



Dusk Dances 2020: A virtual edition for schools

STUDY GUIDE

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PROLOGUE
to the Performing Arts
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Dusk Dances

Every summer since 1993, Dusk Dances has produced outdoor dance festivals in parks and public squares, showcasing dances performed in fields, near shorelines, in and under trees, on picnic tables, basketball courts, under the setting sun and the evening sky.

The entire outdoors is Dusk Dances' stage and selecting specific sites for each piece of choreography is a key element to the magical impact of each year's touring programs.

At the festival the audience moves from site to site throughout the show led by a festival host who informs and entertains. The transitions between dances creates a sense of community and collective anticipation; a hush falls as attendees settle onto the grass in a secluded grove to watch a quiet solo, excitement builds as they enter an empty skating rink enclosure where dancers and a choir await.

For our first ever virtual edition of Dusk Dances we have selected three outstanding dance pieces and two musical performances to share with you and we've created post-performance exploratory and creation-based movement exercises for you and your students to enjoy.

Land Acknowledgement

Dusk Dances would like to acknowledge that we have the incredible opportunity to live and work on this land which is the territory of the Huron-Wendat, the Anishinaabe, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. Today, the meeting place of Tkaronto is also home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples. We are grateful to be able to live, work, and dance on Turtle Island; a sacred land that has been a site for human activity for over 15,000 years.

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Dusk Dances 2020:

A virtual edition for schools

The featured dance pieces in this Virtual Performance:

- *Blood Tides* choreographed by **Santee Smith**
- *Onward Ho, My Love* choreographed by **Julia Aplin**
- *Monument* choreographed by **Gerry Trentham**

The featured musical artists:

Amadou Kienou opens the festival performing on the *kora* (west African 21-stringed, lute shaped harp).

Patty Chan on the *erhu* (two stringed bowed instrument from China) and **Marjolaine Fournier** on the double bass perform the closing act.

Festival Host:

Vincent Leblanc-Beaudoin as Coach Tanguay.

Descriptions of the pieces

BLOOD TIDES

Artistic Direction and Choreographer: Santee Smith

Performers: Julianne Blackbird, Raelyn Metcalfe and Santee Smith

Composer: Cris Derksen

Featured Singers / Musicians: Ngahui Murphy (Māori Karanga, Waiata) and Jo'el Komene (Taonga Pūoro)

Costume Designer: Adriana Fulop

Blood Tides is the 2nd production in Kaha:wi Dance Theatre's triptych series *Re-Quickening, Blood Tides* and *Skén:nen* about the rematriation to the house of humanity: the womb. The international Indigenous collaboration premiered in 2018 and was created and performed through a ceremonial womxn's processes. The Dusk Dances excerpt features the scene *The Thresholders and activation of Lighting Womxn*. Moving through transformative states, it calls to awaken the sacred feminine, acknowledges womxn as the thresholders of life/death, and navigates sacred alignments from cosmos to earth.

ONWARD HO, MY LOVE

Choreographer: Julia Aplin

Performers: Kaitlin Standeven and Brodie Stevenson

Composer: John Gzowski

Singers: Patricia O'Callaghan and Rick Hyslop

Costumes Designer: Appleberry Ink with Heather Macrimmon

Set Designer: Appleberry Ink

This piece explores the inevitability of moving onward. Relationships with people, places and things evolve and change. Experience can cloud our ideals and reality makes them slippery. This piece celebrates an ongoing choice to dance with love. No matter what.

MONUMENT

Choreographer: Gerry Trentham

Performer: Michael Caldwell

Composers: David Morton, Spear Fisher and The Bows

Table Designer: Jeff Livingston

Production Assistant: Jessie Garon
Location Manager: Gerry Trentham

Monument, first created in 2016, is a timely work that questions why, who and what we monumentalize. How did we arrive at this tradition that locates and casts in stone or bronze a particular image, a slice of time, on ground that holds the varied memories of generations? Why are our monuments so often built to celebrate perceived victors of war? Who are these heroes?



Raelyn Metcalfe, Santee Smith and Julianne Blackbird in Santee Smith's *Blood Tides*. Photo by Yehuda Fisher.

Artists Biographies

Julia Aplin, Choreographer

Julia Aplin has been dancing and creating dances for as long as she can remember. She has performed around the world with Dancemakers and has created dances for theatres, rivers and cyberspace. She continues to explore her fascination with the human body in motion through dance, healing and teaching.

Santee Smith, Choreographer

Santee Smith is a multidisciplinary artist from the Kahn̄yehàka Nation, Six Nations. She trained at Canada's National Ballet School, completed Physical Education and Psychology degrees from McMaster University and a Dance MA from York University. Santee premiered her inaugural work Kaha:wi in 2004 and later founded Kaha:wi Dance Theatre which has grown into an internationally renowned company. Her body of work includes 14 productions and numerous short works and collaborations. She is a sought after teacher and speaker on Indigenous performance and culture. Through embodied storytelling and performance her work speaks to Indigenous identity and continuance. Smith is the 19th Chancellor of McMaster University.

Gerry Trentham, Choreographer

lbs/sq" artistic director Gerry Trentham's life-long dedication to the art of performance has created 40 of his works for stage and screen, international acclaim for original roles for some of Canada's most renowned choreographers (most recently as cast/voice director in Denise Fujiwara's hit EUNOIA), garnered top ten lists, numerous Toronto Dora awards/nominations, a recent film award, and international directing, choreographic, teaching and mentoring opportunities. His art and teaching focuses on voice/body's range and presence. With 20 years as faculty of the internationally acclaimed National Voice Intensive and six years with Denise Fujiwara in their new frontier of training Butoh/Voice, he now is a co-founder of the Moving Voice Institute.

Julianne Blackbird, Dancer

Julianne Blackbird is from the Mohawk Nation, Turtle Clan and resides at Six Nations of the Grand River Territory. Julianne has been dancing since age 3, in all genres including Ballet, Pointe, Contemporary, Hip hop, Jazz, Lyrical, and Tap. Julianne danced in The Gift in Toronto, in 2014 for Mercedes Bernardez. She danced with Santee Smith at the North American Indigenous

Games, World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education (2017), Indspire Awards (2018) and is a core member of The Mush Hole. Julianne appeared as an extra in the documentary *Desert Between Us & Them: Raiders, Traitors, and Refugees in the War of 1812* (2013).

Michael Caldwell, Dancer

Michael Caldwell is a Toronto-based choreographer, performer, curator, director, producer, and arts advocate. An 'intense dynamo on stage' (Scene4) with 'exceptional interpretive skills' (Globe & Mail), he has performed/collaborated with over 50 of Canada's esteemed performance creators/companies, performing across North America, Europe, Asia, and Australia, earning two (2) Dora Mavor Moore Awards for outstanding performance in dance. His choreography has been commissioned/presented throughout Canada at major festivals, in traditional venues and in site-responsive contexts. Caldwell is a two-time K.M. Hunter Charitable Foundation Artist Award finalist. He is the Executive Producer at Fall for Dance North in Toronto, and Associate Artistic Director at Festival of Dance Annapolis Royal in Nova Scotia, and sits on the board of directors at The CanDance Network and the Dancer Transition Resource Centre.

Raelyn Metcalfe, Dancer

Raised in Vancouver and based in Toronto, Raelyn is from Plains Cree descent from Saskatchewan. She is a graduate of The Conteur Dance Academy. She has trained with The Richmond Academy of Dance, MOVE: the company, and The Conteur Academy. Raelyn has also worked with Aria Evans (artistic director of Political Movement). In 2017, Raelyn performed Aria's work *Voice of A Nation*, commissioned by the Toronto Concert Orchestra. Revisiting her identity and background, Raelyn had the opportunity to perform as a dancer at the 2018 Indspire Awards along with Santee Smith, and Kaha:wi Dance Theatre's Dora Mavor Moore Award winning *The Mush Hole*.

Kaitlin Standeven, Dancer

Kaitlin Standeven is a contemporary dance artist living and working in Toronto. Recently Standeven has engaged in projects with Allison Cummings, Yvonne Ng, Dusk Dances and Citadel + Compagnie. Standeven began her career as a member of Toronto Dance Theatre. Over eight seasons she originated roles in five full-length works by Artistic Director Christopher House, and was greatly influenced by notable creators Susie Burpee, Deborah Hay, Ame Henderson and Heidi Strauss. Her work now extends beyond performance as she supports, nurtures and inspires through her multiple roles as a teacher, facilitator and administrator. Standeven holds a BFA from Ryerson University.

Brodie Stevenson, Dancer

Brodie Stevenson was born in the small village of Wuikinuxv on British Columbia's central coast. From 2008 – 2014 Stevenson was a company member of Toronto Dance Theatre, where he performed in original works by Artistic Director Christopher House and also for guest choreographers such as Lina Cruz, Deborah Hay and Heidi Strauss. As an independent dancer Stevenson has worked with many choreographers including Peggy Baker, Marie-Josée Chartier, James Kudelka, Allison Cummings and Laurence Lemieux. Since 2008 Stevenson has been creating and performing as part of the award-winning trio, Throwdown Collective. He is a Dora Award nominated performer and choreographic recipient with Throwdown Collective.

Amadou Kienou, Opening Musical Act

Master drummer Amadou Kienou hails from Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, West Africa, once part of the vast ancient Mandingo Empire. A descendant of the Dafin people, Amadou was initiated as a griot (an oral historian), one of a long line of griots whose role is to preserve and transmit their people's history, culture, and values. The djembe is Amadou's principal instrument. As a griot, musician-composer, and choreographer Amadou Kienou has been active throughout North America, Africa, Europe, Asia, India, and the Caribbean. His most prestigious award is being honored with the Order of Merit in Canada in 2017.

Patty Chan, Closing Musical Act

Patty Chan is a second-generation Chinese Canadian erhu musician, educator, and author. She is the Music Director of the Toronto Chinese Orchestra, and Director of Centre for Music Innovations (<https://musinno.com>). As an erhu musician, Patty has collaborated with many ensembles and organizations, including the Strings of St. John's, Red Snow Collective, the Toronto Masque Theatre, and the Canadian Children's Opera Company. She has taught erhu and Chinese music at York, Ryerson, and Carleton universities. Patty has written several books about the erhu, and a storybook in three languages about Chinese instruments for children.

Vincent Leblanc-Beaudoin, Host

Vincent is a two-time Jessie Award winning and a Dora Award nominated actor who works in both French and English. He has an Honours B.A. in Theatre from the University of Ottawa, is a graduate of Studio 58, and he has completed the Manitoulin Conservatory for Creation and Performance's summer intensive. He has a kinesthetic and corporeal approach to theatre and his main areas of interest include immersive theatre, physical theatre, clown, and work that

creatively tackles social issues. Vincent is currently developing his solo show *Le Concierge* - an immersive experience about a lonely janitor working a night shift.

www.vincentleblancbeaudoin.com

William Yong, Director, Director of Photography and Editor

William Yong is a multi-faceted artist, choreographer, director for theatre and film. Since he founded Zata Omm and W Zento Production, William has spent last fifteen years breaking new ground collaborations with artists, scientists and engineers in bold and innovative ways. In particular Zata Omm has become a site for research under his tenure, focusing on the integration of dance, technology and broader culture in order to re-imagining performances for our technological age. William's professional career in dance and theatre spans over twenty-seven years. The award-winning director has created more than one hundred original works worldwide that have been exhibited by major presenters.



Master drummer Amadou Kienou. Photo by Yehuda Fisher.

Pre-Show Activities

Pre-Show Questions

During this virtual performance we invite you and your students to pay particular attention to **where the dances are performed, and how each location amplifies the intent of the dance and becomes an integral part of the choreography itself.**

In addition, the following questions are pertinent to the individual pieces.

Depending on the grade level teachers may choose to present all of the questions or select one or two for your students to consider.

Santee Smith's *Blood Tides* is part of a series of dances created and performed by Indigenous women through a collaborative and ceremonial process. The dances focus on their connections to nature's ever-changing cycles.

- Each dancer holds a long tree bough.
- What could the boughs represent?
- The boughs are lifted into the air, placed purposefully down upon the ground, and slap against the water.
- Are the boughs extensions of the dancers? Do the boughs strengthen their connection to the natural elements? If yes how?

Julia Aplin's *Onward Ho, My Love* is a duet performed on a straight path wide enough for only two people.

- At the start of the piece the dancers appear to be in a blissful relationship but as the choreography evolves things start to shift.
- As the dancers' relationship alters their costumes change as well. How do the costume changes help articulate how the relationship is changing?
- Besides costumes what other ways do the dancers adapt to change and to each other?

Gerry Trentham's *Monument* questions who are the people our society chooses to memorialize.

- Dramatic dance solos are similar to theatrical soliloquies when an actor expresses his or her inner thoughts and struggles to the audience.

- What internal struggle is the dancer experiencing? Is he lost, tired, looking for something or someone?
- The dance is performed in two contrasting landscapes. How do the locations and cinematography magnify dancer's sense of isolation and uncertainty?



Kaitlin Standeven and Brodie Stevenson in Julia Aplin's *Onward Ho, My Love*. Photo by Yehuda Fisher.

Post Show Activities

Post Show Discussion Protocol

Dance is an art form that invites multiple perspectives.

Each students' interpretation or impression is valued.

Use the post show discussion to help build students' communication and listening skills by encouraging everyone to contribute ideas, use constructive language and listen respectfully to each other.

First Question to Discuss

Did the relationship between the location, choreography and dancers deepen the resonance of each piece?

Invite your students to discuss:

- Why the specific sites were chosen and how the locations enriched the choreography.
- Identify what they felt was the most eye-catching moment between the dancers and location.

Second Group of Questions to Discuss

Review the Pre-Show questions for the individual pieces. You needn't respond to them all but make sure your students share their ideas about:

Blood Ties

- What was your impression about the use of the boughs? What did they represent? Did they help to connect the dancers with Nature's energies?

Onward Ho, My Love

- As the relationship progressed both the choreography and costumes became less formal. Is that what happens in life?

Monument

- The table the dancer was standing on is old, his boots are worn. Was he a soldier?
- What could have happened to him? Does he want to be memorialized?

Post Show Movement Explorations

Watching dance performances isn't the only reason people flock to Dusk Dances.

Each evening begins with a musical performance and a movement class for the audience.

Amadou Kienou, this summer's musical artist was featured at the start of the video performing on the *kora*. Amadou also plays the *djembe* (west African drum).

If Spotify is available follow the link below and go to track 2 for the Amadou's djembe composition entitled **Tiriba** to accompany the warm-up exercise.

<https://open.spotify.com/artist/6EbdCOPvVemrM9LPJtNJ5i?autoplay=true>

Warm-up Exercise

Work with everyone standing in their own 2-meter bubble.

The sequence will be repeated 4 times, once in each direction.

If the desks in the classroom have not been moved to create an open space the warm-up can be performed in the aisles. Instead of repeating the sequence in four directions your class can repeat it twice to the front and twice facing the back.

Ask your students to start by standing in parallel position (feet in parallel, legs hip width apart, spine long and tall, arms by the side, neck long, top of the head lengthening toward the ceiling).

- Walk 4 steps forward – 4 beats
- Walk 4 steps back – 4 beats
- Reach right arm and lunge to the right – 2 beats
- Return to parallel – 2 beats
- Reach left arm and lunge to the left – 2 beats
- Return to parallel – 2 beats
- Reach right arm up to ceiling, keep it lifted and look up – 2 beats
- Reach left arm up to ceiling, keep it lifted and look up – 2 beats
- Lower both arms, drop head, slowly roll down through spine, touch the floor – 8 beats
- Roll up through the spine to parallel position with arms by the sides – 4 beats
- Quickly shrug both shoulders up and down 4 times – 4 beats
- Quick jumps on the spot 4 times – 4 beats
- Repeat shoulders up and down 4 times – 4 beats
- Repeat jumps 4 times using the 4th jump to quarter turn to the right to face a new direction– 4 beats

At the end of the first sequence the final jump rotates the class 90 degrees to the right OR if working beside desks rotate 180 degrees to face the back.

Repeat entire sequence facing the new direction.

Continue until the sequence has been repeated 4 times and everyone has returned to facing front.

Water Inspired Movement Exercise

All of the pieces presented in the Dusk Dances Virtual program contain water elements. Water plays a pivotal role in *Blood Ties* and *Monument* and adds a comic twist in *Onward Ho, My Love*.

Step 1 - Create a Word List

Compile a list of words that describe the different way water moves including but not limited to:

Splashes	Trickles	Flows	Cascades	Swirls	Drips
Surges	Churns	Ripples	Melts	Bubbles	Stears
Laps	Seeps	Cradles	Curls	Rises	Erodes

Step 2 - Explore the Words

Lead an exploration using each of the words.

1. Ask your students to stand at least two arms lengths apart and to maintain safe distance from others while they move.
2. Call out a different water word every 15 -20 seconds (longer for senior dance students).
3. Encourage your students to animate different parts of their bodies and to work at different levels and timings.
4. Offer prompts to help younger students visualize the actions.

Step 3 - Create Movement Phrases

1. After your class has explored all of the words invite everyone pick a word to use as inspiration for a movement phrase.
2. The phrase needn't be long (8 – 12 beats for Elementary students, 12 - 16 beats for Secondary).

3. Once students have created and practiced their phrases invite three or four to present their work at the same time.
4. Make sure those presenting have enough space to move safely.
5. Ask everyone to start at the same time and freeze in their final shapes.

Step 4 - Combine the Phrases

1. After everyone has presented ask your students to partner up with someone whose water word and phrase contrasts theirs: bubble/flow, drip/swirl, cascade/melt, and so on.
2. Ask students to teach each other their phrases and connect them so the two phrases can be performed one after another without stopping (some duets may have to add a transition movement to connect the first phrase to the second).
3. If there is enough room invite two duets to present at the same time.

Step 5 - After Sharing Duets

Elementary teachers can lead a class discussion asking students to reflect on the variety of water movements and dynamic energy they used to create their phrases.

Secondary Dance students can form quartets (two duets come together) to create a more challenging work of choreography. Each quartet should contain a unison section, a section where the original duet phrases overlap and one section where everyone performs the same phrase but at a different tempo, level and direction from the others.

Secondary Drama students can form quartets and explore ways to incorporate vocalizations to the movement phrases using their water words and water sounds.

Step 6 – Take the Water Dances Outdoors

Consider creating a site-specific outdoor movement piece.

Is there a lake, river, stream, wetland, wading pool or fountain near the school?

Is there a nearby area that could benefit from water, a garden, vacant lot, dried riverbed?

World Water Day is March 22 and International Ocean Day is June 8. Discuss possibilities of adapting the movement work from Steps 1 and 2 into an outdoor dance that celebrates water.

Indoor Site-Specific Movement Investigations

During the pandemic everyone's awareness of space has increased. Dusk Dances invites your students apply their heightened spatial awareness in an exploratory choreographic exercise using spaces in and around your school.

Due to movement restrictions the dances students envision may have to wait to be fully realized, that's something professional choreographers have to deal with all the time, sometimes it takes years before a piece is produced.

If your students don't have dance journals now is a great time to implement them. The journal can contain students' dance ideas and impressions, diagrams and notation of movement phrases they've created or learned, reviews of dance pieces they watched on their own or as a class, and personal observations about the movement patterns in the world around them.

Step 1 - Examine and Explore

With your class compile a list of your school's indoor spaces that could be the site for a dance or dramatic movement piece. The list could include: classrooms, hallways, lockers, stairways, front entrance/foyer.

Brainstorm one indoor location collectively with your class.

Here's an example of prompts for your class brainstorming ideas for stairways.

- How do we normally interact with stairs?
- How can we use levels and up and down movements to create abstract or dramatic relationships between movers?
- Could we create a movement piece situated on a specific staircase in the school that communicates the ups and downs in life and can be performed while maintaining safe distancing?

Elementary school teachers may decide to select one indoor site, brainstorm ideas and if safe distancing can be maintained work collaboratively to create a movement piece or several movement phrases at the site.

Secondary school teachers may prefer that the exploration be given as an assignment for small groups who can work together safely.

All student work created can be recorded, edited and shared with the school community.

Step 2 - Additional Outdoor Locations

Compile a list of your school's outdoor spaces. The list could include: baseball diamond, track, community garden, front door entrance, green space, treed area.

When the weather makes outdoor dancing more accessible revisit your list of outdoor sites and consider creating a piece outdoors.



Michael Caldwell in Gerry Trentham's *Monument*. Photo by William Yong.



Website: <https://duskdances.ca>

Facebook: <http://facebook.com/duskdances>

Instagram: <http://instagram.com/duskdances>

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