

# Flying Hearts – Artist Biographies

## **Lynda Hill, Artistic & Executive Director**

Lynda is a professional theatre director, dramaturge, arts educator and arts leader with a passion for the creation and development of new work, new artists and new audiences.

Lynda Hill has led the organizational and artistic direction of Theatre Direct since 2001. She has commissioned numerous new plays for the company and guided the successful production of 19 productions, 12 of which were original commissions including *And, By The Way Miss....*, *Beneath the Banyan Tree*, *Binti's Journey*, *Sanctuary Song* and most recently, *Old Man and the River*. The company's productions have been seen by thousands of young people across the country in schools, theatres and international festivals.

In 2006, she initiated and oversaw Theatre Direct's project to establish a permanent home as anchor tenants of the Artscape Wychwood Barns, a revitalization of former streetcar repair barns in the heart of a thriving neighbourhood of young families and schools. Since 2009, the company, moved from seasonal touring to year-round programming including the presentation of their original work, guest productions, community and education programs.

In addition to leading the artistic programming, Lynda oversees the direction of the company's education work in schools and in their community programs, drawing on her 20 year experience as an arts educator. In this capacity, she has conceived and implemented unique residency projects that bring professional artists in collaboration with young people and their broader communities. Notable residency projects include *The Petra Peace Project* (with York Region District School Board) *The Carpet* (at Dovercourt PS in partnership with Akademie Schloss Solitude, Germany), *Letters to Africa* (with Kent Junior PS), *Roundtrip Home* (with 5 local schools within walking distance of the Wychwood Barns), and *1000 Stories* (Fraser Mustard Early Learning Academy).

In tandem with Theatre Direct's cycles of creation, development, and production, Lynda has been researching international trends in theatre for early years. After networking with leading companies in this field, attending various festivals, and creating with children under the age of 6, she initiated English Canada's first international festival of theatre for early years which was realized in May 2014. *The Wee Festival of Theatre and Culture for Early Years*, showcased 7 productions, in 4 venues, from Europe and Québec as well as an academic research conference, professional sector meeting, workshops for artists, parents and children, exhibitions, and a family festival of music and dance.

Prior to joining Theatre Direct, Lynda was a freelance director, dramaturge and radio drama producer. Along with her extensive direction credits, Lynda served as the Associate Artistic Director of Nightwood Theatre from 1989-91 and the Co-Artistic Director of Cahoots Theatre Projects from 1991-1993. In 1995, Lynda was awarded a fellowship at Akademie Schloss

Solitude in Stuttgart, Germany and in 2000, she served as the Theatre Officer at the Ontario Arts Council.

Lynda and her partner James Roy are proud parents of two children, Tessa and Quinn.

### **Michelle Silagy**

Michelle Silagy is Contemporary Dance Artist and Educator. She is the Young Dancers' Program Director at The School of Toronto Dance Theatre where she facilitates a multi-ability dance class, *Creative Movement Made for Me*. Silagy's contemporary dance choreography, has been referred to as "exquisite...filled with beautiful images that speak of rest, tranquility and hope" (Globe and Mail). It's been presented at venues to include the Art Gallery of Ontario, The Textile Museum of Canada (within exhibitions –notably Kai Chan's), The Gardiner Museum, the EnWave Theatre, Beurs van Berlage in Amsterdam, and in Inuvik above the Arctic Circle with singer song-writer Susan Aglukark. Silagy is a certified DanceAbility Teacher (2012)— and — one of ten first generation International Master DanceAbility Teachers (2015). She received her training from DanceAbility International Founder Alito Alessi in Austria, Mexico and Uruguay. Silagy performed an integrated dance piece in Vienna with DanceAbility at ImpulsTanz, Festival 2012. Silagy is currently working with Theatre Direct on projects for Young Audiences.

### **Cathy Nosaty**

Cathy Nosaty enjoys a diverse career as a musician, composer, sound designer, musical director and artist educator. She began her musical training as a classical pianist and her love of creative collaboration led her to work in dance, theatre and scoring to picture.

Over the past thirty years she has created scores for over ninety productions for regional and independent theatre companies across Canada: her work has been heard on international stages with Ronnie Burkett Theatre of Marionettes, Manitoba Theatre For Young People and DynamO Théâtre. Cathy was Assistant Conductor/Keyboardist for the Toronto company of Jersey Boys. Recent projects include the score for the documentary film *The Motherload* for CBC's Doc Zone, *Valley Song* for Gateway Theatre, composition and co-musical direction for *Train Payanam* for Community Arts Guild and *Fornes x 2* for Theatre Asylum.

### **Jessica Runge**

Jessica Runge works and makes her home in Toronto. She began dancing at the age of five and completed her professional training as a scholarship student at The School of Toronto Dance Theatre. A member of Toronto Dance Theatre from 1998 through 2006, Ms. Runge also enjoys a successful career as a freelance dance interpreter, choreographer, and teacher. She has

toured nationally and internationally performing works of such acclaimed Canadian choreographers as Peggy Baker, Peter Chin, Kim Frank, and Christopher House. Her own works have been presented in many venues in Toronto and elsewhere in Canada, including the outdoor stage at the Canada Dance Festival. She has been commissioned to create dances that have toured internationally, as well as site-specific works for such spectacular settings as a twelve metre high outdoor waterfall in downtown Toronto. Ms. Runge is a co-winner of the 2005 K.M. Hunter Artists Award for Dance, and she has been nominated for three Dora Mavor Moore awards for her outstanding performances of, and choreography for new dance premieres. From 1994 - 2004, Ms. Runge was a co-artistic director of Series 8:08, a Toronto-based producer of innovative dance workshops and performances.

### **Andrew Hartley**

A graduate of The School of Toronto Dance Theatre, Andrew Hartley of Moncton, New Brunswick, has performed in work by an eclectic group of emerging and established artists, including Joanie Audet, Serge Bennathan, Sylvie Bouchard, Susie Burpee, Angela Blumberg, Allison Cummings, David Earle, DA Hoskins, Indrit Kasapi, Noémie Lafrance, Meagan O'Shea, Simon Renaud, Andrea Spaziani and Dan Wild.

He is a founding member of Warm Laundry, creating and performing with his colleagues of the collective. His work has been presented at Buddies and Bad Times Theatre in an evening of work by emerging multidisciplinary artists and at the Enwave Theatre as part of *Fresh Blood*. He takes great joy in working with children and teaches in the Young Dancers' Program at the School of TDT and as guest faculty of DancEast Dance Centre de Danse in Moncton.

