



May 26, 2023. 7 30pm
Flannagan Theatre, The GRAND

Welcome to the first public presentation of *windows, black holes, helium*. This work is rather special to me for several reasons, among which the fact that its making followed an atypical trajectory. Indeed, the creative process and rehearsal activities to develop the piece served as context for a social science study. Our subjects, each of whom met criteria for being both a professional dancer and trauma survivor, were routinely involved in group discussions, individual interviews, and focus groups, where impressions were collected of their experience being directed to generate performance material from their own life-memory through various approaches. Our aim was to both augment knowledge on trauma-informed practices in live artmaking and go beyond those by answering questions pertaining to the development of recommendations for directors/choreographers engaging in trauma-*focussed* practices. We were able to shed light on creative potentials in recruiting fragmented traumatic memory from the professional dancer's deeply aware and articulated body, and to discuss in depth the necessary conditions under which this may happen safely. While all this data is still under review and analysis to be published within the next several months, we will happily share our immediate take on this research experience with you tonight post-performance, shall you stay for our informal talk back. Thank you for being here: your presence means a lot to me as an artist, a researcher, and a trauma survivor myself.

Marie France Forcier

-windows, black holes, helium- (2023)

Created by Marie France Forcier, in collaboration with

Performers Jordana Deveau, Cassandra Grose, Karen Kaeja, Louis Laberge-Côté

Sound Score by James Bunton

Lighting Design by Steve Isom

Research Team:

Prof. Marie France Forcier, MFA

Prof. Louis Laberge-Côté, MFA

Prof. Allison Crawford, MD, PhD

Research Assistant: Shevonne Morrison

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This study is primarily affiliated with the University of Calgary, along the University of Toronto and Toronto Metropolitan University. It is funded by the Government of Canada's Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. James Bunton's original composition for the work is funded by the Canada Council for the Arts.

Special thanks to:

Colin Barden, Timothy Clark, Mike and Yvonne MacDonald, Wojciech Mochniej, Melissa Monteros, Danielle Sanford, The Dance Arts Institute, the Faculty of Arts and School of Creative and Performing Arts at the University of Calgary, the School of Performance at Toronto Metropolitan University, The GRAND's Jenna Klein-Waller, Nate Chiang, and technical team.



Artists and Researchers

James Bunton is an independent producer / sound engineer / musician / Dora nominated composer who has performed across North America, Europe and Asia in projects including Ohbijou, Evening Hymns, Light Fires, Lisa Bozikovic, Barzin, The D'Urbervilles and Forest City Lovers. Works include compositions for Anandam Dancetheatre, Forcier Stage Works, Tina Fushell, Departures Entertainment Inc. (*Outdoor Life Network*), Stuart McIntyre & Paul Mathew (*Consul Media*), Richie Mehta (*Rickshaw Productions*), among many.

Allison Crawford is a psychiatrist and Associate Professor in the Department of Psychiatry, University of Toronto, and Adjunct Professor in the Dalla Lana School of Public Health, and Department of English. At the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, she is the Director of the Northern Psychiatric Outreach Program and Telepsychiatry, and co-Chair of ECHO Ontario Mental Health. Allison has worked as a psychiatrist in Nunavut for over 10 years and coordinates psychiatric services for the Government of Nunavut. She has consulted to Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, with the Mental Health Commission of Canada, to create a Canadian National Inuit Suicide Prevention Strategy, and with the Inuit Circumpolar Council and the Arctic Council on circumpolar wellness and suicide prevention initiatives.. Allison has a PhD in English literature, and brings arts-informed approaches to community engagement, public health, research, and education. She is Editor-in-Chief of *Ars Medica*, and co-curator of *The Body Electric*.

Independent dance artist, gardener & seed saver **Jordana Deveau** (she/her) is a first-generation settler based out of Tkaronto, Canada who works as an interpreter, producer, educator, administrator, rehearsal director and project coordinator. She is one of the five Creative Leaders of the Flight Festival of Contemporary Dance. She trained future generations of dance artists as Rehearsal Director and then Associate Artistic Director of Canadian Contemporary Dance Theatre (Deborah Lundmark, A.D.) from 2006-2012. She was the Co-Artistic Director of JDDance, a multifaceted dance theatre collective that she co-founded with Jesse Dell from 2009-2023. She was the production assistant for Dance Matters (Tanya Crowder, A.D.) from 2013-2020 and an administrator and coordinator for GMD (Good Morning Dance, directed by Kenny Pearl) from 2011-2021. Jordana is the co-author with Donna Krasnow, Ph.D., of "C-I Training: Conditioning with Imagery for Dancers". She has trained in Toronto, Guelph, Vancouver, New York, and Vienna, and performed in the U.S., Europe and across Canada interpreting works by notable choreographers including Carol Anderson, Julia Aplin, Peggy Baker, Sidra Bell, David Earle, Sylvain Émard, Kate Franklin, Margie Gillis, Louis Laberge-Côté, Andrea Nann, Roger Sinha, Holly Small, Santee Smith, and Gerry Trentham.

Marie France Forcier, (she/her) is a choreographer, performer, writer, and pedagogue of western contemporary dance forms. Through studio work, public performance, and community initiative, she researches at the intersection of somatic practices, trauma studies and choreography. An Associate Professor of Dance at the University of Calgary's School of Creative and Performing Arts, she received her conservatory training from the School of Toronto Dance Theatre, her Master of Fine Arts in Choreography from York University and is currently pursuing a PhD in Creative Practice at Liverpool John Moores University and Transart Institute (New York/Berlin). Her body of creative work has been presented on platforms spanning little-known urban sites to dance-dedicated proscenium spaces across North America, Europe, and Asia. Her most recent choreographic commissions include works for Decidedly Jazz Danceworks (Calgary, 2023) and the Dance Arts Institute (Toronto, 2023). As an interpreter, she has performed live and on film in disciplines ranging from family theatricals to contemporary dance, to performance art to aerial circus. The artistic director of Forcier Stage Works (forcierstageworks.net) since 2005, she was an Artistic Director at Hub 14 (Toronto, 2013-2015), a Board Director at Dancers Studio West for three seasons (Calgary, 2018-21/ Chair: 20-21), and regularly serves on national and international juries and committees. She lives with her two young sons and works within the traditional territories of the people of the Treaty 7 and the Métis Nation of Alberta, Region III.

A Toronto- and Calgary-based artist, **Cassandra Grose** is a BFA honours graduate from Toronto Metropolitan University's Performance Dance program. Her curiosity has led her into continued exploration of many avenues including formal studies of Human Psychology and various movement modalities. She is passionate about exploring the many facets of movement practices and looks to continuously deepen her connection between the inner and outer world. Cassandra's rigorous dance and performance training has fed into her passion for exploration and creation. She has created self-performed solo work, collaborated on dance pieces with colleagues, and performed in three Fall for Dance North festival editions, dancing in pieces by Charles Moulton, Anne Plamondon, as well as Bobbi Jene Smith and Or Schraiber. She has also had the opportunity to tour Greece with an Alyssa Martin and Peggy Shannon's production and participated in a residency at the Centro Coreográfico Maria Pagés with the Metamorphosis Method in Madrid, Spain. Striving to participate in meaningful art practices and always opened to exploring the human experience through the lens of performance, Cassandra is excited to continue to explore dance's range of possibilities as a medium with colleagues and friends.

Steve Isom is a Calgary based Lighting Designer for Dance, Theatre, Ballet, and Opera. He studied Design and Theatre production at St. Lawrence College in Kingston Ontario (1976-1978) and has won 2 Best Lighting Design awards from Theatre Ontario. His designs have been seen throughout Canada, the United States, Europe and for numerous Calgary and Edmonton Dance and Theatre companies over the past four decades including 12 years for Alberta Ballet and 30 years for The University of Calgary's Division of Dance.

Steve has designed extensively with W&M Physical Theatre in Calgary and in Poland since 1994. Some of those productions are: “When Language Fails”, “The Cube”, “Time”, “Waiting Rooms in Heaven”, “We Selle”, “UJE(Framed)” and “Made in Polska”. His work also includes designs for M-Body, Marie France Forcier, La Caravan Dance Theatre, Dancers Studio West, Calgary and Edmonton Opera, Jeunesse Classique Ballet, Theatre Calgary, Alberta Theatre Projects, Citadel Theatre, Theatre Network and Theatre Junction. For 2023 Steve has completed the Lighting of “Old/New/Borrowed/Blue for Decidedly Jazz Dance Works; “Songs without Words” for Davida Monk, “Mainstage Dance” at U of C. “Makambe Speaks” for Ghost River Theatre and “W&M2” with W&M Dance Projects.

Karen Kaeja is an Ashkenazi, Tkaronto born, choreographer, project instigator, performer, and mentor. The heart of her research and creation concentrates on the agency and challenges of Touch. *“The mastermind behind Porch View Dances”* (Toronto Star), she develops platforms for uniting relationships between dancers and everyday folk. Co-Artistic Director of Kaeja d’Dance with Allen Kaeja, Karen has created over 50 works with international engagements and commissions in Japan, Venezuela, Spain, Portugal, England, Mexico, Israel, Sweden, India, across the US and Canada. Featured in hundreds of dance film festivals, Kaeja films are part of the permanent collections at the MoMA, the Jewish Museum in New York, and the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in Israel. Karen’s awards include the 2022 George Luscombe Mentorship Award, Dance Ontario 2019 Lifetime Achievement Award, the CDA “I Love Dance” Community Award, Best Choreography in a Music video, and Paul D. Fleck Fellowship for Innovation. She was a finalist for the TAF Celebration of Cultural Life Award and the TAF Muriel Sherrin Award for International achievement. A 7-time Dora Mavor Moore nominee, winning one, Karen collaborates with many of Canada’s brilliant dance artists, including this first performance with Marie. www.kaeja.org

Louis Laberge-Côté is Assistant Professor at Toronto Metropolitan University since July 2018. He is a Toronto-based dancer, choreographer, teacher, and rehearsal director. An acclaimed performer, he has danced nationally and internationally with over thirty companies and has been a full-time member of Toronto Dance Theatre (1999-2007) and the Kevin O’Day Ballett Nationaltheater Mannheim (2009-2011). He has created over eighty choreographic works, which have been presented and commissioned in Canada and abroad. His work has garnered him a Dora Mavor Moore Award for Outstanding Choreography and ten other individual and ensemble nominations for Performance or Choreography. He is a triple KM Hunter Award nominee and has received several grants from all three levels of government, the Chalmers Foundation, the Metcalf Foundation, the Laidlaw Foundation, and the Dancer Transition Resource Centre. He acted as Chair of the Canadian Alliance of Dance Artists - Ontario Chapter (2005-2007), Vice-President of the Canadian Dance Assembly (2013-2017), and Chair of the Dance Committee at the Toronto Arts Council (2013-2018). He is currently President of Healthy Dancer Canada. He holds an MFA in Creative Practice from the University of Plymouth (UK) and Transart Institute (USA). Laberge-Côté continues to be a sought-after interpreter and investigator of new dance creations.