

DJD

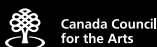
DECIDEDLY JAZZ DANCEWORKS

Nervous Systems



April 27 – May 14, 2023

at the DJD Dance Centre





Global News Hour at 6

Weekdays

with Linda Olsen & Joel Senick

Globalnews.ca

Global 
NEWS



Message from
the Artistic Director,
Kimberley Cooper

Welcome to *Nervous Systems*!

How is your nervous system? Mine is a little frayed, and if you are reading this at the performance, I'm probably quite jacked on adrenaline, which is a pretty wild hormone if you think about it. Adrenaline is released into the body when stress or danger is perceived by the senses and relayed to the brain, which then tells the body to do a series of things like make your heart pump faster, dilate your pupils to let more light in, and pump you full of adrenaline. In my case it's more excitement than fight or flight but you never know...

And so it goes, there is a whole world of adventure going on inside of us ALL the time. We are incredible creatures, and we can do amazing things. I'm thrilled you are here to check out what these artists on this stage can do. I hope you will enjoy this performance and maybe think a little about everything that is going on inside amazing you.

It has been a very exciting season and the beat goes on. This is technically the end of our 22/23 season, but we have a wild summer ahead. We are going on tour with last season's hit show, *Family of Jazz*! In July we will be performing at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa and at Festival des Arts Saint-Sauveur in Saint-Sauveur Quebec, and drumroll please... we will perform at Jacob's Pillow in August! Jacob's Pillow is in the Berkshires in Massachusetts and has the longest running and probably the most established dance festival in North America. It is a very big deal to be presented there, and this season, we are the only jazz company and the only Canadian company to be invited. We are beyond excited.

BUT tonight, in this moment, we are talking about something different, with you. Thank you for joining us, thank you for supporting DJD and live performance. I hope we can really get on your nerves—in the best way possible.

Enjoy the show!

Kimberley Cooper



Message from
the Executive Director,
Kathi Sundstrom

Welcome to this performance of *Nervous Systems*, a new live music production featuring 11 beautiful dancers and 4 remarkable musicians. Tonight, we're going to embark on a whirlwind exploration of the systems that keep us alive and functioning—the wonders of our bodies, the speed of our senses and the miracle of the human brain.

A parallel can be drawn between the inner workings of our nervous systems and those of an organization like DJD. Without support systems like our funders, sponsors, donors, our wonderful board and volunteers, we wouldn't be able to survive, let alone bring a performance like tonight's to life and share it with you.

We extend our gratitude to the government funders who provide operating and project support for our work, specifically the Canada Council for the Arts, the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, and The City of Calgary through Calgary Arts Development. We are grateful for the support of our sponsors Mawer, Global TV, and QRCalgary, as well as our Jazz Roots members and all of our individual and in-kind donors. We have great appreciation for our volunteers who donate their time to support us. And, of course, our staff, choreographers, dancers, technicians, front of house folks, teachers and students in our school, plus all of you, our audience! You are all part of the systems that make this organization work.

I hope you enjoy this whimsical journey of wonder and if you do, please tell your friends so they, too, can be part of this extraordinary experience.

Kathi Sundstrom

Biographies



Kimberley Cooper Artistic Director, Choreographer

Kimberley is the Artistic Director of Decidedly Jazz Danceworks (DJD). She has been a part of DJD for almost three decades, first as a dancer (1989-2013), then Resident Choreographer/Artistic Associate (2002-2013), and now as Artistic Director since 2013. She has studied, taught, and performed all over the world. Most recently she created a new work at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, and set a 20-minute piece of her repertoire at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, Michigan. In 2002, Cooper was named Emerging Artist of the Year by Alberta Dance Alliance, and since 2002 has created over 20 full-length works on DJD as well as numerous shorter pieces. She has created and performed in countless independent projects as well. She served as an Artist in Residence during Calgary's year as Cultural Capital of Canada (2012), and was awarded Dance Victoria's Crystal Dance Prize (2014) for her research in Brazil. Cooper has contributed chapters to the books: *City of Animals*, for University of Calgary's Humanities Department about *New Universe*, a work she created with American jazz bassist and composer William Parker in 2017; and *Rooted Jazz Dance: Africanist Aesthetics and Equity in the Twenty First Century* (University Press of Florida 2022). She was an Artist in Residence with Fall for Dance North from 2020-2022 (Toronto). DJD will perform her work at Jacob's Pillow this summer in the company's first performance in the USA since 1994.



Carsten Rubeling Musical Director, Composer, Trombone, Keyboard

Carsten is one of Canada's most active and dynamic trombonists and composers. Originally from Rocky Mountain House Alberta, Carsten performs a wide array of music from jazz and classical music to hip hop, salsa and almost everything in between. He has released two albums, *VOLK//PEOPLE* (2019) and *Headwaters* (2022) on Inner Ocean Records. After many shows with DJD this is his first as composer and musical director. Carsten has performed and recorded with Sean Jones, Ingrid Jensen, Seamus Blake, Brian Lynch, Brad Turner, David Braid, Nick Fraser, Laila Biali, Jens Lindemann, the Foothills Brass, the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, Jann Arden and Weird Al.



Shahrzad Ahmadi Dancer

Originally from Vancouver, Shahrzad trained at Pro Arte Centre before graduating with a BA (Hons) from the Rambert School of Ballet and Contemporary Dance. While in the UK, she danced with Rambert Company as well as various independent artists. In 2016, Shahrzad moved back to Vancouver, freelancing, and working with artists including Amber Funk Barton, Heather Laura Grey, Peter Bingham, Jennifer Mascall, and Judith Marcuse. Shahrzad has also danced, choreographed and been an assistant choreographer for compositions that have toured British Columbia, USA, music videos and film that has been selected for academy qualifying festivals.



Thys Armstrong Dancer

Hailing from Vancouver, Thys began dancing at RNB Dance & Theatre Arts with teachers Charmaine Nobes, Haley Walker, and Vicki View, among others. Thys has danced with Coastal City Ballet, under the direction of Li Yaming and Katie Bois, Ottawa Rhythm Initiative, and 3120Dance Collective Amsterdam. He has had the pleasure of performing works by Brandi Coleman, Lisa La Touche, Melanie George, Ben Stevenson, and Wen Wei Wang. Thys has been featured in *Centre Stage: On Pointe* (film) and in *Unreal!* (TV). He is thrilled to continue his journey into the world of jazz in his second season with DJD.



Scott Augustine Dancer

Scott is a native of Vancouver B.C. and this is his fourth season with DJD. He has danced extensively with the Vancouver-based contemporary company Wen Wei Dance as well with other companies such as The Company 605, Radical System Arts and Move the Company. Scott has played major roles in musical theatre including Riff in *West Side Story* for the Vancouver Opera and Rainbow Stage, Tulsa in *Gypsy*, and Neleus in *Mary Poppins* for the Arts Club Theatre Company.



Cassandra Bowerman Dancer

Cassandra is a dance artist and educator originally from Stoney Creek, Ontario. After earning her BFA in Dance with Honours from Toronto Metropolitan University (formerly Ryerson), she attended DJD's Professional Training Program in 2015/16. In the Greater Toronto area, Cassandra has choreographed a number of plays and dance pieces for the Hamilton Fringe, Toronto Fringe and Dusk Dances Hamilton Festivals. In Alberta she has performed in Alberta Dance Festival, CrossCurrents, and with Project InTandem. Cassandra has a passion for rhythm, musicality and theatre and she is eager to deepen her study of jazz and its roots in her fourth season with the DJD company.



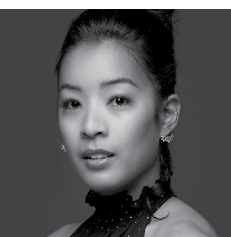
Sabrina Naz Comănescu Dancer

Sabrina has helped cultivate the Calgary dance scene for over a decade as a performer, choreographer, filmmaker, dance instructor, volunteer and as the Artistic Associate for the Diversity Performing Arts Club of Calgary. She has worked with Machel Montano, House of Dangerkat, Headly, The Hifi Club and has opened for international acts such as Pop Caan, Sean Paul and Kes The Band. She is a 2015 Black Gold Award recipient for best dance act and the 2017 Alberta Foundation of the Arts Young Artist Prize winner. She is thrilled to be dancing in her eighth season this year!



Angela Dale Costume Designer

Angela studied theatre and art at Dalhousie, NSCAD and University of Calgary. She has been designing and creating for stage and film for over 30 years. Recent design credits include costumes and masks for Dancing Monkey Laboratories *Sublimity - A Love Supreme*, *m-Body's Song without Words*, Project InTandem's *Deep End and moving through, it all amounts to something*. Her wearable art and tech couture designs have appeared at Make Fashion, CES in Las Vegas, CE Week in NYC and Maker Faires and Festivals around the globe. Her research interests include technology, surface design, fabric manipulation and mask-making.



Mara Liao Esnard Dancer

Rooted in Cuba, Mara is an educator, dancer, and choreographer who graduated from the National Ballet School in Havana. Through her time in YYC she has participated in several diverse festivals and collaborative works. Her passion and curiosity for jazz dance and music led her to immerse herself in DJD's Professional Training Program for two seasons. Mara was part of the DJD company for their 36th season as an understudy and she is thrilled to be back as a dancer this season. Mara is inspired to dig deeper into her mixed-race identities and discover how all these backgrounds influence her artistry.



Catherine Hayward Dancer

Catherine graduated from the Toronto Metropolitan University dance program (formerly Ryerson), earning a BFA with Honours and has been with the DJD company since 2007. She was the Artistic Director of DJD's dancer-choreographed shows, *Velocity* (2017) and *Borderland* (2015). In 2021 she premiered *Don't Wake the Lions*, a full-evening work featuring live music by Tom Richards with Votive Dance (Halifax). Catherine is the Co-Artistic Director of the Bodied Indivisible ensemble with Shayne Johnson; their debut production comprising four works that premiered in 2020. Previous choreography using original musical compositions and live music include *form, act, cease, ensue* in collaboration with musician Jeremy Gignoux (2017), and *Tethered*, musical composition by Rubim de Toledo (2016). In 2023, Catherine is releasing a short film featuring Davida Monk and musician Jon McCaslin and presenting a stage version of this work to audiences in September. Catherine continues to mentor dancers training in DJD's recreational school, Professional Training Program and Youth Training Program.

Biographies



Shemar Hebert Apprentice Dancer

Shemar was born in Calgary and is of Jamaican and Nevisian heritage. Growing up in a musical environment, Shemar's love for music is what first sparked his love for dancing. Shemar began training in a myriad of street dance styles including but not limited to: Afro House, Locking, Hip Hop, Popping and Dancehall. Shemar will continue to expand on his own choreographic endeavours and forms of artistic expression, while ensuring further exploration of his love for dance.

Alongside fostering his own artistic identity, Shemar vows to pay homage to the cultures that have historically paved the way for the future generations.



Kaja Irwin Dancer

Kaja is a Winnipeg-born dancer, choreographer, and dance educator. After deciding to pursue a career in dance after completing her B.A. in Political Science, Kaja studied in the Professional Training Program at DJD, developing her love of both jazz and the Calgary dance community. Kaja loves to explore movement and collaborations across art forms, including mask, puppetry, clown, and character work, as well as collaborating with Calgary jazz musicians developing improvised pieces for the stage. Kaja is excited and dedicated to be digging deeper and

exploring the jazz art form and feels honoured to be back for her eighth season performing with DJD.



Natasha Korney Dancer

Natasha began pursuing dance at the age of 13, specifically in the styles of Hip-Hop, Jazz, Modern, Contemporary and African Dance. As part of her training, she spent two years in the Professional Training Program at DJD, performing in the annual show Footprints. In 2010, she commenced a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree, specializing in Contemporary dance at the University of Calgary, and took part in performances such as, Mainstage, *Why Dance 3D* and other productions. This is Natasha's 10th season with DJD, and she looks forward to performing in many more

productions with the company.



Marcia Liber Stage Manager

Marcia is excited to be working her fifth season with Decidedly Jazz Danceworks. Previous DJD Stage Management credits include *Old/New/Borrowed/Blue*, *Family of Jazz*, *AMPLIFIED*, *suspending disbelief*, *Juliet & Romeo (2019/20)*, *Better Get Hit in Your Soul (2019)*, *Lovestruck*, *Mimic* and *Velocity*. Other stage management credits include *Musculus Mundi*, *The Leap*, *Dancing Home*, *Metamorphosis* and *Mythbehavin'* (Dancers' Studio West), and *Satellites* (Dancing Monkey Laboratories, 2013). She also spent six years working with Calgary Young Peoples' theatre. She

would like to thank her family for their continued support. Enjoy the show!



Brian MacNeil Lighting Designer

Brian has served as a lighting designer and technical director for dance and theatre productions including festivals and touring. The Brian Webb Dance Company introduced him to Elaine Bowman, developing into a relationship with Dancers' Studio West, which exposed him to many local and abroad performance artists. Favourite productions include Theatre Encounter's *Caligula*, *Waiting for Godot*, and *Medea*. Past productions for DJD include *New Universe*, *Juliet & Romeo*, *Modern Vaudevillians*, *MIMIC*, *Better Get Hit in Your Soul*, *suspending disbelief*, and *Family of Jazz*.



Daniel Nava Bass

Daniel is a Juno-nominated musician, composer, producer, arranger, and songwriter from Venezuela. He has over 20 years of experience in the music industry. He's a founder of the Symphony Orchestra of the Zulian Young Adults, performing with Gustavo Dudamel, Simon Rattle, Daniel Barenboim, and others. At age 18, he started his bachelors at Haute École De Musique de Lausanne in Switzerland, performing in music festivals like Montreux Jazz, Cully Jazz, Festival De Jazz De Fribourg and Fête De La Musique in Geneva, Lausanne and Fribourg. Daniel relocated to Miami in 2015 where he taught upright bass and worked with artists like Franco De Vita, Nacho, Tony Succar, Marc Anthony, and others. He performed on stages like American Airlines Arena, Radio City Music Hall, and many others. Currently based in Canada, he works with many artists, has been performing at Jazz YYC since 2019, and is currently working on his first solo project.



Simeon Peters Dancer

Born in Trinidad and Tobago, Simeon is a 29-year-old aspiring ethnographer. His training focuses on the Afro-centric aesthetic, specifically West African movement, and his native country's folk dances. He holds the highest performance degree in his country and spent years concluding his bachelor's degree, researching and collecting data in hopes of contributing to the retention of the folklore dance in Trinidad and Tobago. A true representation of building community and bridging gaps, Simeon was hand-selected in 2022 to be a part of Decidedly Jazz Danceworks after their first ever audition in Trinidad. He is elated to be developing his relationship with Jazz and specifically with DJD.



Luis 'El Pana' Tovar Percussion

Luis Tovar, a Venezuelan-born musician, has earned a Juno nomination for his outstanding percussion skills. Since moving to Alberta 16 years ago, he has made a name for himself on the Western Canadian music scene. With 25 years of professional experience mastering world percussion instruments, he is the leader and creative force behind the area's top salsa band, Distrito Salsa. Regardless of the musical genre or collaborators, Luis Tovar brings a unique blend of energy and positive dynamics to the stage or recording studio, drawing on his Venezuelan/Afro-Caribbean roots to contribute to any project. He has played a prominent role in a variety of musical groups, including the Esteban Herrera Quintet, Montuno West, Tendavillage, Perpie Nwa Olisa, Notas de 4, and The Grandstand Show. Most recently, Luis collaborated with Sabrina Naz Comănescu to create a piece for DJD's production, *OLD/NEW/BORROWED/BLUE* called *The Storm We Are In*.



André Wickenheiser Trumpet

André Wickenheiser began his musical studies at Mount Royal University where he completed an Artist Diploma in jazz performance. From there, he went on to finish both Bachelors and Masters Degrees in jazz performance at McGill University in Montreal. André is a busy educator, composer/arranger, and freelance musician performing regularly in many local groups. He is on the music faculty at Ambrose University, the Mount Royal Conservatory, and the University of Calgary. André has performed with artists and groups including Laila Biali, Jens Lindemann, the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Canadian National Jazz Orchestra.

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PROFESSIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM (PTP)

The PTP is an 8-month program designed for dancers who feel a passion for both jazz and the work of DJD. It was developed to train dancers in the DJD style, introduce them to the rich history of jazz music and dance, develop their ear for jazz music, and discover the joy of jazz improvisation. Bridging the gap between student and professional, the PTP encourages dancers to explore their own personal expression, to strive for excellence, and to attain their full potential as dance artists.

Through a national audition process we accept 10 to 15 students each year from across Canada.

For more information, contact Program Director Ingrid Díaz Céspedes at idadiaz@decidedlyjazz.com

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IN THE SPIRIT OF JAZZ WE DANCE

DJD is unique, and one of only a handful of dance organizations globally that is driven by a jazz mandate. We are a concert jazz dance company, constantly innovating and evolving the art form. We are also Calgary's largest dance school, offering a wide variety of classes for all ages and abilities, from beginner to professional. Our professional training program is designed for those aspiring to have a career in jazz dance.

In 2016 we opened the stunning DJD Dance Centre, which has become a dance hub in our city. We exist to contribute meaningfully to the future of jazz dance. Our community is wide and inclusive. We believe in human connection, personal expression, and the dignity of all people. We believe in dancing to music, with bent knees and movement in our torsos, we embrace improvisation, rhythmic sophistication, the individual, and the community.

Jazz is born of Black American culture and its roots lie in the turbulent history of the African American experience. We acknowledge this history and recognize ourselves as guests in this form. We are inspired by and benefit from traditions born of a culture that is not our own. We strive to be respectful in honouring the roots and history of jazz, we dance with reverence for those who came before us, we dig deep to go forward, we strive to appreciate rather than appropriate.



DJD Dance Centre
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For more information visit www.decidedlyjazz.com

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Catherine Hayward

Shemar Hebert APPRENTICE

Kaja Irwin

Natasha Korney

Simeon Peters

Musical Director/ Composer

Carsten Rubeling

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Carsten Rubeling
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André Wickenheiser
TRUMPET

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Marcia Liber

Artistic Assistant

Laura Kleiner

Part One: Inside

Preface

DANCED BY
Full company

Introduction

DANCED BY
Full company

Chapter 1

Heartache or Headache:
Deep Thoughts on the Heart by the
Central Nervous System

DANCED BY
Catherine and Natasha, Cassandra,
Sabrina, Shahrzad, Shemar, Scott

Chapter 2

Adventures in the
Circulatory System

DANCED BY
Cassandra, Shemar, Kaja,
Sabrina, Natasha, Shahrzad,
Mara, Scott, Thys

Chapter 3

Touching, Isn't She?

DANCED BY
Thys, Scott, Simeon, Catherine,
Sabrina, Mara, Natasha, Kaja,
Shahrzad, featuring Cassandra

Chapter 4

Fight or Flight:
The Adrenaline Between Us

DANCED BY
Catherine, Shahrzad, Thys, Simeon

Chapter 5

Lifelines

DANCED BY
Full company

Part Two: Out

Chapter 6

Braineater

DANCED BY
Full company featuring Sabrina

Chapter 7

Rapid Eye Movement

DANCED BY
Full company featuring Catherine

Chapter 8

What Do Neurons Dream Of?

DANCED BY
Natasha, Kaja, Mara,
Cassandra, Simeon

Chapter 9

Perception

DANCED BY
Scott, Thys, Shemar, Shahrzad,
Catherine, Sabrina

Chapter 10

Interpretation

DANCED BY
Full company

Chapter 11

You've Got Some Nerve

DANCED BY
Kaja

Chapter 12

Nervous Systems

DANCED BY
Full company

Take a Bow

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Heartfelt thanks to our supporters listed below for recognizing the importance of the arts. Your gifts directly enrich DJD's ability to innovate and lead within the jazz art form. Members of our Jazz Roots Club—a special donor club that offers opportunities to meet and mingle with other supporters and the dancers—are listed separately on page 13 of the program.

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A popular vernacular jazz dance in the 1930s that is danced in a circle. It was so popular in fact that Life Magazine featured the Big Apple in a four-page photo spread and the magazine predicted that 1937 would be remembered as the year of the Big Apple.

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- Catherine McAteer
- Roxanne McCaig
- Gayle McPhee
- Andrew Mosker
- Gail Niinimaa
- Harry Paterson in Honour of Vicki Adams Willis
- Bonni Pierce
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Matching Gift Companies

ATB Financial

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We would also like to thank the numerous individuals who support us from \$1-\$99.

- Supporter of Send a Kid to Camp
- Supporter of Dancing Parkinson's YYC
- Supporter of Arts in Education

To the best of our knowledge, this list reflects donations received from August 1, 2021 – April 14, 2023. Please call **Heather Close** at **403-228-8181** to make your gift or to advise us of any changes or omissions so we may correct our records.

Jazz Roots Club

The Jazz Roots Club connects jazz enthusiasts in supporting the vibrant spirit and artistic excellence of DJD.

Jazz Roots is an exclusive club for people and companies that want to have a direct impact on the performances, artist development and community outreach that DJD is able to provide in Calgary and beyond. Members get to have direct relationships with our professional dancers, enjoy exclusive behind-the-scenes experiences, and become part of the legacy of DJD.

Current Donors

Jazz Royalty

\$50,000+

Duke, Count, Queen, Lady, Empress and King, nicknames given to exceptional musicians as a result of their contributions to jazz.

Anonymous

#1 Rhythm Club

\$10,000+

The first of many jazz appreciation societies founded in 1933

Scarlett Neill, in honour of David L. Neill

Lisa Poole

Valerie Seaman

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Big Easies

\$5,000 - \$9,999

"The Big Easy" is the nickname for New Orleans, the birthplace of jazz

Anonymous

Fabbrici Foundation for the Arts

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Blue Notes

\$2,500 - \$4,999

The flattened notes fundamental to blues - oriented jazz and the name of a famous record label

● Virginia Dobson & Dale Huntingford

Janet Harvie & Britt Simmons

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Rug Cutters

\$1,000 - \$2,499

The term describing a very good swing dancer, the most popular dance style in the 1920s, '30s and '40s

Anonymous

Maureen Armitage

Vicki Adams Willis

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Jody Wood & Quentin Pittman

Big Apples

\$500 - \$999

A popular vernacular jazz dance in the 1930s that is danced in a circle. It was so popular in fact that Life Magazine featured the Big Apple in a four-page photo spread and the magazine predicted that 1937 would be remembered as the year of the Big Apple.

Anonymous

Jina Abells Morissette

Claire Auroi

Frances Behan

Taylor Brown

Rochelle Caron

Nancy & Rob Close

Cheryl Cohen

Pam Corbett

Dr. Judith Dwarkin

Kathy Fidyk

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Colin Szopa

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Matching Gift Companies

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