

ALLIES AND FRIENDS

NOV 7–8 / 2025

MAR 20–21 / 2026

MAY 1–2 / 2026

THE CITADEL:
ROSS CENTRE FOR DANCE

PRESENTER-IN-RESIDENCE



wind
in the leaves
collective

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LIVE ²⁵/₂₆

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PHOTO BY JENNIFER COLEMAN

wind in the leaves collective presents

ALLIES AND FRIENDS

Nov 7+8, 2025 | 8pm | The Citadel: Ross Centre for Dance

Seeing unseen

Choreographer and Performer: Rumi Jeraj

Poet: Therese Estacion

The Bicycle & Wolf

Choreographer and Director: Roshanak Jaber

Created with Performers: Carlos Rivera, Yui Ugai

Writer: Ramak Jaber

Narrator: Bren Eastcott

Sound Designer: Thomas Ryder Payne

-15-minute intermission -

Metamorphosis and Conversation

Poetry: charles c smith

Performers: Jillia Cato, Dwauntea Chambers, Emily Duckett, Abby Hanson, Bakari Lindsay, Shelley Ann McLeod, Zuri Skeete

Readers: Shelley Ann McCleod, Zuri Skeete, charles c smith

Choreographers: wind in the leaves collective (*Metamorphosis*), Kevin A. Ormsby (*Conversation*)

Music: Bill Dixon (*Metamorphosis*); Peter Kowold with William Parker (*Conversation*)

Running time approximately 85 minutes

wind in the leaves collective

Artistic Director: charles c. smith

Producer: Jenny McCowan

Project Coordinator: Jillia Cato

Social Media Manager: Claire Whitaker

Administrator: Bia Rohde

Videographer: S'Quire Johnson

allies and friends

Production Stage Manager: Sharon DiGenova

Lighting Designer: Eliajah Stefura

Greetings

Well, here we are again. The start of another wonderful, powerful, moving and beautiful allies and friends season as presenter-in-residence at The Citadel: Ross Centre for Dance! What an exciting adventure it has been to work out of this space and with such incredible artists, performances and those attending who are intrigued by the relationships and intimacy between poetry and dance.

We start this season with **Rumi Jeraj** and **Therese Estacion** who performed together for Mallo Nights in 2023. Therese's first collection of poems, *Phantompains*, was published by Book*Hug in Spring 2021 and was a finalist for both the 2021 Indies Foreword Reviews and 2021 CLMP Firecracker Award. Rumi is an Ismaili Muslim who has danced solo and with many Toronto-based dance companies. Their performance builds on their relationship that started at Mallo Nights, including improvised movement influenced by the poems. They come together in a surreal third space, a space where the Other can be seen, not as Other, but as a part of oneself. Through poetry and dance, ableism and its underbelly is exposed and depersonalized.

A tender duet in early development by **Jaberi Dance Theatre**, *The Bicycle & Wolf* explores family bonds and separation, inspired by the choreographer's parents. Blending dance, theatre, and poetry, it unfolds across the shifting terrain of memory. This work invites an intimate glimpse into a creative journey that traces two intertwined legacies, reflecting on the stories we carry forward.

The **wind in the leaves collective** starts this season with a new piece – *Metamorphosis* – which provides twists and turns, is quiet and then explodes with improvisation while smith's poetry captures stories of various times. The dancers, in turn, interpret these materials through solos, duets and ensemble movements. We will also be remounting *Conversation*, a piece originally choreographed by **Kevin A. Ormsby** which features solo reading by **charles c smith**. Both pieces reveal episodes over time, recognizing current and historic events and how they affect Black bodies and allies.

Given what these artists have done in the past, our season opening is fantastic and we're looking forward to presenting our next programs in March and May, 2026 as well as continuing our collaboration with the Meaningful Movement, our IBPOC Touring Network Live Performances and Mallo Nights in February and April.

We have a lot going on so stay tuned!!! (www.windintheleavescollective.com)

All the very best



Seeing unseen

Choreographer and Performer: Rumi Jeraj

Poetry: Therese Estacion

Therese and Rumi come together in a surreal third space, a space where the Other can be seen, not as Other, but as a part of oneself. Through poetry and dance, ableism and its underbelly is exposed and depersonalized. What is often deemed an it can be approached as a living thing. A thing that moves and breathes with silent power. A thing that has meaning, and therefore, is able to dream.

Special thanks to publisher Book*hug, the Ontario Arts Council and the Canada Council for the Arts, and to Soulpepper Theatre for their in-kind support of this project.

The Bicycle & Wolf

Choreographer and Director: Roshanak Jaber

Created with Performers: Carlos Rivera, Yui Ugai

Writer: Ramak Jaber

Narrator: Bren Eastcott

Sound Designer: Thomas Ryder Payne

A tender duet in early development by Jaber Dance Theatre, *The Bicycle & Wolf* explores family bonds and separation, inspired by the choreographer's parents. Blending dance, theatre, and poetry, it unfolds across the shifting terrain of memory and offers a glimpse into a creative exploration shaping a larger work. Original poetry, also in development and authored by Ramak Jaber, is narrated by Bren Eastcott, whose recorded presence recalls these memories. This work invites an intimate glimpse into a creative journey that traces two intertwined legacies performed by Carlos Rivera and Yui Ugai, reflecting on the stories we carry forward.

This work is supported by the Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Arts Council and the Toronto Arts Council.

Metamorphosis and Conversation

Poetry: charles c smith

Performers: Jillia Cato, Dwauntea Chambers, Emily Duckett, Abby Hanson, Bakari Lindsay, Shelley Ann McLeod, Zuri Skeete

Readers: Shelley Ann McCleod, Zuri Skeete, charles c smith

Choreographers: Kevin A. Ormsby (*Conversation*); wind in the leaves collective (*Metamorphosis*)

Music: Bill Dixon (*Metamorphosis*); Peter Kowold with William Parker (*Conversation*)

The wind in the leaves collective starts this season with a new piece – *Metamorphosis* – based on the music of Bill Dixon and the poetry of charles c smith with dancers Bakari Lindsay, Emily Duckett, Abby Hanson, Zuri Skeete, Shelley Ann McLeod, Dwauntea Chambers, Jillia Cato. Dixon's composition provides twists and turns, quiet and explosions of improvisation while smith's poetry captures stories of various times. The dancers, in turn, interpret these materials through solos, duets and ensemble movements

- There will be a 5 minute pause between *Metamorphosis* and *Conversation* -

We will also be remounting *Conversation*, a piece originally choreographed by Kevin A. Ormsby which features solo reading by charles c smith based on his poetry. The dancers work in an ensemble.

Both pieces reveal episodes over time of bodies, recognizing current and historic events and how they affect Black bodies and allies.

Special thanks to Sharon DiGenova and Eli Stefura for the production and technical support, and to Laurence Lemieux and the Citadel + Compagnie folks for their ongoing support.

Meet the Artists



Sharon DiGenova | Production Stage Manager

Sharon is a Production Stage Manager and award-winning Lighting Designer, who began her career in a Broadway touring house in Massachusetts. She has since been engaged in many capacities in a multitude of disciplines – designing for dance, theatre, multi-media, circus and even freak shows, and stage-managing music venues, producing dance, running her own venue, and touring internationally to over 350 cities (several times over) in more than 30 countries. She has collaborated with scores of artists, companies and festivals ranging from The Royal Winnipeg Ballet, and Esmeralda Enrique Spanish Dance Co to Lua Shayenne Dance Co., and Canada's internationally acclaimed Holy Body Tattoo.



Bren Eastcott | Narrator, *The Bicycle & Wolf*

Bren Eastcott is a writer and actor based in Toronto, Ontario. She began her professional acting career at the age of 12, appearing in many television shows, shorts, and two feature films before finding her way to the theatre. Recent theatre credits include *15 Dogs* (National Arts Centre), *The Wrong Bashir* (Crow's), *Wayne and Shuster Live!* (Bygone), *As You Like It* (Canadian Stage), and *Orestes* (Tarragon).



Therese Estacion | Poet, *Seeing unseen*

Therese Estacion is the author of a *Phantompains*—a collection of poems (Book*hug Press), that explores her Filipinx heritage and physical disability. *Phantompains* was a finalist for both the 2021 Indies Foreword Reviews and 2021 CLMP Firecracker Award. She has been a guest editor for ARC poetry magazine and Feels Zine, and curated Smutburger's 2023-2024 series. She has also worked as an assessor for the Ontario Arts Council and Canada Arts Council and was an adjunct professor at the University of Toronto's School of Continuing Studies. She is currently seeing clients as a psychotherapist in training. Her upcoming book, *Jelly Bell: Essays on disability and vulnerability* will be published by Book*Hug Spring 2026.



Photo: Ashley Irwin

Ramak Jaber | Writer, *The Bicycle & Wolf*

Ramak is a Toronto-based writer and psychotherapist who is curious about how language informs identity, how perspective shifts memory, and how the stories we tell – and those we inherit – shape who we are.



Photo: Ashley Irwin

Roshanak Jaber | Choreographer and Director, *The Bicycle & Wolf*

Roshanak is a choreographer, director, and performer with a career spanning 25 years. Leading Toronto's Jaber Dance Theatre as Artistic Director, she pursues an interdisciplinary, research-driven practice that unfolds at the interface of socio-political inquiry and contemporary dance-theatre. Through movement, narrative, and visual language, she crafts work that is emotionally resonant and physically rigorous, inviting audiences into suspended tension and connection. Her stage productions and films have toured nationally and internationally, earning several awards and nominations.



Photo: Drew Berry

Rumi Jeraj | Choreographer and Performer, *Seeing unseen*

Rumi Jeraj is an Ismaili Muslim hailing from Sherwood Park Alberta (the world's largest hamlet). A graduate of Toronto Metropolitan University, Rumi has worked for dance artists including Darryl Tracy, Heidi Strauss, Hanna Kiel and Eilish Shin-Culhane. Since graduating Rumi has been curious about creating his own work, collaborating with drummer Aidan McConnell on a project called *Space and Spectra* which aims to create collaboration between contemporary dancers and musicians. This project has been supported by the National Ballet of Canada's Open Space Programme as well as Good Women Dance and the Edmonton Foundation. Rumi is also using his tap dance knowledge to create a work with Purawai Vyas (a Bharatanatyam dancer).



Photo: Kais Padamshi

Kevin A. Ormsby | Choreographer, *Conversation*

An Ontario Chalmers Fellowship recipient and KM Hunter Dance Award Nominee, Toronto Arts Council Cultural Leaders Fellow (2015) and Canada Council for the Arts' Victor Martyn Lynch - Staunton Award recipient in Dance (2014) for outstanding achievement by a mid-career artist, Ormsby functions in many of areas of dance; from the creative practice to arts administration to advocacy, writing and education. As the Program Manager for Cultural Pluralism in the Arts Movement Ontario (CPAMO), he delivers programming for the professional and organizational development in the Arts. He is on the Boards of Dance Collection Danse, Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts and has served on the Boards of Canadian Dance Assembly, Prologue to the Performing Arts and Nia Centre for the Arts.



Photo: Damian Siqueiros

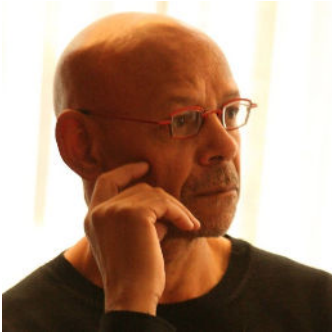
Carlos Rivera | Creator and Performer, *The Bicycle & Wolf*

Carlos is an actor, dancer, choreographer, teacher, and director currently based in Montréal. Originally from México City, he identifies as a Nahuatl Indigenous descent from Sierra Norte, Puebla Mexico. Carlos has toured nationally and internationally with various companies and was the Associate Artist at Red Sky Performance for 16 years. He is a graduate of the Indigenous Residency Program at the National Theatre School of Canada and attended the MFA Program in Directing for Theatre at University of Ottawa.



Thomas Ryder Payne | Sound Designer, *The Bicycle & Wolf*

Thomas Ryder Payne is a composer and sound designer for theatre, dance and film. Selected past work includes designs for National Arts Centre, Stratford, Shaw, Mirvish, Soulpepper, Canadian Stage, Tarragon, Factory, TPM, YPT, Crow's, Modern Times, Aluna Theatre, BIBT, Nightwood, Toronto Dance Theatre, and many others. Thomas has received multiple Dora awards and several nominations for his work.



charles c smith | Poet, *Metamorphosis* and *Conversation*

charles c smith is a poet, playwright and performer. He studied poetry and drama at New York City University and Herbert Berghof Studios, and drama at the Frank Silvera's Writers' Workshop in Harlem. His play *Last Days for the Desperate* won an award from Black Theatre Canada. He has received a grant from the Ontario Arts Council's Writers Reserve Grants Program and the Toronto Arts Council Writers Grants Program, has published four books of poetry and has edited several collections of poetry (including the works of Dionne Brand, Marlene Nourbese Phillips, Claire Harris, Cyril Dabydeen, Lillian Allen, George Elliott Clarke, Clifton Joseph). His writings have appeared in numerous journals and magazines, including Poetry Canada Review, the Quill and Quire, Descant, Dandelion, Fiddlehead, Anti-Racism in Education: Missing in Action (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives), the Amethyst Review, Bywords, Canadian Ethnic Studies and others. Charles was also the founder of the Black Perspectives Cultural Program in Regent Park and over the years has continued to develop and convene community arts workshops in high-needs areas throughout the GTA, funded provided by the Ontario Arts Council and the Toronto Arts Council.



Elijah Stefura | Lighting Designer

Elijah Stefura (He/Him) is a technician in the city of Toronto. He began working professionally in the industry after his graduation from Toronto Metropolitan University in 2019. Eli joined the C+C team in 2021 and is now The Citadel's Technical Director, also acting as engineer of the company's livestream programming.



Photo: Kunio Imamura

Yui Ugai | Performer, *The Bicycle & Wolf*

Yui is a dance artist originally from Hiroshima, Japan, now based in Toronto. She has collaborated with over 15 professional dance companies, touring nationally and internationally. Her talent and dedication have earned her several awards, including the Laurence Heisey Award in Fine Arts, the Ontario Graduate Scholarship, and a Dora Mavor Moore Award nomination. She studied drama at Takarazuka North High School and dance and music at Kobe College in Japan. Yui holds both a BFA and an MFA in Dance from York University, where she currently serves as contract faculty.



wind in the leaves collective

Presenter-in-Residence at The Citadel

The 'wind in the leaves collective' has developed a significant body of work over the past decade. Our unique approach to multi-disciplinary performance takes its lead from the artistic director's poetry which is explored and choreographed by dancers, musicians and video artists.

This collaboration across disciplines has been successful in engaging audiences and building a profile for this type of performance. The 'collective' is now staging performances with other artists that involve similar elements, i.e., connecting poetry with dance and music in creation and performance.

The 'collective' has been approached by the Citadel to curate performances and is now Presenter in Residence at the Citadel where selected artists will share the stage and advance the notion of poetry and dance as a seamless art form practiced by racialized and Indigenous artists and drawing from historic pre-colonial practices made contemporary.

www.windintheleavescollective.com

Citadel + Compagnie is an artistic and community entity with a dual purpose.

It is at once both place and people.

The Citadel: Ross Centre for Dance is a remarkable building nestled in the Regent Park neighbourhood of Toronto. Since 2012, The Citadel has established itself as an open and welcoming space for artists to rehearse, create and perform, and where the community can learn, communicate, and share.

The Citadel plays host to a range of presentation platforms and residency programs for some of Canada's most interesting choreographers and dance companies. It is also the home of the Citadel Dance Program, providing free dance education to local children and youth, and neighbour Toronto Council Fire's Indigenous dance program, First Fire.

Compagnie de la Citadelle is the professional dance company within Citadel + Compagnie. Founded in 2000, the Compagnie is known for its creative processes and intimate performances of classic works and new creations. Through remount initiatives, the Compagnie also dedicates itself to the preservation of important Canadian dance work, making available iconic repertoire to a new generation of dance artists.

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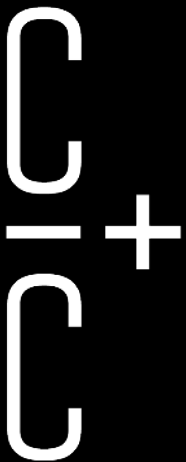
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Citadel + Compagnie wishes to express its deep gratitude towards the following supporters whose significant lifetime giving of over \$100,000 has helped us create not only The Citadel: Ross Centre for Dance but has also helped with our operations, productions and tours. Thank you!

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The 2025/26 season is generously supported by



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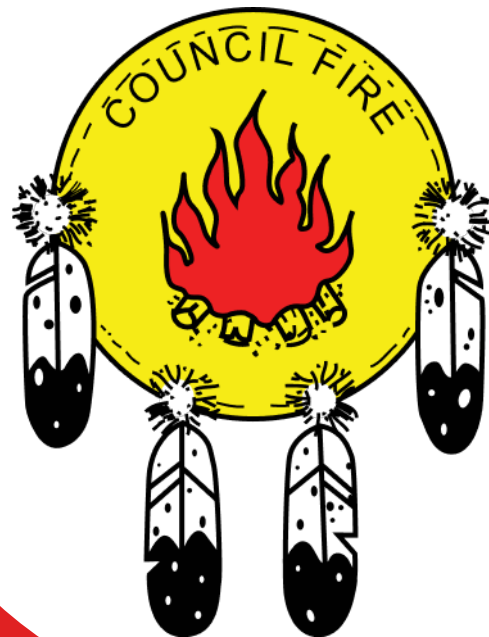
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*Monthly donor

This list represents all donations made between June 1, 2024 - October 28, 2025.
It has been updated as of October 28, 2025. We apologize in advance for any omissions.

TORONTO COUNCIL FIRE NATIVE CULTURAL CENTRE



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Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre is one of many Aboriginal service providers in the Greater Toronto Area that work together to address the social, health, education, economic, and cultural needs of the Toronto urban Aboriginal population.

On an annual basis they interact with over 200,000 clients made up of youth, adults, seniors, and families who are established in the community or in transition.

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