowledge Keeper, Purepecha Language Mentor, Regalia Co-Designer

Leonardo Martin Vargas Carrion is from the community of San Lorenzo, municipality of Uruapan Michoacan. My ancestors were my grandfather, Santiago Carrion Morales, composer and musician of great pirekuas (a word of Purépecha origin that means song). My father, Santiago Carrion Reyes, is the precursor of the tradition and the first indigenous person who, apart from his Purépecha language, mastered the Spanish language and gained the position of interim president of the city of Uruapan, the great forerunner of the traditions of our state. I am interested in participating in the work of Diana López Soto because it is very important for us Purépechas that people from other countries recognize our culture, which includes music, traditional dance and traditional food that has been preserved since pre-Hispanic times, in addition to the preservation and conservation of our clothing, which is classified as pre-Hispanic ceremonial, dance and daily use.



Diego Marulanda – Composer (First Draft) Jan 2019- August 2022

Diego Marulanda is a well-established composer for dance, theatre, film and television with vast experience in contemporary and world music. Born in Bogota, Colombia, Diego is a multi-instrumentalist playing guitar as well as the instruments in his extensive 40+ collection. Diego lives in Toronto, ON, where he has had an active music career since 1988; he has been active as a composer, performer, music director, music arranger and producer. He was nominated for the Juno Awards and Canadian Music Week, composed scores and created music for dance performances has worked with choreographers across Canada such as Iqaluit, Nunavut and the Yukon First Nation.



Edgardo Moreno – Musician And Composer (Final Composition)

is a Canadian- Chilean composer that has been commissioned for projects in Canada, Venezuela, Mexico, Sweden, Argentina, Colombia, England and USA. He has worked extensively with indigenous contemporary dance choreographers and artists including Penny Couchie, Justin Manyfingers, Alejandro Ronceria, Olga Barrios, Norma Araiza, Rulan Tangen, Starr Muranko, Tasha Faye Evans, Jeanette Kotowich, Carlos Rivera, Sara Roque. He is presently working in creating video and live sound pieces that are part of his Fireflyproject. www.musicamoreno.com www.fireflyproject.ca



Erandi Cuiriz Ramos – Pirekua Composer

Mother, community leader and Purpecha composer. Vocalist for the Orquesta Tata Vasco. Born in Santa Fe de la Laguna, Michoacan, Mexico. Her upbringing was surrounded by music. Her mother, father and siblings are all part of the Orquesta Tata Vasco. They travel regionally and nationally to maintain the knowledge, the tradition and the language of the Purepecha community.



Rebecca Leonard - Rigging Specialist

Aerialist, rigging specialist, actor, and choreographer, Rebecca Leonard, has performed locally and internationally with circus companies across Canada: Les Filles aux Lit, Hangtime, Circus Orange, HighStrung, Cirque Sublime, Cirque Eos, Lookup Theatre, Anti-Gravity. Feature film credits: *The Tuxedo* and *Chicago*. An honours graduate of Ryerson Theatre School. In 2003 she founded A Girl In The Sky Productions. Rebecca is a Graduate of the Ecole Nationale du Cirque and she has been in leadership roles throughout the U.S. and Canada including Toronto School of Circus Arts, Cirque du Monde, Cirkids, WiseFool, Banff Center for the Arts, Harbourfront Circus Camp, Monica's Danz Gym, aerial and acrobatics coach at NECCA and Winnipeg Children's Festival.



Israel Barrera Hernandez - Rigging Specialist

Israel Barrera Hernandez is a Mazahua rigging artist from the community in the Municipality of Tunal of San Felipe del Progreso, Estado de Mexico. He was a professional Ballet and Contemporary Dancer at the beginning of his career in the performing arts. He has 17 years of experience as an acrobatic rigger, stunt rigger and field rigger, and ground support. He is recognized nationally and internationally due to his extensive experience as a mentor and specialized rigger in aerial dance.



Patricia Levert - Production & Tour Manager

A Facilitator of dreams for the past 25 years, Patricia has worn many different hats in the entertainment industry. Her education began in 1995, attending Humber College's Theatre Technical Program where she studied production & design. She currently lives in Peterborough Ontario, working at the historic Market Hall Performing Arts Centre as Production and Technical Manager (since 2010). She is a founding member of Peterborough Academy of Circus Arts. Patricia has successfully completed the Social Circus Instructor program from Ecole Nationale du Cirque in Montreal. She is excited to be a part of the *NOMADA* Team.



Taylor Young - Stage Manager

Taylor Young is a Toronto-based Stage Manager and Production Manager, originally from Calgary, AB. They hold a BFA from TMU in Performance Production. They have worked with companies such as Dance Made in Canada, Pencil Kit Productions, Kaeja d'Dance, Nova Dance, ProArteDanza, Citadel + Compagnie, DopoLavoro Teatrale, Toronto Dance Theatre, Rock Bottom Movement, and Fall for Dance North.



Samay Arcentales Cajas - Projection Designer

Samay Arcentales Cajas is a Toronto-based Kichwa artist and filmmaker exploring human-land relations, the new media dimensions of indigenous cosmology, and immersive art as a site of liberation. Her works have been shown at ImagineNATIVE, Xpace Cultural Centre, Mayworks Festival of Working People, Maysumak Quichwa Film Showcase, among others. Samay has also facilitated film programs at Sketch Working Arts and Charles Street Video, where she currently works as a program coordinator. She held her first solo show, "*Will You Listen?: Latinx Voices in Tkaronto*", a projection-based media installation at Whippersnapper Gallery. Samay works as a video designer and editor for artists and filmmakers nationwide.



Arun Srinivasan - Lighting Designer

Arun has worked extensively in the performing arts. He trained at York University, earning a Specialized Honours B.F.A. Dance collaborators have included Robert Desrosiers, Peter Chin, Danny Grossman, COBA, Kaha:wi Dance Theatre, Tiger Princess Dance Projects, The National Ballet School & ProArteDanza. He has been the resident designer for Canadian Contemporary Dance Theatre since 2002. Theatre credits include The Stratford Festival, Factory Theatre, The Canadian Stage Co., The Globe Theatre, The World Stage Theatre Festival, fu-GEN, Cahoots Theatre Projects, k'Now Theatre & Buddies In Bad Times Theatre. His career has garnered 8 Dora Mavor Moore Award nominations for Outstanding Lighting Design in both the theatre and dance categories. Productions have taken him to Ukraine, Malaysia, Singapore, India, China, and North America.



Andy Moro - Set Co-Designer

Andy Moro is a mixed-blood multi-disciplinary artist. His practice began in studio visual arts, foundry-based sculpture, blown glass, large-scale public installation and pyrotechnics. He has worked in automobile assembly, production film graphics and animation, typography and print design, darkroom and digital photography, 3D display technology, construction and installation, set construction, projection, set, lighting, sound and property design. Presently Moro codirects the Indigenous Activism Arts organization ARTICLE 11 with partner Tara Beagan.



Adriana Fulop - Costume Designer

Adriana Fulop is an award-winning costume and fashion designer. She was born in Bratislava, Slovakia and is currently residing in Toronto. She is one of the co-founders (together with Ryan Webber) of a future-thinking, Canadian independent fashion label PlastikWrap, which has been creating men's and women's fashions since 2001. (www.plastikwrap.com). Adriana's main passion is creating. She embraces the challenge of designing any style required for the job at hand. She believes a good design is not just a sketch or a picture but a marriage between script, character research and communication with the director and cast. In the last decade, Adriana has created costumes for many video and film productions, dancers, musicians, and independent theatres and artists.

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