



TEA WITH MARA

FEB 19–22 / 2026

THE CITADEL:
ROSS CENTRE FOR DANCE

CO-PRESENTED WITH
CHOREOGRAPHER
SUZANNE LISKA

CITADEL
LIVE 25
26

TEA WITH MARA

Feb 19-21 , 8pm | Feb 22, 2pm | The Citadel: Ross Centre for Dance

CO-PRESENTED WITH SUZANNE LISKA

Choreographer: Suzanne Liska
Co-Creators + Performers: Gibum Dante Lim,
Suzanne Liska,
Mateo G. Torres
Sound Designer + Composer: Heidi Chan
Assistant Sound Designer: Rasesh Jes
Musicians + Performers: Heidi Chan, Young Park
Costume + Set Designer: Jennie Simm (Vallis)
Lighting Designer: Gabriel Cropley
Stage Manager: A.J. Morra
Dramaturg + Outside Eye: Maxine Heppner

Tea with Mara, meaning to invite Mara (your 'demons') for tea, is set in this 'spirited' space, embodying Japanese Canadian and Buddhist mythology, practices and philosophy. This interdisciplinary collaboration between dance/theatre and music, animates themes of suffering, pleasure, transformation, and the interconnection between the past, present, and future.

Approximate running time is 60 minutes, no intermission.
This performance contains haze.

From the Artist

Tea with Mara, my newest dance work, is inspired by my Japanese Canadian family's history of survival through the forced relocation from British Columbia to Alberta in the 1940s- that continues to shape me. The title means "to invite your demons for tea". The work is framed by the Edo-period ghost-storytelling tradition, yakumonogatari kaidankai, that summons ancestral spirits and teaches people to face fear. For me it's a way of stepping into a spirited space where joy, suffering, transformation, and continuity all meet, leading to connections of past, present, and future through movement and sound.

My collaborators are dance, music, sound and design artists. Together, we use partnering dance, live music, and layered design to bring our diasporic experience into dialogue with mythological inheritances and intergenerational memory. We embody Shinto-Buddhist realms—gods, humans, animals, hungry ghosts, and demons—each realm carrying both struggle and vitality. Costumes and props evoke landscapes of Japanese Canadian origins and folklore, weaving memory and myth. We yearn to turn grief into hope, lust into love, and fear into courage.

Tea with Mara is my invitation for audiences to join me in this embodied journey and be together in this space of honouring ancestral pasts as we envision futures still unfolding.

-Suzanne Liska

Special thanks to my co-creators Mateo and Gibum for your artistry and dedication in shaping this vision and Mika, whose early research was invaluable. To Heidi and Young, for weaving dance and music into seamless dialogue; to Maxine, for your steady guidance in moments of panic. To Jennie Simm (Vallis), whose costumes, props, and projections elevated and guided the work; to Gabriel, for lighting that transformed the space; and to A.J., for your professionalism and kindness. Finally deep gratitude to The Citadel, for your incredible co-production team and theatre venue, my CI jam community, Kathleen Rea and our Axis/CI research group, the Japanese Legacy Fund, JCCC, IGAC Dance studio, and finally to my family—for your questions, support, and love.

Tea with Mara is supported by the Toronto Arts Council, Japanese Canadian Legacy Fund, and Canada Council for the Arts.



Suzanne Liska

Choreographer + Performer

Suzanne Liska is a dance artist, choreographer, teacher and researcher. Her artistic practices are shaped by her diasporic Japanese Canadian cultural background. She is thus committed to exploring the interrelatedness of mind, body, and identity and the role of movement in questioning, inhabiting/embodying, reimagining, and transforming understandings of the mixed diasporic self and its intergenerational reverberations. Through a SSHRC-funded MFA in Dance Choreography, Suzanne established a research praxis anchored in dance ethnography, practice-based research, Asian dance history and form, and social somatic theory. She has received grants and awards through TAC, OAC, CCA and the Japanese Canadian Legacy Fund. Her choreographic and teaching expertise are grounded the interdisciplinary contexts of dance, theatre and music. She specializes in: somatics (certified Alexander Technique teacher); dance kinesiology; dance theatre; solo, contact and ensemble dance improvisation; Taiko; and Butoh. She is contract Faculty in York University's Dance department and George Brown College's Theatre School.

@suzliska

suzanneliska.com



Gibum Dante Lim | Co-Creator + Performer

Gibum Dante Lim is an actor, mover, and theatre maker shaped by Philippe Gaulier, Giovanni Fusetti, and the Lecoq lineage. A graduate of the George Brown Theatre Conservatory. He has performed with Corpus Dance Projects in *Transhumance*, *The Alpine Merry Sheep Choir*, *Camping Royale*, and *Les Moutons* across Canada and Sweden. He was part of the creative ensemble for Bad New Days' Dora-nominated *Last Landscape* and continues his work with REA'son d'être Dance on their Axis Syllabus x Contact Improv research. He's drawn to the discipline and readiness of play, where the body listens and responds, making theatre a deeply transformative experience.



Mateo G. Torres | Co-Creator + Performer

Mateo G. Torres [GUETCHA GUARITCHA] is a Colombian-Canadian multidisciplinary artist, educator and arts organizer with a particular interest in the human body: its singular expressions, the way it moves, and its unavoidable impact. Mateo's work is highly influenced by his ancestral roots; politically charged and rooted in our collective present experience. Mateo is committed to cultivating welcoming and responsive spaces that consider people's needs and foster active self-reflection and care, and to create work relevant to our historical and geographical context, focused on community building based on equity.



Heidi Chan | Sound Design + Composer Musician + Performer

Heidi Chan performs, composes, and designs music and sound for theatre, dance, and film, and has worked and toured across Canada, the US, Asia, and the UK. Heidi is a member of Japanese folk music ensemble Ten Ten, and performs with various music collectives using both acoustic and electronic instrumentation. Dance and theatre credits include productions by Little Pear Garden Collective, Tang Shu-wing Theatre Studio (Hong Kong), Shakespeare's Globe (UK), Blyth Festival, Outside The March, Shaw Festival, and Factory Theatre.



Young Park | Musician + Performer

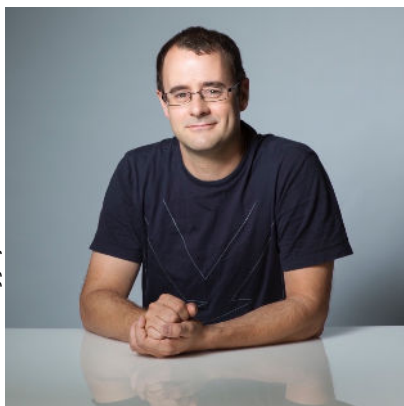
Young Park was born in South Korea and immigrated to Boston Massachusetts when she was 7-years old. She began studying music (viola) at the age of ten, attending New England Conservatory, Prep Division and Walnut Hill School of Performing Arts. She attended Eastman School of Music and then transferred to Oberlin College, where she also studied modern dance. After receiving her bachelor's degree in Music from Oberlin College, she pursued further music and dance studies at University of Michigan, where she received her master's degree. In 1992, she co-founded SAFMOD (Cleveland, OH), a multi-disciplinary performing arts group that focused on the creation of original dance, music and visual art. As Artistic Director of SAFMOD from 1993-2004, she created numerous original dance choreography, influenced by movement styles like Butoh, Contact Improv, capoeira and stilting. She joined RAW Taiko in 2007, became Artistic Director in 2017. She is also the Festival Director of Toronto Taiko Festival.



Jennie Simm (Vallis) | Costume + Set Designer

Jennie Vallis is an award-winning production designer, publisher and visual artist with over 12 years in the creative industries of theatre stage design, contemporary art, and fabricating effects and props for film + television. A BFA graduate with distinction from AUArts ('11) and an MFA graduate from Emily Carr University of Art & Design ('21), she specializes in creating visual en with dance and theatre companies. Theatrical Credits include production design for *Know The Rules, Win the Game* (Cloudsway Dance Theatre), *Fihi Ma Fihi*, *The Dybbuk* (La Caravan Dance Theatre) and stage installations featured at TEDTalks, Burning Man and Powell Street Festival. TV Credits include *Fargo S.5* (FX), *Heartland* (CBC), *Under the Banner of Heaven* (FX), *Billy The Kid* (MGM). Jennie is also the publisher and editor-in-chief of the arts, music + culture publication.

www.jennievallis



Gabriel Cropley | Lighting Designer

Gabriel Cropley is a Toronto based lighting + projections designer and four-time Dora Mavor Moore award nominee. Companies include Ballet Creole, Ottawa Dance Directive, Blue Ceiling dance, Toronto Dance Theatre, TMU Performance Dance, Peggy Baker Dance Projects, UofT Opera, Coal Mine Theatre, Toronto Dance Theatre, Opera York, CanAsian Dance, RAW Taiko, The Chimera Project, Sampradaya Dance Creations, Dancemakers, Humber Theatre, BouchardDanse, pounds per square inch performance, City of Toronto/Nuit Blanche, Capitol Theatre Port Hope, Newton Moraes Dance Theatre, York Dance Ensemble, TOES for Dance, Sook-Yin Lee & Jennifer Goodwin, Hamilton Children's Choir, Dance Arts Institute, and many more. Gabriel is a member of the Associated Designers of Canada.

www.gabrielcropley.ca



A.J. Morra | Stage Manager

Based in Toronto, A.J. is a graduate of the Technical Theatre Program at Toronto Metropolitan University and has enjoyed an active career as a Technical Director, Production Manager, and Stage Manager for contemporary dance, opera, circus, and theatre. Selected credits include three seasons with Toronto Dance Theatre, nine seasons with the Festival of Dance Annapolis Royal, four seasons with Canadian Contemporary Dance Theatre, and assorted projects with Dreamwalker Dance Company, Fujiwara Dance Inventions, ProArte Danza, Groundling Theatre Company, Holla Jazz, Zero Gravity Circus, Soundstreams, and Signal Theatre.



Maxine Heppner | Dramaturg + Outside Eye

Maxine Heppner's favourite place is in-studio with colleagues figuring things out. Since the 1970's her multi-heritage international dance & inter-medial career creating, teaching, designing, writing, has led to her conviction that the source of positive human expression & interaction is somatic intelligence. Her Across Oceans Arts facilitates collaborative platforms for artists & public across viewpoints, generations & heritages since 1995. A community-builder, she has founded dance programs including for Claude Watson High School for the Arts & co-founded the Canadian Alliance of Dance Artists & the International Network for Cultural Diversity (in Unesco). Maxine creates & teaches in T'karonto, online & internationally.

acrossoceans.org

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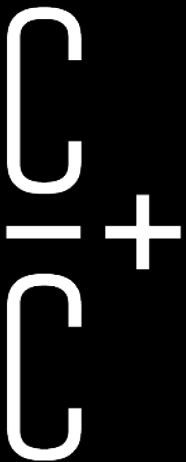
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Citadel + Compagnie wishes to express its deep gratitude towards the following supporters whose significant lifetime giving of over \$100,000 has helped us create not only The Citadel: Ross Centre for Dance but has also helped with our operations,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

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It has been updated as of February 15, 2026. We apologize in advance for any omissions.

We are thankful to the original caretakers of the traditional territory on which we present this work: the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples. We acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit.

Alongside this acknowledgement, we encourage you to get to know our neighbours and learn more about how you can support the important work they do in our community.



TORONTO COUNCIL FIRE NATIVE CULTURAL CENTRE

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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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