



SPRING FORWARD

JUN 5–6 / 2026

THE CITADEL:
ROSS CENTRE FOR DANCE

COMPAGNIE
DE LA CITADELLE

CHOREOGRAPHERS
NOVA BHATTACHARYA
LAURENCE LEMIEUX

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26

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SPRING FORWARD

June 5, 8pm + June 6, 3pm, 8pm
The Citadel: Ross Centre for Dance

Svāhā! (excerpts)

Choreographer: Nova Bhattacharya
Composer: Ed Hanley
Performers: Nidhi Baadkar, Rajvi Dedhia, Karthiha Parthiban, Grihalakshmi Soundarapandian, with students from the Citadel Dance Program and Abhinayakshetra Fine Arts Canada

Nova Dance
Repertoire Coaches: Rajvi Dedhia, Purawai Vyas
Cypher Coach: Mel Hart
Costumes: Nova Bhattacharya, Val Calam, Charlotte Carbone

Dixit Dominus

Choreographer: Laurence Lemieux
Performers: Danielle Baskerville, Rajvi Dedhia, Miyeko Ferguson, Masima Lawrence, and Claire Whitaker, with guest Santina Lawrence
Rehearsal Director: Johanna Bergfelt
Music: Dixit Dominus HWV 232 by George Frideric Handel

Lighting Designer: Simon Rossiter
Production Stage Manager: Marianna Rosato
Technical Director: Eliajah Stefura

Approximate running time is 75 minutes, including a 15-minute intermission

With support from



Svāhā! (excerpts)

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Performers: Nidhi Baadkar
Rajvi Dedhia
Karthiha Parthiban
Grihalakshmi Soundarapandian

<i>Citadel Dance Program</i>	<i>Abhinayakshetra Fine Arts Canada</i>
Quintavia Brideau	Keertana Dhanawade
Annika Chand	Diya Gajan
Lydia Elgsaether-Fox	Shainthavi Jayenthiran
Mannat Kankariya	Tarunikaa Jesinthakumar
Taryn Luke	Aishwariya Logo
Samvedya Tadakamalla	Aathmika Sribavan
Amberly Tong	Varshaa Thishyan
	Rose Wignarajah

Nova Dance

Repertoire Coaches: Rajvi Dedhia, Purawai Vyas

Cypher Coach: Mel Hart

Costumes: Nova Bhattacharya, Val Calam, Charlotte Carbone

Svāhā! is a celebration of dance as a revitalizing ritual that brings us closer together. It is an offering of movement, music, colours and sensations. It is “about” dancers dancing.

This project was made possible through Citadel + Compagnie, Nova Dance and Abhinayakshetra Fine Arts Canada. Bangles courtesy of Banglez by Malinda Chohan.

Dixit Dominus

Choreographer: Laurence Lemieux

Performers: Danielle Baskerville, Rajvi Dedhia, Miyeko Ferguson, Masima Lawrence, and Claire Whitaker, with guest Santina Lawrence

Rehearsal Director: Johanna Bergfelt

Music: Dixit Dominus HWV 232 by George Frideric Handel

Using the musical structure as backdrop, *Dixit Dominus* pays tribute to six women at different stages of their lives, revealing resilience, strength and spirituality. The choreographic language used for this dance work is grounded in everyday gestures mixed in with lyrical movements that follows the arc of the musical score.



Nova Bhattacharya

Choreographer, *Svāhā!*

Nova Bhattacharya is an award-winning, barrier-breaking, artist and cultural leader based in Tkaronto. Her inspiration is found in identities, hybridities and diversities, manifesting creations that resonate with technical virtuosity and lush, vivid imagery. She's always been a rebel reinterpreting traditions and reinventing rituals. In 2008, she founded Nova Dance, embedding the principle that building for the margins ensures inclusion for everyone. The Company offers a space for vital conversations and serves community with kindness, compassion, and generosity. Nova's recent choreography *Svāhā!* features a cast of 22 performers proficient in more than 29 dance forms currently practiced on Turtle Island. The epic work embodies her vision of a diversiform company where the perceived boundaries of culture and technique are dissolved and bodies from the margins are centered. Nova believes that dance expresses the essence of our humanity.



Laurence Lemieux

Choreographer, *Dixit Dominus*

Laurence Lemieux is a dancer, choreographer, teacher, presenter and artistic director of Citadel + Compagnie. Born in Québec City, Lemieux studied dance at L'École Supérieure de Danse du Québec and The School of Toronto Dance Theatre. From 1986 to 1998 she performed for Toronto Dance Theatre, winning a Dora Mavor Moore Award for her interpretation of Christopher House's *"Cryptoversa"* in 1998. Over the course of her career, Lemieux has danced for some of Canada's most prominent choreographers, including Margie Gillis, James Kudelka, and Jean-Pierre Perreault, and has created over thirty original works, drawing deeply on personal experiences that resonate strongly with audiences and presenters alike.

As artistic director of Citadel + Compagnie, Lemieux has established herself as a leader within Toronto's dance community. Over her twenty-five-year tenure she has built the company's home, The Citadel: Ross Centre for Dance, into the cultural beacon it has become today, instituting much needed platforms for presentation, and creating the Citadel Dance Program, bringing accessible dance classes to children living in Toronto's Regent Park.

Under Lemieux's leadership, the company has toured extensively, travelling to Russia, Scotland's Edinburgh Festival, Vimy, France, the acclaimed Jacob's Pillow Festival, and Battery Dance Festival in NYC, facilitating artistic exchange around the globe. Lemieux's satisfaction as an artist comes from sharing her love of dance with both audiences and students and she has taught at many respected institutions across Canada. She is a passionate advocate for the arts and a deeply engaged and active member of the dance community.



Nidhi Baadkar, Performer *Svāhā!*

Born in India and raised in the Kingdom of Bahrain, Nidhi Baadkar (she/her) started her training at the age of ten in the Indian classical technique of Bharata-natyam. Because of her interest in contemporary art, Nidhi completed her Diploma in Movement Art and Mixed Media at Attakkalari Centre, Bangalore, India where she studied Indian martial arts including Kalaripayattu and Chhau, contemporary techniques and physical theatre. She has worked and performed in Bahrain, Canada and India and is a certified facilitator in Therapeutic Dance in Education from CMTAI, India. A newcomer artist based in Toronto, Nidhi is a Dance Arts Institute alumna and emerging movement artist who has worked with renowned choreographers including Nova Bhattacharya, Michael Caldwell, Neena Jayarajan, and Mayumi Lashbrook. As an arts manager, she is currently the Associate Company Manager at The National Ballet of Canada. Her movement practice is rooted in Indian aesthetics, and Nidhi aims to develop her own artistic vocabulary while integrating her management skills to promote accessibility, equity, and inclusivity in the arts.



Danielle Baskerville, Performer *Dixit Dominus*

Danielle Baskerville has been engaged in performing, teaching, rehearsal directing, producing, and advocating within the field of dance for 30 years. She has received numerous awards for performance, as well as independent and scholarly support for research into dance archiving, and the intersection of performance and affect theory. She has served a five-year term on the board of the Canadian Alliance of Dance Artists (CADA-East), received her MA from York University, is Artistic Associate of The Dietrich Group and Artistic Coordinator at Dance Arts Institute. As a performer she most recently appeared in a solo film by Jonathan Osborn entitled *100 YEARS OF WOMEN IN CINEMA IN 300 MOVING PIECES* (composed of chronologically organised excerptss of movement sourced from the performances of 300 different female "icons" from global cinema). In addition to her dance life, Danielle is one year into a new career as a Registered Massage Therapist and finding immense joy in helping others feel better in their bodies.



Rajvi Dedhia, Performer *Svāhā!* and *Dixit Dominus*

Rajvi Dedhia is a Toronto-based dance artist, choreographer, arts administrator and educator. Moved from India in 2021, she is trained in a range of styles, including ballet, Bollywood, contemporary, modern, Indian folk, hip-hop, jazz, and salsa. A graduate of the Dance Arts Institute (formerly The School of Toronto Dance Theatre), she has performed works by Nova Bhattacharya, Laurence Lemieux, Alyssa Martin and more. As an educator, she teaches both Indian and Western dance styles across community, educational, and professional settings, fostering inclusivity and cultural exchange. A digital content creator, she shares her passion for dance through online platforms and offers Bollywood workshops and social media management services for dancers, collectives, and arts organizations, bridging the gap between performance and digital platforms to reach broader audiences.



Miyeko Ferguson, Performer *Dixit Dominus*

Miyeko Ferguson is a Toronto-based dance artist and graduate of Toronto Metropolitan University's Performance Dance program. She has worked with renowned choreographers including Laurence Lemieux, James Kudelka, Peggy Baker, and Jera Wolfe, and has performed with Compagnie de la Citadelle, the Canadian Opera Company, and Côté Danse. In 2024, she was part of the Dora Award-winning ensemble for James Kudelka's *The Man in Black* and has assisted Jera Wolfe on projects such as *Arise* with Canada's National Ballet School and his upcoming work with The National Ballet of Canada. Her film credits include *Seven Veils* by Atom Egoyan, *SWEAT* by The Bicycle Opera Project, and *Follow* by Vikram Dasgupta.



Masima Lawrence, Performer *Dixit Dominus*

Masima Lawrence discovered her passion for dance and performance at a young age, transforming a shy and quiet personality into a confident artist and leader. Trained in Contemporary, Hip Hop, Jazz Funk, Modern, Ballet, and Breakdance, she has performed in productions including *The Journey Musical*, *Dixit Dominus*, and various Fringe Festival performances. Her performance experience includes appearances at the Stomp Urban Dance Competition and special events for distinguished audiences, including the Governor General of Canada. In addition to performing, Masima has spent years teaching and mentoring young dancers through community-based arts programs. She is passionate about using movement as a tool for storytelling, connection, and empowerment.



Santina Lawrence, Performer *Dixit Dominus*

Santina Lawrence is a 12-year-old dancer who has been training and performing for over three years. She has studied ballet through Citadel + Compagnie's Citadel Dance Program and hip hop through various recreational programs across the City of Toronto. Santana has participated in dance competitions, performed at school assemblies, and showcased her talent at community recitals and talent shows in Regent Park. She enjoys sharing her love of dance through both performance and school-based events. This season marks her third performance in *Dixit Dominus*, continuing her growing journey as a young artist.



Karthiha Parthiban, Performer *Svāhā!*

Karthiha Parthiban is an accomplished Bharatanatyam artiste, educator, and Founder and Artistic Director of Abhinayakshetra Fine Arts Canada, Toronto. A graduate of the Kalakshetra Foundation, Chennai, she holds a Master's degree in Fine Arts and is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Dance. Trained under renowned gurus, she is skilled in performance, choreography, and nattuvangam. An award-winning artiste, she has performed internationally and received honours including Nattiya Jothi and the Balasaraswathi Award, along with recognition at the World Classical Tamil Conference (2010). She also contributes to Dance Movement Therapy as a member of the IDEAS Committee at the Dance Movement Therapy Association of Canada. Her research focuses on culturally responsive DMT practices among South Asian communities in the Greater Toronto Area, integrating arts, wellness, seniors' engagement, and community development.



Grihalakshmi Soundarapandian, Performer *Svāhā!*

Grihalakshmi is a Tamil Canadian Bharatanatyam dancer and urban planner whose work explores the intersections of culture, place-based identity, and contemporary performance. She began training in 2003 and completed her Arangetram in 2016 under the guidance of Jai Govinda at Mandala Arts and Culture. She has performed across Canada and internationally, including earning second place in the Senior Varnam category at the 2018 Cleveland Thyagaraja Festival. In 2023, she was featured in a solo, four-piece virtual program with Mandala Arts, that highlighted the synergy between pure dance and storytelling elements. In 2025, she performed in Toronto Dance Theatre's *Eyes on Beginning* showcase. Her practice explores Bharatanatyam's technical architecture and versatility, alongside contemporary and interdisciplinary movement.



Claire Whitaker, Performer *Dixit Dominus*

Claire Whitaker (she/her) is a freelance contemporary dance artist based in Toronto, Ontario. A graduate from Dance Arts Institute (formerly The School of Toronto Dance Theatre), she has performed her own solo work as well as works by Peggy Baker, Christopher House, Colleen Snell, Kylie Thompson, Kiera Breaugh, Motus O Dance Theatre, wind in the leaves collective and Compagnie de la Citadelle. Claire's practice is shaped by Modern/Western contemporary dance and inspired by Yin Yue's FOCO technique and Anouk Van Dijk's Countertechnique practice, alongside the teachings of the Alexander Technique.



Simon Rossiter, Lighting Designer

Simon Rossiter is a lighting designer who occasionally designs scenery. A long-time collaborator with Citadel + Compagnie he has created designs for more than 18 of the company's works, including *Contes pour la fin du temps*, *A Perfect Day*, *Four Old Legs*, *#lovesexbrahms* (Dora award), *Looking for Elvis* (Dora nomination), *Against Nature*, *Les Paradis Perdus*, and *From the House of Mirth* (Dora nomination). Elsewhere, he has created more than 275 designs, which have been honoured with 3 Dora awards from ten nominations for Outstanding Lighting Design. Simon is also Business Agent for the Associated Designers of Canada, IATSE Local ADC659.

Citadel Dance Program students

Established in 2012, the Citadel Dance Program provides weekend dance classes for children and youth in our local community of Regent Park. Our mandate is to make dance both accessible and visible to those living in our neighbourhood and to empower youth through the arts. CDP offers classes for students in JK to Grade 7 in Creative Movement, Ballet, Bharatanatyam and Tap.

Quintavia Brideau

Quintavia is 10 years old. Her favourite colour is blue and she loves puppies. She enjoys playing badminton for fun, alongside tap dance where she enjoys tapping her feet. She is excited to be a part of *Svāhā!* because she gets to dance in front of lots of people.

Annika Chand

Annika is 8 years old. She loves the colours blue and indigo. Her favourite animals are capybaras and red pandas. In her spare time, she likes to draw. When she dances, she loves all the different poses she gets to do!

Lydia Elgsaether-Fox

Lydia is 12 years old. Her favourite colours are baby blue and cherry red. She loves sloths and lions. Dancing is one of her favourite hobbies, alongside music and boxing. She is very excited to perform *Svāhā!*

Mannat Kankariya

Mannat is 9 years old. She likes the colour light purple and loves penguins. She loves doing arts and crafts. She is excited to be a part of *Svāhā!* and doing all of the different poses in the work.

Taryn Luke

Taryn is 9 years old. Her favourite colour is pink. She likes leopards and loves everything about dance. She has a lot of fun dancing and performing in *Svāhā!* and hopes to be a dancer when she grows up!

Samvedya Tadakamalla

Samvedya is 7 years old. She likes the colour pink and thinks tigers are really cool. She also likes to draw and dance... a lot!

Amberly Tong

Amberly is 10 years old. Her favourite colour is light purple. She loves koalas and playing badminton. She likes dance because of all the different moves and is excited to perform in front of lots of people.

Abhinayakshetra Fine Arts Canada students

Abhinayakshetra Fine Arts Canada, founded in 2015, is a not-for-profit dedicated to promoting Bharatanatyam in the Kalakshetra Bani. Led by Smt. Karthiha Parthiban, it nurtures artistic excellence, cultural identity, and community engagement, offering inclusive training, performances, and wellness-focused programs for diverse learners across the Greater Toronto Area.

Keertana Dhanawade

Keertana is 11 years old. She likes the colours white and blue. Her favourite animal is a fox. When she's not busy dancing, she enjoys playing volleyball. She thinks dance is really fun and requires a lot of talent. She can't wait to be on a big stage with everyone watching!

Diya Gajan

Diya is 8 years old. She loves the colour pink, and bear cubs. Her favourite thing to do is dance, because she gets to perform on stage. She is excited to be a part of *Svāhā!* and perform in front of her friends and family.

Shainthavi Jayenthiran

Shainthavi is 11 years old. She likes baby pink and lavender purple. Her favourite animals are capybaras and cheetahs. In addition to dancing, she loves to draw, play games and sing. Her favourite part about dance is her teacher and being able to express her feelings. She is very excited to perform *Svāhā!* in front of an audience.

Tarunikaa Jesinthakumar

Tarunikaa is 11 years old. She loves light pink and monkeys. She enjoys dancing and playing sports. What she loves about dance is learning new things and telling stories through movement. She has enjoyed being a part of *Svāhā!* meeting new people and learning the choreography. Nidhi, Rajvi, Griha and Karthi have all been very kind and helpful and Tarunikaa loves watching their solos.

Aishwariya Logo

Aishwariya is 8 years old. She loves sea turtles and the colour violet. She enjoys doing gymnastics and dancing. She loves dancing because it's super fun and you can act like a different person. Aishwariya and her classmates have been working really hard on *Svāhā!* and she can't wait for everyone to see it on stage!

Aathmika Sribavan

Aathmika is 12 years old. Her favourite colour is blue. She loves sea horses and loves to read. Her favourite thing about dance is all the friends she has met. She is excited to perform *Svāhā!* with her friends.

Varshaa Thishyan

Varshaa is 12 years old. She likes the colour light blue and loves birds. In her spare time, she likes to draw and paint. Her favourite thing about dance is being able to express different emotions. She is grateful to have met new people in this process and is really excited to have fun and perform!

Rose Wignarajah

Rose is 9 years old. Her favourite colour is pink, and her favourite animal is a cheetah. She likes to do puzzles and ride her bicycle. Dancing is really fun for her, and she likes learning new dances. She is really excited to perform in front everyone!

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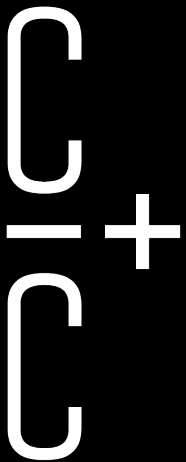
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Citadel + Compagnie wishes to express its deep gratitude towards the following supporters whose significant lifetime giving of over \$100,000 has helped us create not only The Citadel: Ross Centre for Dance but has also helped with our operations,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

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It has been updated as of May 31, 2026. We apologize in advance for any omissions.

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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

Get to know our neighbours

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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From **grassroots support** through our Citadel Dance Program, **bringing free dance education** to the children and youth of Regent Park, to our **support of local dance artists and companies** through a plethora of vital residency and presentation opportunities, to **our conviction** in bringing deeply human nuanced dance works to audiences across the country as means of understanding, **Citadel + Compagnie holds and upholds dance.**

ELEVATION CAMPAIGN

Help us reach our goal of **\$25,000** by **June 30, 2026**, so we may continue our work elevating dance and community—connecting over the beauty of the human experience through dance.

[CLICK HERE TO DONATE](#)