

MOMENTUM

2022

April 27-30

Winchester Street Theatre
80 Winchester Street

Works by:

VALERIE CALAM

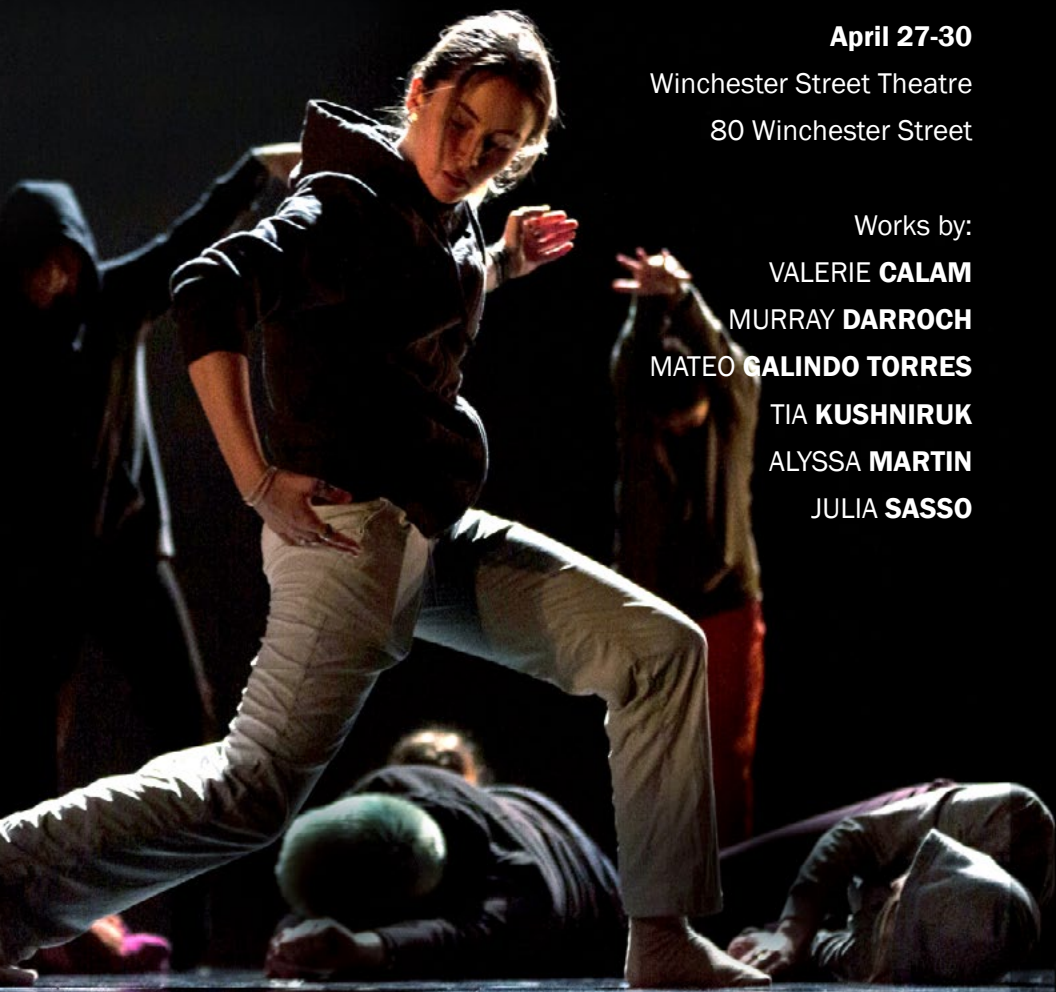
MURRAY DARROCH

MATEO GALINDO TORRES

TIA KUSHNIRUK

ALYSSA MARTIN

JULIA SASSO



WELCOME TO MOMENTUM 2022!

Our performance series are curated to provide the students with artistic and technical challenges that are in line with the learning aims for each particular year of study, and they give them the opportunity to encounter new choreographic perspectives and ideas. Through these encounters, students practice a variety of compositional methods and strategies and are engaged in high level discourse. By fusing doing and knowing, students develop skills to formulate critical responses to the dances they learn and perform.

Each choreographic practice is unique and can originate from an infinite number of inquiries of imagination, culture, place, body, gender and much more. This is particularly important to keep in mind when watching the works in this performance series, as some of them implicate and challenge our role as audience, as spectators. Also worth noting, both the works for the third year class, created decades apart by Murray Darroch and Alyssa Martin, speak to the importance of experiencing fun in the rehearsal and creation process. I highly encourage you to take the time to read through all the choreographers' notes to learn more about their intentions and processes.

Thank you for your support of the students and our School.
Please enjoy the show!



Sasha Ivanochko
Artistic Director

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF TRADITIONAL LAND

The School of Toronto Dance Theatre would like to acknowledge the sacred land on which we operate, the site of human activity for over 15,000 years. This land is the traditional territory of many nations: the Wendat, the Haudenosaunee, and the Anishinaabe, including the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. We are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land and to share our space with all peoples – those indigenous to Turtle Island and those from the world.

MOMENTUM 2022

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Sasha Ivanochko

DANCERS

First year class

Emmett Bradshaw
Kai Fitzpatrick
Micaela Janse
Van Rensberg
Keanne Kessler
Camille Scully
Malcolm Snow
Élodie Kyra Tan

Second year class

Katie Ayer
Peter Bannister
Amelia Brown
Rajvi Dedhia
Abigail Hanson
Mai Luening
Pritesh Mehta
Ella Parsons
Camryn Rieksts
Maya Santos O'Keefe
Isabella Schaffer-Hooper

Third year class

Katie Adams-Gossage
Nidhi Baadkar
Fannie-Rose Bernard
Kayla Champis
Sydney-Grace James
Ben King
Jaimee Leggett
Julianna Heft
Frédérique Perron
Jayne Shi
Leah Wilton

WORKS BY

Valerie Calam
Murray Darroch
Mateo Galindo Torres
Tia Ashley Kushniruk
Alyssa Martin
Julia Sasso

PRODUCTION TEAM

Noah Feaver, Lighting Designer
Valerie Calam, Costume Coordinator & Designer
Helin Gungoren, Stage Manager
Taylor Young, Assistant Stage Manager
Nathan Bruce, Lead Technician
Emerson Kafarowski, Lighting Technician
Robynne Harder, Production Manager

MOMENTUM 2022

Fun (1994)

Choreographer: Murray Darroch

Remounted by: Heidi Strauss

Rehearsal director: Johanna Bergfelt

Music: Louis Moreau Gottschalk, Grande tarantelle, Op. 67

Performers: Third year class

Heidi's notes:

Murray created this work on the School's 1994 graduating class, based on their request to faculty to be challenged in new and different directions. The work was constructed in phrases that were later puzzled together with the music in an order that kept the dancers on high alert; sometimes it felt like the movement and music were at odds. If you were successful making it through those difficult moments, you'd always land where you were supposed to. Back when it was made, Murray called the dancers who performed it 'heroic'. For him, and for those who have danced it, it was about the attempt, not the outcome; the process of performing it, and the challenge. It was about the importance of committing to it and sticking it out together. Murray's work was always a dry comment on something. This one was perhaps on virtuosity in dance, but also, potentially, on how important it is to simply keep going.

The School of Toronto Dance Theatre remounted this work in 1997 and 2005. It is Fun. It has always been Fun.

Special thanks to Steve Cooney & Jason Klugmana for bringing Murray's spirit back in this way, and to the dancers who embraced the next-level challenge of remounting and rehearsing it fully masked.

Murray Darroch (1954-2005) was a graduate of the School of Toronto Dance Theatre, a choreographer, teacher, arts administrator and closet ballroom dancer. After graduating, he worked as Associate Artistic Director of Winnipeg Contemporary Dancers before returning to Toronto where he continued choreographing, became administrator of the School of Toronto Dance Theatre, taught in the General School and also briefly took on a brief interim position as Artistic Director. "It is, however, as a trendsetting choreographer that Mr. Darroch is best known, and his original and avant-garde approach to dance won him the prestigious Canada Council Jacqueline Lemieux Prize in 1983. Mr. Darroch was among the first dance-theatre choreographers in the country, incorporating text, props, costumes and pedestrian movement into his acclaimed works. Quirky, satiric, subversive, unpredictable, witty and always very dark, his choreographies placed dance in a bizarre and fantastical world of theatrical emotionalism, and would sometimes include full-frontal nudity." (Paula Citron)

Heidi Strauss creates dance-based experiences to examine human behavior from different perspectives, using relationships as a basis to consider our current social and environmental moment. She is interested in challenging how we see/experience performance by shifting the physical perspective of the audience, creating immersive, installation, ambulatory, site-sensitive and digital works for theatre and non-theatre environments. A multi-Dora Award winning choreographer and the Artistic Director of *adelheid*, Heidi's interest in creative process led to *adelheid's re:research*, which supports professional development for emerging dance artists. Heidi is a recipient of the KM Hunter Award for Dance. Besides being in the original cast of *Fun*, she was Murray's ballroom partner and close friend.

adelheid.ca

Uncertainty, a principle.

Choreographer: Mateo Galindo Torres - GUETCHA GUARITCHA, in collaboration with the dancers

Music: Pua by Dengue Dengue Dengue and Peña; Bakiné by Ampersan

Text/sound design: Mateo Galindo Torres - GUETCHA GUARITCHA

Hindi translation: Rajvi Dedhia

Performers: Second year class

In quantum mechanics, Heisenberg's uncertainty principle implies that it is not possible to determine the accurate position and momentum of a particle at the same time. We either know where a particle is or how it is moving, but we cannot know both.

I draw a relationship between this principle and a life lesson I have learned (and keep re-learning): In order to move, I need to leave where I am. To grow and evolve, I need to allow my ideas, beliefs, and opinions to shift and change.

There must be space for the unknown.

In a world that feels more and more divided, where spectrums disappear and harsh opposites seem to become the norm, it feels important to reflect on this lesson. How malleable is my position? Am I welcoming to the knowledge and experiences of others? How open am I to the fact that I cannot ever fully know where others are coming from?

Often I cannot even know where I am fully coming from... Perhaps that is ok... Perhaps uncertainty is a place for celebration, where we can see and welcome each other because of our differences.

Uncertainty, a principle is an exploration of these ideas. The dancers' journey from very meticulously choreographed movement patterns to an improvisation and exploration. They are invited to welcome the unknown as structures shift and disappear, finding intimacy and joy within. I am incredibly grateful to the dancers for their generosity and commitment to this work.

Mateo Galindo Torres is a Colombian-Canadian multidisciplinary dance artist, actor and performer based in Toronto. Mateo started his training in Bogota at an early age, and deepened his studies in the USA, Cuba, and Canada. As an interpreter, Mateo has worked with a wide array of directors and choreographers, for live theatre, voice over and film. Mateo has performed in Canada, Colombia, Cuba, Germany, Mexico, and Panama. As a choreographer and creator, his work is highly influenced by his Latinx American background, often politically charged, and inspired by social subject matters. Mateo fuses his eclectic movement training within his choreography creating a distinct movement quality.

Mateo is the founder and artistic lead of **GUETCHA GUARITCHA**, a dance and performance company whose call is "to find our essential truth, to connect with it, honour it, and to express ourselves from it."

Inside the Baseline Flex

Choreographer/audio editor: Valerie Calam

Music/sound: Original track composed by Fantastical Realms

Performers: First year class

The first portion of the creative process included improvising with set phrases of movement, completing a choreographic structure without set roles, and feeling the impulses to take a solo. Therefore, the dancers were free to join in when they felt compelled to do so, and equally free to witness and watch. The effect was like a sprinting relay team as dancers traded off and picked up where someone else let off. We always leaned into physical specificity and aimed to hear 'the music of the movements.' As we came closer to the performance run, the piece began to 'set' itself in a way – I believe this happened through the dancers' repetition of decision-making and the self-selection of their own experience through the piece.

The addition of costuming and tactile materials added to the practice of listening, helping to draw awareness back to the present moment. We also tried to fit the work into a specific time frame constraint, which presented a practice of 'pruning'. Conceptually, we are aimed to cultivate space around the moments that feel really good and cut-away the moments that don't serve the overall energetic flow of the group. We used the same music for the entire process, and it became the baseline to flex within. Always forward moving, with precision! Always focussing on the individual within a group, working together in non-violence! Thank you to the dancers for collaborating on the costumes, and their commitment and openness throughout!

Valerie Calam is a Toronto-based artist interested in finding pathways to refresh and support herself. She works with sound, movement, fabric, patterns, the nervous system, and the body.

Valerie umbrellas much of her work under the name Company Vice Versa (companyviceversa.com) and is currently collaborating on a sound score for dance artist Allison Cummings, as well as a interactive sound design for dance artist Emma Kerson to be presented at The Citadel: Ross Centre for Dance, Toronto in June 2022.

Valerie is the Dance Ontario Regional Representative for her hometown of Sault Ste Marie, Ontario. She is the Membership Coordinator and Operations Manager for CADA/East (Canadian Alliance of Dance Artists). Valerie frequently works with composer Fantastical Realms, dance artist Kate Franklin, and visual artist Diane Borsato. Currently, Valerie is collaborating on an experimental video game with filmmaker Franci Duran and Fantastical Realms through the generous support of Canada Council for the Arts.

Valerie has had a long and enriching history with Toronto Dance Theatre. She recently collaborated with designer Angela Cabrera to create a new work for TDT's Performance Clash (Andrew Tay, Artistic Director). Under the Artistic Direction of Christopher House, Val was a full-time company dancer from 1999-2009 and a guest artist from 2015-2019. She is a KM Hunter Award winner for Dance. She completed a Master of Fine Arts Degree in Choreography in 2014 from York University where she continued her research of state and imagination-based movement and composition.

INTERMISSION

FEED (excerpt.remix) *

Choreographer/director/script writer: Tia Ashley Kushniruk

Assistant directors: Clarke Blair, Eric Pinkerton

Rehearsal director: Johanna Bergfelt

Script writer: Eric Pinkerton

Stage combat consultants: Clarke Blair, Anna Pratch

Composer: Jon Kereliuk (Track listing: Dilemma - Nelly ft. Kelly Rowland, Arjun Vagale - Black Strobe; Seamless - Down in It; Under Black Helmet - Impulsive Behaviour; Perc & Randomer - Flooring)

Performers: Second year class

*This work contains violence, coarse language, and the use of strobe lighting.

FEED (excerpt.remix) is a work about youth, hedonism, violence and control. What starts as a climactic end to a night of debauchery quickly escalates into a nightmare fueled by indulgence, submission, and mania, resulting in an inevitable catastrophe that asks the question, how far would you go to feel like you are in control?

This work was built in nine days. It is inspired from an un-premiered work called *FEED*, devised with Jenna Berlyn Mazur and Kenzie Bowes. In *FEED*, there is a group chorus section wherein all of the characters move in unison/non-unison, emitting a feeling of unease and anxiety towards the entrapment of this particular situation they are in - in this case, it was a funeral.

For *FEED (excerpt.remix)*, I wanted to take this feeling of 'entrapment' and change the context to one of this group of youthful students and a long night out. I had an idea for a lighting implement that would be this non-human character hiding in plain sight. Seemingly innocent, maybe cheeky and fun, built into the space itself, but a 2nd act twist entity for the unsuspecting party goers.

Due to my own current interpersonal circumstances, I wanted to show what control looks like to someone unsuspecting and naive and what the consequences are for them, the people around them, and the witnessing audience. How does 'control' really dictate what people think they can do, and what are they willing to do to gain 'control' of the situation.

Thank you once again to my generous collaborators and the performers on stage, and to Mona Kaneko who was a collaborator & performer during the inception of the work. And to you - the passive witnessing audience - I say, Let them eat cake.

Tia Ashley Kushniruk (亚女弟) is a queer woman of Chinese-Eastern European settler heritage from the Treaty 6 Territory of Amiskwaciwâskahikan/Edmonton. She is a dancer, an illustrator, a moderator, an animator, a stand-up comedian and a writer. Tia is the inaugural recipient of the CONFLUENCE Fellowship from Catalyst Theatre in Edmonton. She is a current company member of SK/RSA in Vancouver BC. If she could be a cartoon character she would be Garfield.

Timber.

Choreographer: Julia Sasso, in collaboration with the dancers

Costumes: Julia Sasso, with Valerie Calam

Music: Michael Gorden, remix by High Priest of APC – Timber; Hildur Guonadottir - Folk faer andlit; Balaklava Blues - Don't Leave Me

Performers: First year class. Thank you to Kai Fitzpatrick and Michaela Skuce for contributing to the project.

Since the beginning of time, artists of every description have interrogated and explored Conflict, questioning what separates us and what brings us together. I listen to a lot of music, I get something from every genre, even those that challenge me. A lifelong lover of public radio, my local go-to station is CIUT89.5 where I've made countless musical discoveries. Public/community radio also keeps me current with what I feel I need to be aware of, locally and globally. My musical discoveries often coincide with current events, each suggesting imagery, movement, energies, rhythms, and emotional and physical states. My imagination begins to depict our humanity through movement expression. This was the case when I stumbled upon these thrilling pieces of music in a moment when our world took another chilling turn. The music I chose [perhaps, it chose me?] speaks to me of timeless themes: tension, chaos, flight, empathy, loss, longing as well as, resistance, resilience, memory, love, and hope. Even the possibility for transcendence, freedom, and light. Our creation process has been rich and collaborative, involving improvisation, trial and error, laughter, tears, and dialogue – the students questioned some of the work's content and imagery, prompting me to consider what we were creating through a different lens: their lens. I am grateful for a deeply meaningful experience together with these maverick young artists. *Timber.* is a reflection; A response to the world's un-folding; an empathic dream of Peace and Reconciliation. – JS

Imagine all the people

Living life in peace...

– John Lennon [1956-1980]

Julia Sasso's decades-long career encompasses performance, choreography, teaching, mentorship, writing, and advocacy. Sasso performed internationally with Toronto's Dancemakers (1984-2000) and was the company's Assistant Artistic Director and principal teacher for a dozen years. 'one of perhaps a dozen contemporary modern dancers in Canada who is simply breathtaking in motion.' (The Ottawa Citizen), she continues to perform and create independently. Sasso choreographs extensively for the concert stage as well as for theatre, feature film, and television. Her choreography has been commissioned and presented throughout Canada, in the United States and abroad by Harbourfront Centre, the Canada Dance Festival, the Stratford Shakespeare Festival of Canada, Toronto Dance Theatre, Dancemakers, Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers, and DanceWorks among others. Her contribution to theatre and dancemaking in Toronto has been acknowledged with eight Dora Mavor Moore Award nominations. Sasso has taught at distinguished learning centres world wide. She has created choreography for professional contemporary dance training programs across Canada and abroad and since 1995, has created close to 100 dances for The School of Toronto Dance Theatre's Professional Training Program where she is a core faculty member. Since 2006, she has taught in York University's School of the Arts, Media, Performance and Design. Her recently published writing appears in, Skinner Releasing Technique, A Movement and Dance Practice (2021) (triarchypress.net/srt)

Upcoming projects include performances at the 2nd annual Flight festival (flightfestivalpec.org) in August and at Harbourfront Centre in November as part of 20 Over 50, Older & Reckless/Moonhorse Dance Theatre, choreographer Tedd Robinson.

château remorse

Choreographer/music/sound/text: Alyssa Martin

Performers: Third year class

This work is built on a foundation of laughing together, exchanging poems and songs while rigorously traveling into our imaginations. With a loving acknowledgement of the dance legacies soaked into these walls, we'd fold dance into theatre, into musical theatre, into mime, into soap opera; all centering around the idea of repackaging our embarrassing idiosyncratic guts as glimmering tiaras. While creating this work, we would flip flop between taking ourselves seriously and having collective existential laughs about the absurdity of it all. Eventually, the world of the work began to reveal itself to us; *château remorse* had a way of singing, moving, seeing...

The collective imagination is, for lack of a better word, bonkers. Before we knew it we were greeting a lounging metaphorical-carcass on astroturf, inviting it to join us in the ballroom. We've spun an entire absurd narrative to carry us through, however, we'd suggest you treat this dance as less "story" and more "poem." There is plenty of space for your thoughts, confusions, laughter, frustrations and feelings.

Dance-making can be radically fun when the process is approached in the same way one might approach friendship: with space for laughter and spontaneity amidst an ongoing celebration of time with one another. As a guest and visitor, the deep friendship and support was so immediately apparent in this group of artists. I'm tremendously grateful for this opportunity to meet and work together with them; their trust, curiosity, hard work and hilarity made this time so memorable.

Alyssa Martin (she/her) is a choreographer and director based in Tkaronto. She's working on using a neo-absurdist approach to bake wonky imaginative coping mechanisms into psychedelic contemporary spectacle. Determined to help blur the distinctions of dance and theatre, she founded a company called Rock Bottom Movement in 2012 alongside friends/collaborators. The group has since shared full-evening works in the city and abroad; including their award winning dance meets quasi-musical, hollow mountain. Recently, she's been commissioned to create new work for film and stage with Toronto Dance Theatre (Bin Chicken), Canadian Contemporary Dance Theatre (STAR SEED), and X University (DinoLand). In addition to concert dance, Alyssa works in theatre and musicals as a choreographer and movement director having worked at The Stratford Festival, Tarragon Theatre and Theatre Sheridan. She's worked in residence at The Banff Centre, Canadian Stage and Stratford Festival LAB as well as through programs such as adelheid's re:research, and Toronto Dance Theatre's Emerging Voices Project. Her dance films have been featured at the Portland Film Festival, Sydney Women's International Film Festival (Bin Chicken) and dance : made in canada fait au canada (this is not a passion project). She teaches at many post-secondary institutions as well as through her community-based NONDancer workshops. She is currently creating a new multi-disciplinary work with Susie Burpee and Linnea Swan, choreographing at The Stratford Festival, creating new works with Rock Bottom and devising a "play" through the Bulmash-Siegel Award for New Development at Tarragon Theatre with her collaborator, Telehorn.

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For more information about these capital improvements, please contact: facilities@tdt.org

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- engages exceptional professional faculty to provide outstanding and relevant instruction;
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- provides leadership to the field and leaders for the field.

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 schooloftdt.org

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THE SCHOOL
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