

# CANADIAN CONTEMPORARY DANCE THEATRE

*Artistic Director, Deborah Lundmark*

*presents*

## WINTERSONG

*dances for a sacred season*

### Performance Guide 2019

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## **An Introduction to *WinterSong* – dances for a sacred season**

Celebrating its 32<sup>nd</sup> year, Canadian Contemporary Dance Theatre has gathered an enthusiastic following for its annual December performance, *WinterSong - dances for a sacred season*. The Toronto Star has called it “a thoroughly refreshing take on the season.” *WinterSong* premiered in December, 1988 at Harbourfront’s Fleck Dance Theatre (formerly Premiere Dance Theatre). Prior to 1988, CCDT had presented a Christmas satire called *Simon Sorry in the Battle for the Toys*. After several years of poking fun, through *Simon’s* antics, at the commercial kidnapping of the holiday season, the dance company wanted to offer an alternative vision, one that returned to the often forgotten origins of the mid-winter festivities: nature. For thousands of years our ancestors anxiously watched the sun’s annual descent towards its lowest point on the southern horizon. Only through the power of their rituals, they believed, would the aging sun be reborn at dawn, December 21, from its winter solstice. From those rituals also were born the stories and traditions, the songs and dances that warm our spirits to this day.

In celebrating the solstice season, *WinterSong* draws on many themes and traditions including Hebraic, Christian, Aboriginal, pagan and humanist. Over the years, some of Canada’s leading choreographers have contributed to the *WinterSong* repertoire. The debut performance featured Toronto Dance Theatre Co-Founder David Earle’s mythic Hebraic dance titled *Chichester Psalms*; Carol Anderson created a medieval dance called *Nowell Sing We* (which remains active in the company’s repertoire today); Holly Small choreographed a moving lament for children lost to war titled *Missa Brevis*; and CCDT Artistic Director Deborah Lundmark created *Ceremony of Carols* to the music of Benjamin Britten. Recent *WinterSong* choreographers have included acclaimed street dance artists Ofilio Sinbadinho and Apolonia Velasquez, the Artistic Director of New York City’s José Limón Dance Company, Colin Connor, indigenous contemporary artists Jera Wolfe and Santee Smith, and Toronto-based creators Sylvie Bouchard, Ryan Lee, and Hanna Kiel.

### **At the Performance**

The 60-minute production will be animated by Artistic Director Deborah Lundmark, who will introduce each dance piece with a brief description. After the final dance, the entire company will come on stage for a final bow, followed by a short Q & A session. This will be an opportunity for both students and teachers to ask questions about the show, CCDT, the individual dancers, and dance in general.

### **Theatre Etiquette**

A visit to the theatre is an excellent opportunity for your students to learn and practise proper theatre etiquette. Below are a few suggestions to make your trip to the theatre a success. These same rules can be applied to a performance in your school’s auditorium or gymnasium.

- **Arrive early** to allow time to seat your class, **and then have students use the washroom** after being seated. Late arrivals delay the performance, or you risk missing part of the show.
- **Disperse chaperones** among students.
- **Do not bring food or drinks** into the theatre.
- **Do not wear headphones** in the theatre.
- **Do not bring laser pointers, cameras, or lights** into the theatre. Photography and videography are strictly prohibited during the performance – this includes social media posting.

- **Turn off all mobile phones and devices** before entering the theatre.
- **Talking is not permitted** during the performance (unless specifically encouraged by the performers), although quiet discussion is allowed before and after the performance.
- **Applause** is welcome after each individual piece.
- **Do not leave your seats** until the end of the performance.
- **Take your time and make sure you have all your personal belongings** when leaving the theatre.

## Things to Consider during the Performance

Students will take more of an interest if they are aware of the type of dance that is being performed. You might emphasize to your students that they are not “required” to like every dance they see. A major step towards “dance literacy” is being able to recapture and describe what was seen. Let your students know that we encourage them to actively participate in the matinee program by asking questions and giving opinions after the performance. Below are some ideas they may want to think about while watching the performance and that you can discuss later in class.

1. What was your first impression? What did the performance bring to mind or remind you of?
2. Did the performance cause an emotional response? How did it make you feel?
3. Was the dance an interesting visual experience? What stood out for you? (i.e. What kinds of lines and shapes were seen? What visual patterns were seen on stage?) See the Elements of Dance on page 12 for more information
4. How did the lighting and set design, if any, enhance or detract from the performance?
5. Describe the costumes. How did the costumes move with the choreography and/or connect to the theme of the dance?
6. Describe the types of music you heard. Did the dance seem like an interpretation of the music or was it the opposite (e.g. did you hear fast music and see slow movement)?
7. *WinterSong* draws on the many themes of the winter solstice. Did you see these themes come to life in each piece? Describe ways in which these themes were represented. Refer to *WinterSong* and the Winter Solstice on page 9.

## Contact us – we greatly value your feedback!

If you or your students have more questions, opinions, or responses after the performance, we would love to hear from you. Emails can be sent to [development@ccdt.org](mailto:development@ccdt.org), and post can be sent to:

Canadian Contemporary Dance Theatre  
509 Parliament Street  
Toronto, ON M4X 1P3

## **WinterSong – The Dances You Will See**

*Please note that the dances may not be performed in the order listed below.*

### **SKNAHT**

*(Premiere 2012)*

**Choreography** by Ofilio Sinbadinho

**Music** by Dr. Christian Fischer

**Costume Design** by Angel Wong

**Costume Production** by Vanessa

Janiszewski

**Lighting Design** by Arun Srinivasan

**SKNAHT** (pronounced "Snat") is 'thanks' spelled backwards – an intriguing title derived from the dance's exploration of the importance of gratitude and communication within our cultural traditions and celebrations.



This dance is a solstice tale set in an endless Arctic night where anonymous exiles cross paths, no memories left of their respective language, culture or traditions. Imagine this place where memories of where you are from, who you are and what you are expected to do are erased. Then, you will easily see if you really absorbed the meaning of traditions and rituals or you just robotically repeated what others have been repeating. Real human instinct is what this is all about

**Ofilio Sibadinho's** highly charged street dance reputation has vaulted him on stage alongside such renowned popular artists as Nelly Furtado, Kreesha, Feist and Jully Black. His company, Gadfly, cofounded with Apolonia Velasquez in 2008, has been presented at Toronto's Luminato and Nuit Blanche, the Montreal Fringe Festival and Break Beats & Culture. In 2011 he created the Dora Award winning *Klorofyl*. Now, in little more than two years, Ofilio has radically broadened his reputation for the unexpected, working with contemporary dancers to ignite an explosive fusion of urban and contemporary dance. His 2012 *Skenaht*, commissioned by CCDT, was among the first of these transformative crossovers.

[www.gadfly.ca](http://www.gadfly.ca)

## ***A Day of Light***

*(Premiere 2018)*

**Choreography and Direction by** Hanna Kiel, in collaboration with the dancers

**Original Music by** Greg Harrison and Frances Miller, with Cello by Blanche Israël

**Costumes by** Krista Dowson

**Lighting Design by** Arun Srinivasan



In this dance, choreographer Hanna Kiel imagines a community of people gathering to celebrate the sunlight's lengthening hours with a joyous festival. The dancers congregate in growing excitement through sections of harmonious unison and playful solos and duets, eventually building up to a radiant group dance incorporating many traditional Korean folk dance steps drawn from Kiel's heritage. The music, an original composition by Greg Harrison and Frances Miller, incorporates folk-inspired melodies inspired by Harrison's east coast upbringing with beautiful voice and lyrics by Miller.

Of the work, Kiel writes: *Thinking of the winter solstice, I was inspired to celebrate the arrival of the first lengthening day. Though it goes by so quickly, it is like our innocent time and we cherish those moments in the sun forever.*

Dora Award-winning choreographer **Hanna Kiel** is from Seoul, South Korea, and moved to Vancouver in 1996, where she presented her work at 12 Minutes Max, PlanB Singles and solos Festival, Dancing on the Edge Festival and Pulse at the Scotiabank Dance Centre. In 2007, she collaborated with Yoko Ono as a dancer and choreographer at the Centre A. Moving to Toronto in 2008, Hanna has continued choreographing for Rosedale Heights School of the Arts, The Conteur Academy, George Brown Dance, Ryerson Dances, The School of Toronto Dance Theatre, Kenny Pearl's Emerging Artist Intensive, IGNITE, ProArteDanza, Ballet Jörgen, Alias Dance Project, The National Ballet of Canada, Canadian Contemporary Dance Theatre, Toronto Dance Theatre, and Decidedly Jazz Danceworks (Calgary). In 2012 Hanna won Northwest Dance Project's Pretty Creatives international choreographic competition. She was an Emerging Choreographer for Springboard Danse Montréal 2015, and a choreographer at Osez 2018 in Quebec City. Hanna is the artistic director of Human Body Expression and a founder of The Garage, a dance development and exchange collective.

## **Embers**

*(World Premiere)*

**Choreography** by Jera Wolfe

**Music** by Luke Howard, Lior, Shards

**Costume Design** by Angel Wong

**Costume Production** by Krista Dowson

**Lighting Design** by Arun Srinivasan



*Embers* explores how in the coldest of times we seek closeness to those around us for warmth and comfort. The dancers come together to seek refuge from the bitter cold, uniting their energy much in the way that tinder, kindling, and wood must be gathered together to fuel a fire. Their movements have a strong connection to the earth, moving in and out of the floor, using breath to unify the group in both motion and energy. We see them embrace and carry each other through the space, and help elevate each other in bold lifts and tosses into the air, always to be caught and put back on their feet with grace and care. The dancers support one another unwaveringly, providing a source of endless fuel for their collective burning fire, from moments of powerful, vibrant flames to quiet, smoking embers.

Choreographer Jera Wolfe shares: *When I think about the winter solstice I am taken to my time spent in Winnipeg. I remember the cold winters that brought me and others together. We would gather together indoors to stay warm. We would eat, play music and enjoy each other's company. It was the warmth of us coming together that brought comfort to the harsh and unforgiving winters.*

**Jera Wolfe** was born in Toronto. He is a choreographer and performer of Métis heritage and is an Associate Artist with Red Sky Performance. His choreographic works have been presented by Canadian Stage, Fall For Dance North, Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, Festival des arts de Saint-Sauveur, Danse Danse, and Jacob's Pillow. His recent works have included *Bare* choreographed on Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet, *Trace* by Red Sky Performance, and *Arise* for Canada's National Ballet School. Jera trained at Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet School and has created new works for them annually since 2016. Jera's upcoming works will include *Arise* presented at Canada's National Ballet School's Assemblée Internationale, and new creations for Tulsa Ballet II and Ryerson University, School of Performance Dance. In 2019 Jera won a Dora Mavor Moore award for Outstanding Original Choreography for *Trace*.



## ***Nowell Sing We***

*(Premiere 1988)*

**Choreography** by Carol Anderson  
**Medieval Music Arranged** by Kirk Elliott

**Costumes** by Katharine Mallinson  
**Lighting Design** by Arun Srinivasan

This dance takes its inspiration from medieval art and music. The music is composed of actual medieval carols played on period instruments such as the psalter. Anderson drew her images from medieval manuscripts and early Christian books, and in one section she makes use of the Mary and Child motif common in Medieval Christian art.



The flat-surface movement style of *Nowell Sing We* reflects the medieval period when images and art had a very two-dimensional look. The dance also involves intricate patterns in which the dancers weave the floor like a tapestry. Another aspect of the choreography, which permeates much of Anderson's work, is the seamless flow of movement. The different gestures and steps move so carefully into one another that the audience clearly will see several different movements without seeing where one begins and the other ends. Anderson says that when she created the work she set herself to the challenge of making the dancers move as fast as possible.

Anderson has looked to create a dance that conveys a feeling of community and celebration in an idealized, more innocent medieval world. Since its premiere in 1988, *Nowell Sing We* has been performed at every *WinterSong*.

**Carol Anderson** has pursued a wide-ranging career as a dancer, teacher, writer, consultant and choreographer. CCDT's Artist-in-Residence in 1999/2000, since 1988 Anderson has created eight works for the company: *Nowell Sing We*, *Garden*, *Haiku*, *London*, *Les Belles Heures*, *Lily (The Lely)*, *Shore* and *Sephardic Songs*. A founding member of Dancemakers, during the fifteen years of her association with the company she was a dancer, choreographer, Co-Artistic Director (with Patricia Fraser) from 1980–1985, and was the company's Artistic Director from 1985–1988. In 1994 she received the Dance Ontario Award. Anderson is the author of five books, including *Rachel Browne: Dancing Toward the Light*, and *Chasing the Tale of Contemporary Dance Parts I and II*. Her writing on Canadian dance also appears in magazines, anthologies and encyclopaedias. Anderson is a member of the Performing Arts Committee of the Laidlaw Foundation, a professor emerita of York University, and frequently acts as a consultant for cultural agencies.

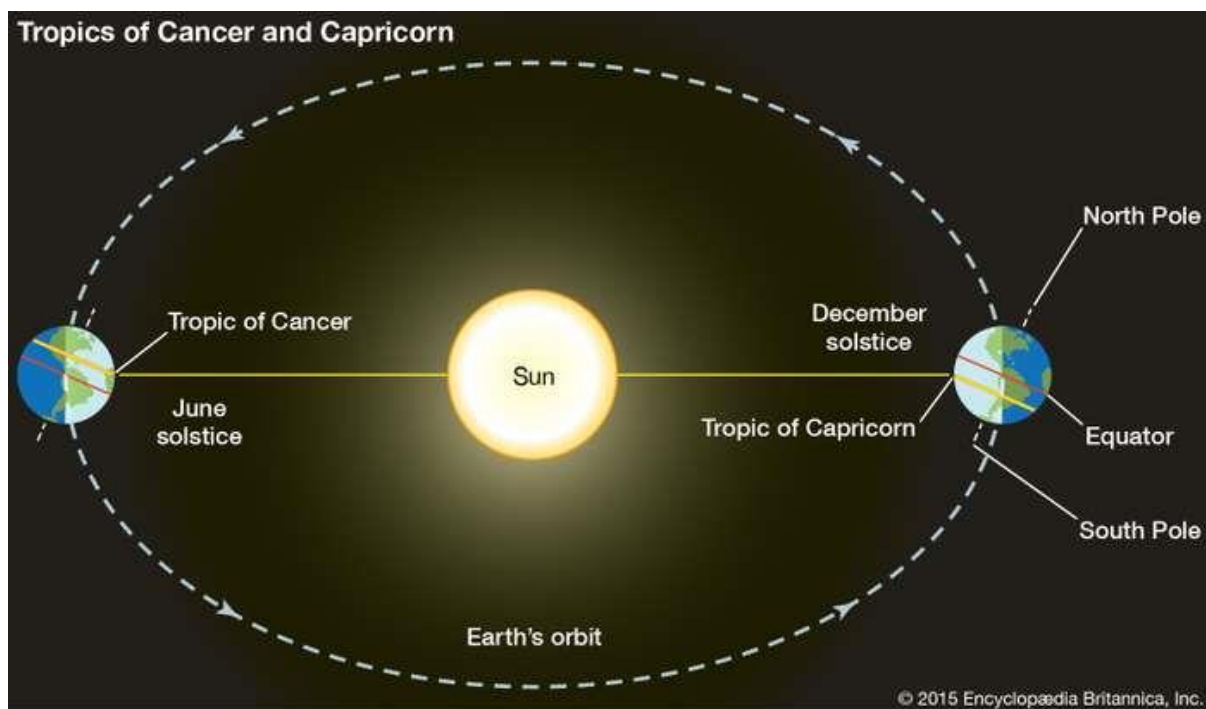


## WinterSong and the Winter Solstice

*WinterSong* serves as a good starting point for classroom discussions, activities and exercises relating to the winter solstice. It can be applied to activities in music, visual art, writing, geography, science and history in all grades. Below you will find information about the solstice as it occurs in the natural world, as well as aspects of the themes and rituals of different cultures associated with this time of the year.

### The Science of the Solstice

In astronomy, the solstice is either of the two times a year when the sun is at its farthest distance from the equator. The equator is the longest line of latitude (40,075.16 kilometers long!) and divides the Earth from east to west, into Northern and Southern Hemispheres. The Tropic of Cancer (23.5 degrees north of the equator) running through Mexico, the Bahamas and Egypt and the Tropic of Capricorn (23.5 degrees south of the equator) running through Australia, Chile and parts of South Africa, are two other important lines running across the surface of the earth. They are based on the position of the sun in relation to the earth at two points during the year – the summer and winter solstices. The tropics are the two lines where the sun is directly overhead at noon on the two solstices – in June and December.



Winter solstice 2019 in the Northern Hemisphere will be on Saturday December 21 at 11:19PM EST. On this day, the Northern Hemisphere is leaning farther away from the sun than at any other time during the year, because of the earth's tilt. As a result, the sun is directly overhead at noon only along the Tropic of Capricorn. This day has the least daylight and the longest night, when the sun is at its lowest and weakest, travelling a very low arc in the sky.

The day of winter solstice is considered a pivotal point in the year, since the sun will grow stronger and brighter from this day forward. The sun is “renewed” on this day. The winter solstice also marks the changing of seasons in the hemispheres – the first day of winter in the Northern Hemisphere, and the first day of summer in the Southern Hemisphere. The summer solstice occurs in mid-June, when the sun shines directly over the Tropic of Cancer. This is the beginning of summer in the Northern Hemisphere and winter in the Southern Hemisphere. The reason that the seasons occur at opposite times of the year in the two hemispheres is that while the earth rotates around the sun, it also spins on its axis, which is tilted 23.5 degrees towards the plane of its rotation—sort of like an off-kilter spinning top. Because of this tilt, the Northern Hemisphere receives less direct sunlight (creating winter); at the same time that the Southern Hemisphere receives more direct sunlight (creating summer). As the earth continues its orbit, the hemisphere angled closest to the sun changes and the seasons are reversed.

The area bounded by the Tropic of Cancer on the north and the Tropic of Capricorn on the south is known as the tropics. This area does not experience different seasons because the sun is always high in the sky. Tropical cultures, as well as many places that lie directly on the Equator, including Ecuador, Indonesia, Kenya and the Democratic Republic of the Congo do not often celebrate solstice rituals. These communities have other celebrations and ceremonies. For instance, in Ecuador, El Carnival is the major celebration, and Otavalo celebrations of Inti Raymi happen in June, while the Indonesian island of Bali is famous for celebrating the festival of Diwali.

## The History of the Solstice

No one is really sure how long ago humans first recognized the winter solstice. Some anthropologists believe that it was the Mesopotamians, who lived 4,000 years ago. They celebrated the solstice with a 12-day festival of renewal, designed to help the god Marduk tame the monsters of chaos for one more year. Another theory claims that the first humans to formally mark the winter solstice were the Neolithic peoples, who were the first farmers. Their lives were intimately tied to the seasons, the sun and the cycle of harvest. What we do know for sure, however, is that for thousands of years (maybe more!) people all over the world have heralded the winter solstice as a turning point – the day that marks the return of the sun.

In ancient times, winter was a very difficult time for people in the northern latitudes. The growing season had ended, and food was becoming increasingly scarce. Because ancient cultures did not know as much about the changes of the earth’s position as modern astronomy has allowed us to discover today, many cultures feared that the life-giving sun would not return as daylight grew shorter, leaving them in darkness and cold. Many humans believed that honouring the sun with a celebration or vigil would increase the likelihood of its return. In fact, there are more ceremonies and rituals associated with the winter solstice than any other time of the year!

After the winter solstice, people had reason to celebrate as the sun rose and began to strengthen again. Although many months of winter cold remained before spring, the strengthening sun gave ancient peoples hope that the return of the warm season was approaching. The concept of birth and death, or rebirth, became associated with the winter solstice. An amazing number of ancient cultures built great architectural works – tombs, temples and sacred observatories – so that they aligned with the solstices and equinoxes. Many people know the Stonehenge in Scotland perfectly marks both the winter and the summer solstices. There are similar sites in Ireland, Egypt and throughout the world. The Romans called the winter solstice *Dies Natalis Invicti Solis*, the Birthday of the Unconquered Sun.

## Winter Solstice in Many Cultures

Although the winter solstice is marked by different cultures in many different ways, it is widely perceived as the start of the solar year, a celebration of light and the rebirth of the sun. Many different cultures and faiths have a celebration of some sort during December. People in the Christian faith celebrate Christmas on December 25th, and the Jewish tradition celebrates the eight-day festival of Hanukkah. Shabe-Yalda, the rebirth of the sun, is celebrated in Iran by followers of many religions. Native American cultures observe different rituals related to the winter solstice. For example, the Hopi community undertakes a ceremony called Soyal, lasting for twenty days. The ancient Incas celebrated a festival called Inti Raymi, or the Festival of the Sun, but this ritual was banned during the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Although all of these celebrations and festivals are different in many ways, many of them involve festivities like special meals, gathering with family and friends and celebratory songs, dances and symbols, like candles.

### Suggested Exercises

Following discussion about the winter solstice, have the students carry out further research and answer one or more of the following questions:

- In what ways is the sun important in contemporary and/or ancient culture(s)? Students may compare and contrast the importance of the sun in different parts of the world and/or different times in history (e.g., ancient Greece vs. contemporary communities, the Tropics vs. Alaska etc.).
- What are some different symbols used to represent the sun around the world? How are these symbols used in winter solstice and/or other celebrations? (e.g., candles at Hanukkah, lights decorating trees in Christmas celebrations etc.)
- Why was the sun so important to people in ancient farming cultures? (e.g., Neolithic peoples). Research the many ways that the sun was used in one or more of these cultures (e.g., to grow food, to light and heat the home, Vitamin D).
- Examine the influence of the sun and/or the seasons in the artworks of one culture, or compare and contrast two different cultures. Students may choose to look at the influence of the sun on the artwork (e.g., Gaudi's sun-based mosaics and architecture in Spain), music (e.g., Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*), dance (e.g., traditional or folk dances honoring nature) or drama (the Greek tragedy *Medea*, involving the sun god Helios) of a community. What is the connection between nature and art in contemporary society?
- Conduct in-depth research about the winter solstice celebrations of a culture or community with which you are not familiar. Include details like: special foods eaten, clothes worn, dances or songs performed, and explain the significance of each of these traditions.
- What kinds of celebrations and rituals are observed in Equatorial and/or Tropical cultures? When do they take place? What is being celebrated? How did these celebrations begin?

# The Elements of Dance

*The following is excerpted and/or expanded upon from [www.elementsofdance.org](http://www.elementsofdance.org) - visit the website for more information.*

The Elements of Dance are the foundational concepts and vocabulary that help students develop movement skills and understand dance as an artistic practice.

The acronym BASTE helps students remember the elements:

Body  
Action  
Space  
Time  
Energy

This framework is a way to discuss any kind of movement. While different dance styles call for specialized skills and stylization choices, the underlying elements of dance are visible in all dance experiences.

## **BODY**

In dance, the body is the mobile figure or shape, felt by the dancer, seen by others. The body is sometimes relatively still and sometimes changing as the dancer moves in place or travels about the space. Dancers may isolate or emphasize specific parts of their body, or use their whole body all at once.

When we look at a dancer's whole body we might consider the overall shape design; is it symmetrical? twisted? What part of the body initiates movement?

## **ACTION**

Action is any human movement included in the act of dancing—it can include dance steps, facial movements, partner lifts, gestures, and even everyday movements such as walking. Dance is made up of streams of motion and pauses, so action refers not only to steps and sequences, but also to pauses and moments of relative stillness.

Dancers may use movements that have been choreographed and taught to them, or movements that they have created themselves based on direction (ideas, tasks, images) given by someone else. Movement can also be improvised, meaning that the dancers make it up "on the spot" as they spontaneously dance.

## **SPACE**

Dancers interact with space in many different ways. They may stay in one place or they may travel from one place to another. They may alter the direction, level, size, and pathways of their movements.

The relationships of the dancers to each other may be based on geometric designs or rapidly change as they move close together, then apart. Even when a dancer is dancing alone in a solo, the dancer is dynamically involved in the space of the performing area so that space might almost be considered a partner in the dance.

## **TIME**

Time in relation to dance can relate to speed or duration of movements, the time between movements, rhythm, or the music to which one is dancing.

Rhythmic patterns may be metered (counted, mostly typically in 8s) or free rhythm. Much of western music uses repeating patterns (2/4 or 3/4 for example), but concepts of time and meter are used very differently throughout the world. Dance movements may also show different timing relationships such as simultaneous or sequential timing, short to long duration, fast to slow speed, or accents in predictable or unpredictable intervals.

## **ENERGY**

Energy is about *how* the movement happens. Choices about energy include variations in movement flow and the use of force, tension, and weight. An arm gesture might be free flowing or easily stopped, and it may be powerful or gentle, tight or loose, heavy or light. A dancer may step into a position with a sharp, percussive attack or with light, flowing ease. Energy may change in an instant, and several types of energy may be concurrently in play.

Saying that a dance "has a lot of energy" is misleading. ALL dances use the element of energy, though in some instances it may be slow, supple, indirect energy - not the punchy, high speed energy of a fast tempo dance.

Energy choices may also reveal emotional states. For example, a powerful push might be aggressive or playfully boisterous depending on the intent and situation.

## Basic Dance Terminology

**ADAGIO:** Indicates a slow tempo during a sequence of movements. Like a musical adagio, the dance adagio is slow and smooth. It requires great control and balance.

**ALLEGRO:** Movements performed quickly and with liveliness (often a series of jumps), highlighting the dancer's speed and agility.

**ARABESQUE:** A term used in ballet and modern dance; a position in which the entire weight of the body is balanced on one leg while the second is lifted in extension behind the body.

**ATTITUDE:** A term common to both modern and ballet. The body weight is supported on one leg while the second leg is lifted either behind or in front of the body with the knee bent at about 90 degrees or less.

**CURVE:** A movement of the torso in which the spine curves forward, dropping the head forward toward the waist. In the José Limón modern dance technique, a full curve begins at the top of the head and curls all the way through to the waist (see: SUCCESSION). A curve can also happen in sideways and backward directions, which are more commonly called a side bend and arch/high lift, respectively.

**DOWNSTAGE:** A theatre term used to describe the area of the stage closest to the audience. It comes from a time when the stage was "raked" or slanted towards the audience, instead of the audience sitting on a slant towards the stage as we see today.

**FALL AND RECOVERY:** First used by American dance pioneer Doris Humphrey, this term is widely used today in modern dance movement. Fall and recovery results from the interaction of two opposites—balance and lack of balance; all movement is the alternation of these two states.

**FOCUS:** Focus refers to concentration and awareness, as well as using the eyes to connect to the space around you while moving. Learning to focus is a key element in the execution of movements. In dance class, focus allows for concentration and proper execution of steps on your own and with a group. On stage, using eye focus while moving allows the performer to express with my clarity and connect with the spectators.

**HIGH LIFT:** A movement of the torso in which the upper back arches up and backward, looking up to the ceiling above. Also known as an arch, in Limón technique only the head and shoulders are included in a high lift, while the ribs, waist and pelvis remain in vertical alignment.

**HIGH POINT:** The highest point on the body in relation to the vertical plumb line in any given shape. Energizing upward through the high point gives the dancer an oppositional energy from gravity, which allows for increased balance and suspension.

**IMPROVISATION:** Often choreographers give dancers choices that allow them to change their choreographic movement within a given structure. These choices mean that no two dance performances of the same piece are ever exactly the same. This allows for heightened concentration, exploration and excitement because no one knows what will happen next. However, it is highly structured, demanding much concentration and awareness of fellow dancers. Improvisation is a rich,

creative device. Many choreographers improvise themselves or ask their dancers to improvise around a structure in order to create a dance.

**ISOLATION:** The act of moving only one body part while the rest of the body remains unaffected. Isolation is used in all dance techniques, but is particularly notable in jazz dance and street dance styles including hip hop.

**OPPOSITION:** The presence of active opposing forces in the body at the same time; the forces can be equal as in a static position, or one force may be stronger, resulting in movement.

**PARALLEL:** Where ballet technique is based on the outward rotation of the legs from the hips, which results in turnout, modern dance techniques are often developed from parallel positions. In parallel the thighs, knees and toes face straight ahead.

**PHRASE:** A sequence of several movements having a sense of a beginning, middle and a completion; at some point in the sequence it usually has a highlight or accent.

**REPERTOIRE:** A stock of dances that a performer or dance company knows. If the repertoire is “active”, those dances are ready to be performed. Many companies have a much larger repertoire of dances that are not all performed within the same year, rather specific dances may be selected for revival and restaging in future performances.

**STAGE RIGHT/STAGE LEFT:** Left and right stage directions are determined with the performer facing out toward the audience. Conversely, house right and house left (the house being the audience) are determined from the perspective of looking towards the stage.

**SUCCESSION:** An approach to movement that begins at one end of a body part and moves sequentially through to the other. For example, curving forward successionaly begins with the head, followed by the shoulders, rib cage, and finally the waist. Unfolding an arm successionaly will begin with the shoulder, followed by elbow, and last the wrist and hand. This action is opposed to undulating or rippling through the body, or otherwise moving a large part of the body in one static shape through space.

**SUSPENSION:** A movement quality which resists the pull of gravity and allows the body to float at the end of an inhalation of breath. Suspension can be related to the feeling of near-stillness before the drop at the height of a playground swing set, or the peak of a rollercoaster before the first drop.

**TECHNIQUE:** A set of skills dancers develop to perform a certain dance form such as ballet, modern or tap. Sometimes, particularly in modern dance, choreographers become famous for their own codified dance techniques such as Martha Graham, José Limón and Merce Cunningham.

**TRIPLET:** A traveling pattern which consists of three steps: one “down” with flexed knee and ankle, and two steps “up” high on the balls of the feet with legs fully extended.

**TURN OUT:** A term used to indicate an outward rotation of the legs starting from the hip socket, so the knees and toes point outward from the centre line of the body. Turn out is highly characteristic to classical ballet but also integral to contemporary dance.



**UNDERCURE:** A transfer of weight from one foot to the other in which the lower body (legs and pelvis) make a U-shape, scooping down through a pli  as the weight is transferred, stretching up to a straight leg by the end of the shift.

**UPSTAGE:** A theatre term used to describe the area of the stage that is furthest from the audience.

**WEIGHT SHIFT:** The transference of body support from one body part to another (e.g. from one foot to the other), or from one area of the body to another (e.g. on the floor: upper body to the lower body); essential to locomotion.

## Behind the Scenes

Every dance company includes not only dancers and choreographers but individuals who make sure that the curtain goes up on time, that the sets and costumes are constructed, and that tickets are sold for each performance. These people are never on stage, but without them the show could not go on.

### Administration

#### **General Manager / Managing Director**

The general manager or GM puts artistic visions into practical reality. The GM negotiates contracts with artists, designers and choreographers. The GM also works with theatres and festivals across Canada and around the world for the company. The general manager is responsible for the financial well-being of the company and reports to the company's board of directors, the government and other funding bodies.

#### **Marketing**

The marketing director makes sure the company is well promoted to the media and public in order to increase awareness and to help sell tickets to performances. All the company's written materials and photographs are produced by this person or contracted to others to do so. The marketing director also invites dance critics to review performances.

#### **Fundraising**

Most dance companies are non-profit, charitable organizations, which mean that no one individual or group of individuals makes a profit. There is a volunteer board of directors that helps with fundraising and legal issues. Canadian dance companies can receive assistance from up to three levels of government—federal, provincial and municipal—but this is usually not enough. Dance companies must turn to the community for assistance. By educating the public and offering benefits, the company reaches out to individuals and the business community for assistance. These relationships and financial support are key in maintaining high artistic standards and the survival of the company.

#### **Archivist**

An archivist is responsible for preserving a company's history. He or she organizes and maintains anything relating to the company's history such as playbills, videotapes, media coverage, photographs, documents, oral histories of company members and artifacts such as set pieces and costumes. The preservation of dance is unlike that of other art forms. You cannot visit a dance piece in a museum like a painting or listen to it on a CD like a symphony. Every time a dance is presented it is slightly different from the last time it was shown. Therefore, a dance archivist must carefully and meticulously preserve every aspect of a company's repertoire and its history so that the dances and stories are never lost.

### Production

#### **Artistic Director**

The artistic director works in rehearsal with the dancers to prepare them physically and emotionally for performances. In many cases, the artistic director also choreographs and teaches the choreography. The

artistic director works closely with the management and board of directors in achieving the artistic goals of the company. Sometimes, the same person does the work of artistic director and general manager.

### **Rehearsal Director**

The Rehearsal Director coordinates rehearsals, assists the choreographer to achieve elements and qualities desired in each piece, and works closely with the dancers to help them learn repertoire from video. This person also helps the choreographer “clean” dance pieces to make them look and feel their best.

### **Technical Director**

The technical director looks after the technical needs of the company in terms of video, sound and other technical recording equipment. When it comes time to perform, the technical director becomes a very important link between the artists and the theatre. He or she ensures that lighting, sound, sets and all stage equipment is functioning for the successful execution of a performance. Sometimes the technical director is also a lighting designer; if not, a lighting designer is brought in to light each dance.

### **Stage Managers**

These individuals “call” the show. By watching rehearsals or reading a musical score, stage managers familiarize themselves with the dance, its exits and entrances, lighting and sound cues, and prop and set requirements. When “calling the show”, they provide to-the-second instructions for stage hands and technicians to execute all the elements of the production in proper sequence and timing.

### **Lighting Designer**

Working closely with the choreographer, the lighting designer employs stage lighting techniques to enhance the visual imagery of the dance. Using music, costume and choreography as sources of inspiration, the lighting designer attempts to integrate all of those aspects in order to present a unified production.

### **Wardrobe Master or Mistress**

The Wardrobe Master or Mistress (or sometimes simply **Costume Designer**) is responsible for reconstructing original costume designs and accessories for revivals; maintaining the condition and inventory of all costumes, shoes and accessories; and ensuring that all costumes and accessories fit the performers.

### **Production Crew**

The crew members are usually affiliated with the theatre venue at which a performance takes place, and are responsible for much of the set-up, execution, and clean-up involved in the production. The crew is comprised of stage hands, lighting technicians, and sound technicians, among other roles. They are involved in the setup of lighting fixtures, cleaning the stage before and after shows, running lights sound during the performance, carrying sets and props, operating the curtain and fly system (through which objects are “flown” in to hang over the stage), and much more. An efficient crew is integral to the success of any production.

## About Canadian Contemporary Dance Theatre

**Canadian Contemporary Dance Theatre** is a repertory company founded by Artistic Director Deborah Lundmark and Managing Director Michael deConinck Smith in 1980 for dancers under 19 years of age. Company members and audiences alike enjoy one of Canada's largest and most diverse repertoires including works by such dance luminaries as David Earle, Carol Anderson, Danny Grossman, Margie Gillis, Peggy Baker, Robert Glumbek and Peter Chin and, most recently, Apolonia Velasquez, Colin Connor, Sylvie Bouchard, and Hanna Kiel. Presentation highlights include appearances at Toronto's Princess of Wales and Royal Alexandra Theatres for the Creative Trust and Dancers for Life Galas, tours to Singapore, Malaysia and China, and five invitations to the Canada Dance Festival in Ottawa. A leading touring company, CCDT has introduced over 200,000 young people to dance through its *Ontario Arts Access* program. The company was selected by Toronto Arts Foundation as winner of its prestigious *Arts for Youth Award* and recently was invited to perform at the inaugural Commonwealth Youth Dance Festival in Glasgow, Scotland. In October of 2015, CCDT performed to standing ovation at New York City's storied Joyce Theater as part of the José Limón International Dance Festival.

Visit us at [www.ccdt.org/history](http://www.ccdt.org/history) to learn more.



# A Brief History of Dance

## Ballet

Ballet took root in the court dances of Europe, beginning in Italy and soon spreading to France. In the late 16th century, Queen Catherine of France mounted the first ballet with a dramatic plot, *Le Ballet Comique de la Reine*. Nearly a century later ballet's prominence was further enhanced by France's King Louis XIV who loved to dance. He created the first academy of dancing in order to codify steps which could then be developed and passed on to future generations. Eventually these private court presentations moved into Paris' public theatres where only men were allowed to perform, however, very minute movements were danced compared to the grand leaps and beaten jumps that we see today.



In 1681, women were finally allowed to perform on stage however, they still wore long and cumbersome dresses which did not allow them to show off intricate steps like the male dancers could. Around 1720, dancer Marie Camargo shortened her dress a few inches to reveal her ankles and removed the heels from her shoes. This set a new standard for the female dancer, which allowed her to dazzle audiences with brilliant beats of the legs and amazing leaps. Over the next century ballet spread across Europe even further with prominence given to the companies of France, Italy and Copenhagen.

From about 1830-1850 ballet experienced the Romantic period that also affected painting, literature and drama. Romantic ballets portrayed ethereal creatures such as fairies, wilis and sylphides and took place in far away, exotic lands. Ballets from this period include *La Sylphide*, *Giselle* and *Napoli*. This period also saw the introduction of dancing on pointe as used by Marie Taglioni in *La Sylphide* in 1832. This gave the ethereal sylphide a quality of lightness as if she was about to take off into the air.

By the middle of the 19th century ballet's success shifted from Paris to St. Petersburg. Here Marius Petipa created numerous ballets to the music of Tchaikovsky such as *Swan Lake*, *Sleeping Beauty* and *The Nutcracker*. At the turn of the century, impresario Serge Diaghilev brought together many great artists to collaborate including designer Leon Bakst, composer Igor Stravinsky, choreographer Mikhail Fokine and great dancers such as Anna Pavlova and Vaslav Nijinsky. As Les Ballets Russes, these artists created influential ballets such as *Les Sylphides*, *Petrouchka* and *The Rite of Spring*, which caused a riot at its Paris debut. The Ballets Russes used dancers from all over the world "Russianizing" their names. Canadians Nesta Toumine (Nesta Maslova), Rosemary Deveson (Natasha Sobinova) and Patricia Meyers (Alexandra Denisova) all danced for the Ballets Russes and then brought its influence into Canada when they returned home. These same influences were carried into England through Marie Rambert and the United States through George Balanchine, Leonide Massine and numerous ballets russes spin-off companies. Through its evolution in the 20th century, new ballets have moved away from the long, multi-act, story ballets toward abstract ballets which emphasize concepts or moods or simply interpret music through movement; however, the classics of the past are still performed all over the world.

## **Modern Dance**

While many of the art forms that enhance our daily lives have existed for centuries, modern dance is a development of the 20th century; created purposefully to reject the rigid conventions of ballet, modern dance developed in Europe through the work of Americans such as Isadora Duncan, Loie Fuller and Canadian Maud Allan. Where ballet fought to defy gravity and remain an ethereal dance form, modern dancers played with gravity either giving into it or resisting it. They also chose to dance in bare feet and wear loose, flowing clothing. Their improvisational movements were largely an emotional response to the music of composers such as Schubert, Chopin, Brahms and Beethoven.

After the forerunners of modern dance had created an atmosphere for the form to evolve, pioneers such as Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn laid the foundations of modern dance performance and training in the United States. St. Denis began performing in 1905 and Shawn joined her in 1914. The two are known for using oriental mysticism in their dances, and Shawn is noted for adding humour and American themes to the work. Denishawn created a fertile ground for the next generation of modern dancers, namely Doris Humphrey, Charles Weidman and



Martha Graham. Humphrey and Weidman are noted for creating American modern dance. Their work was not romantic like ballet, nor oriental or ethnic like the work of Denishawn but instead reflected the American experience and life as they saw it. Humphrey also developed the Humphrey-Weidman technique based in movement qualities such as breath, opposition, succession, fall and recovery, sharp accents and sustained flow. Martha Graham also developed her own technique, which is widely taught today. Modern dance continued to evolve as students of the second generation went on to found their own companies such as Paul Taylor, Merce Cunningham and José Limón.



Despite two world wars and much political upheaval, European modern dance continued to develop through the 20th century. Significant to Canadian dance history is the German Expressionist Mary Wigman who trained dancers such as Yoné Kviety and Bianca Roggé who brought Wigman's influences to Canada when they immigrated in the late-1940s. In America, Wigman's movement concepts were shared through Hanya Holm. Other significant contributors of this period include Rudolph Laban who created methods of movement analysis and Emile Jacques-Dalcroze for his system of Eurhythmics—a means of learning rhythm through physicalizing music.



## **Ballet and Modern Dance in Canada**

Around the turn of the century, the major centres of Canada were becoming home to many dancing academies and schools of physical culture whose directors would produce recitals throughout the year. As the century progressed the popularity of dance grew as did the number of companies. The 1930s saw the formation of two ballet companies that would aid the development of dance in Canada: Boris Volkoff's Volkoff Canadian Ballet in Toronto and Gweneth Lloyd and Betty Farally's Winnipeg Ballet. The late 1940s and early 1950s saw tremendous growth in Canada's dance community and increasing awareness of dance by Canadians. Two factors behind this boom were the rise in Canada's artistic population due to heavy immigration after World War II and the birth of the Canadian Ballet Festivals, which were national, annual events held from 1948 to 1954. Founded by Lloyd, Volkoff and Winnipeg Ballet Manager David Yeddeau, the festivals presented both ballet and modern dance companies in a friendly, non-competitive atmosphere that encouraged original creation of dance, music, set and costume designs. The work of Volkoff, Lloyd and other regional dance teachers made it possible for a group of Toronto society women to hire British dancer Celia Franca to found the National Ballet of Canada in 1951.



In the 1960s modern dance and ballet continued to grow as the number of teachers increased. The 1960s also saw the founding of three modern dance companies that today form cornerstones in the dance community: Rachel Browne's Winnipeg Contemporary Dancers in 1964, Jeanne Renaud's Le Groupe de la Place Royale in Montreal in 1966, and the Toronto Dance Theatre founded by Patricia Beatty, David Earle and Peter Randazzo in 1968. The 1970s were another boom period for dance in Canada. Like their predecessors in the 1940s, the dancers worked together to increase the awareness and appreciation of dance in Canada by organizing

festivals and creating the Dance in Canada Association which would serve and represent dance and function as a united front in order to enhance the image of dance in Canada. Modern dance continued to thrive in Canada throughout the 1980s and 1990s despite severe cuts in funding by all levels of government. The 1980s saw the continuing rise of the independent choreographer, which had begun in the 1970s, as well as the formation of performance series and festivals across the nation. In addition, a new generation of companies began to emerge as experienced dancers branched out from existing companies.



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Dance Collection Danse is an excellent Canadian dance resource centre for teachers which distributes publications and videos on Canadian dance. For more information please contact Miriam and Lawrence Adams at (416) 365-3233. Dance Collection Danse, 145 George St., Toronto, ON, M5A 2M6 or through E-mail: [talk@dcd.ca](mailto:talk@dcd.ca); [www.dcd.ca](http://www.dcd.ca).

Please also see CCDT/TILT's publication, "Cultural Literacy in the Classroom" for more ideas on arts education and the performing arts. Email [development@ccdt.org](mailto:development@ccdt.org) for a copy.

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Malaspina Great Books; <http://www.malaspina.com>

**Dance Collection Danse** is an excellent Canadian dance resource centre, which distributes publications and videos on Canadian dance. For more information please see [www.dcd.org](http://www.dcd.org) or E-mail: [talk@dcd.ca](mailto:talk@dcd.ca).

## Solstice Information Sources

<http://www.candlegrove.com/solstice.html>  
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