

WeeFestival and
TheatreDirect
present

Flying Hearts

Created by **Michelle Silagy
& Lynda Hill**

For Children 2+
of All Abilities

Autism-Friendly &
Relaxed Performance

Original Music
Cathy Nosaty

Production Design
Jung-Hye Kim

Costume Design
Jennifer Dallas

Lighting Design
Jennifer Lennon

Starring
Allison Basha, Lucas Penner, Jake Ramos & Jessica Runge



Flying Hearts

For children of all abilities 2 years +
A Relaxed and Autism-Friendly Performance

Created by Michelle Silagy and Lynda Hill

Original Music Composed by Cathy Nosaty

Set Design by Jung Hye Kim

Costume Design by Jennifer Dallas

Lighting Design by Jennifer Lennon

Relaxed Audio Description by Kat Germain

Starring Allison Basha, Lucas Penner, Jake Ramos & Jessica Runge

Join four friends as they set off on an imagination adventure through the sights, sounds, and textures of earth, water, air, and light! *Flying Hearts* combines dance, theatre and music in a multi-sensory and interactive dance/theatre creation that promises a rich and stimulating arts experience for young audiences.

An inclusive, immersive, and fully Relaxed Performance, *Flying Hearts* welcomes children with Autism Spectrum Disorder, Developmental Disabilities, or any child for whom a traditional theatre experience is challenging.

Flying Hearts, a musical dance experience, is a gift to students with developmental disabilities and diverse learning needs. Theatre Direct has an open collaborative approach that makes their performances not only accessible but uniquely meaningful. Every student—especially those with special needs—deserves to experience the wonder of Flying Hearts.” Educator

Watch our promo video!

<https://vimeo.com/315261387>



Photo credits: Dahlia Katz | performers featured, Jessica Runge, Tylee Jones, Emma Zabloski, Cathy Nosaty



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Flying Hearts is performed within a stage environment evoking a sailing ship of dreams. The dancers accompanied by a musician playing a range of percussive and melodic instruments journey through the world of light, water, air, and earth expressed through sophisticated, yet accessible choreography inspired by play. Between each chapter of the story, the audience are treated to a sensory experience that compliments the action on stage. For example, gentle wafting of fans for air, light misting of water, and gentle bubbles.

The audience is seated close to the action with rich lighting that gently transforms the atmosphere, compliments the environment of the stage setting. In this way we can include the children in the action and world of the performance. Before and after the performance, the children can interact with a sensory installation that is inspired by the elements of the show and that supports their preparation for the show and transition from their previous environment or activity.

Flying Hearts performances in 2019 will be accompanied by a Relaxed Audience Description benefitting children of All Abilities.

What is Relaxed Audio Description? by Kat Germain

Relaxed Audio Description (RAD) makes Relaxed Performances more accessible for people who have differing needs when accessing cultural events via sight, understanding and/ or attention. RAD is most often used to provide access for people who are neurodiverse and/ or with sensory sensitivities such as Autism and Tourette. The applications also include people who are Blind or partially sighted and those with a fixed or narrow visual field due to range of motion of the head, neck and/ or spine. Additionally, as young children learn about their world, a linguistically-rich environment can elevate their phonological awareness and foundational language skills.

Relaxed Audio Description is the Art of Talking Pictorially. Describers act as reporters and “tour guides” and talk about the essential, visual aspects of the event in order to help listeners understand the content, focus on the main action and deconstruct emotional responses, all of which support the telling of the story. Occasionally cues are given ahead of anything that may change suddenly or be startling.

For young audiences, the description takes on the rhythm and tone of a storybook using repetition, verbal cues and consistent tone; language and cadence that young audiences are used to. The verbal service contributes to engagement with content and provides one consistent, reliable voice throughout the show. For the RAD performances, the descriptions will be “open”, meaning the entire audience will hear them.

Feedback from Educators

“They were calm, involved and expressive throughout the performance. The delight of this experience lasted all day. “The sensory elements of the show and tactile stations were engaging for the students. The grass carpeting, the lights, sounds and movements with minimal speech were all tremendously inviting and relaxing.”

“I was surprised how well they sustained attention throughout the performance! All was engaging! You provided a wonderful/delightful mix of music, movement, lights, sounds and audience participation. The pace of your performance was perfect. The limited use of voice but in the same time, the most perfect use of voice, made your performance understandable for our students. The content was very relevant.

“You respected student space and understood those that might not have responded so readily to you involving them in your performance.”

“The performers were outstanding! The singing voices were pure delight: clear and perfect. The musical instruments pure magic! I was so mesmerized and I was observing the students!”

“You encouraged students to be themselves and not have to be reigned in so as to not affect your performance. So welcomed! It is often hard to have our students attend to performances and keep their noises to a minimum. ”

“Your focus was perfect. The setting you provided in our gym made me feel like I was in the theatre. I so enjoyed watching our students so engaged and vocalizing and participating. Learning: -participating in a large group and enjoying it.”

“They loved the bubbles, water, and air and enjoyed the music and sound effects. They also really loved the grass they sat on and the sensory stations set up at the beginning.”

Development of Flying Hearts was generously supported by CIBC's Children's Foundation.

Flying Hearts received its international premier at the WeeFestival of Theatre and Culture for Early years, May 2018, www.weefestival.ca