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Meridian Hall

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TO Live Presents

# Carmen

Compañía Nacional de Danza

February 2 & 3, 2024



*Photo credit: Ariel Cecilio Lemus*

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TO Live



inaem

INSTITUTO NACIONAL  
DE LAS ARTES ESCÉNICAS  
Y DE LA MÚSICA

Compañía Nacional  
de Danza

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# **TO Live would like to acknowledge Tkaronto, which is a Mohawk word meaning the place in the water where the trees are standing.**

We live and work on the traditional territory of Haudenosaunee-speaking nations, including the Huron-Wendat, Seneca, and Mohawk. Haudenosaunee-speaking nations have been here since time immemorial, and were more recently joined by the Mississaugas of the Credit.

This place has many Indigenous ports, including where the Humber and Rouge rivers meet other waterways such as Lake Ontario. Ancient longhouses—typical Haudenosaunee housing structures—have been found along both these rivers and in the north of Toronto near modern-day York University. This territory is covered by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Haudenosaunee (Six Nations) Confederacy and the Anishnaabe (Ojibwe) and allied nations to peaceably share and care for the lands and the relationships around the Great Lakes.

What this means is that by living and working here, we all have a responsibility to the environment and to each other, to treat each other and the environment with peace and respect. This means we have responsibilities to honour, renew, and consistently uphold the values and relationships outlined in the ancient agreements.

Today, Toronto is home to Indigenous peoples and settlers from around the world. Let us all come together in an atmosphere of respect and peace to do good work together with good minds. Let's start building stronger and healthier relationships with each other and the spaces we inhabit in Tkaronto, Ontario, Kanata.

Let's hold our minds together in kindness.

Nia:wen. Thank you.

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# Welcome letter from TO Live

Welcome,

Tonight, Spain's Compañía Nacional de Danza makes its Toronto debut with *Carmen*, an award-winning new interpretation by Swedish choreographer Johan Inger of a much-loved story. In this production we witness the passion of Carmen in a new light as Inger strips the classic tale down to its mythic and universal elements of passion and revenge.

This bold, provocative new *Carmen*, reinterprets Prosper Mérimée's novella by framing the action through the eyes of a child, who is ultimately doomed to repeating the life of violence they observe. This is a timeless *Carmen*, set in a place of our own imagining in which we can recognize our contemporary world. Musically too, it traverses time with Rodion Shchedrin's classic *Carmen Suite*, after Bizet's opera, complemented by new music by Spanish composer Marc Álvarez.

Following *Carmen*, we present *Message In A Bottle* (March 20 to 23), inspired by the iconic hits and poetic lyrics of 17-time Grammy Award-winning artist Sting. Produced by Sadler's Wells, London's premiere dance house, it's a spectacular new dance-theatre show from five-time Olivier Award nominee Kate Prince that powerfully offers us a story of hope amid the human tragedy of suffering and displacement in a war-torn world.

In addition to these two stellar international productions, we are also proud to be presenting Kaha:wi Dance Theatre's *SKÉV:NEN*. The theatrical premiere of a dance and multimedia experience from one of Canada's most acclaimed artists, Santee Smith, will be presented at the St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts' Bluma Appel Theatre (May 9 to 11). The work is conceived for all ages; however, the season includes two special school performances. Students who attend will also have the chance to participate in accompanying workshops that will delve deeply into the work's central themes that consider the impact of climate catastrophe on our earth and the restorative and hopeful message that Indigenous beliefs in balance and peace offer us all.

This spring, we're even presenting a show at a brand-new venue for us, the Leaside Memorial Community Gardens, when we bring you *Murmuration* in partnership with our friends at Fall for Dance North, and the artists, Le Patin Libre (April 25 to 28). Montreal-based Le Patin Libre is making a name for itself the world over with its innovative and exhilarating reimagination of contemporary dance on ice.

With these and other shows at TO Live we remain firm in our commitment to bringing the best of Canadian and international dance to you, our appreciative and enthusiastic audience. You can find everything you need to know and more at [tolive.com](http://tolive.com), but for now, please sit back and enjoy this evening's performance of *Carmen*.

Thank you.

Clyde Wagner  
*President & CEO*  
**TO Live**

Josephine Ridge  
*Vice President of Programming*  
**TO Live**

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# Compañía Nacional de Danza de España (Spanish National Dance Company)

The Compañía Nacional de Danza was founded in 1979 under the name Ballet Clásico Nacional and headed by Víctor Ullate as its first director. In February 1983, María de Ávila took on the directorship of both the Ballet Nacional Español and the Ballet Clásico Español, placing special emphasis on opening the doors to choreographers such as George Balanchine and Antony Tudor. Furthermore, María de Ávila commissioned choreographies from the American dancer and choreographer Ray Barra, at the time resident in Spain. She later offered him the role of full-time director, which he accepted and held until December 1990.

In December 1987, the outstanding Russian dancer Maya Plisétskaya took on the role of artistic ballet director. In June 1990, Nacho Duato was installed as artistic director of what was now called the Compañía Nacional de Danza (CND), a position he held for 20 years. His incorporation brought about an innovative change to the company's history and makeup, with the inclusion of new, original choreographies within its repertoire together with longstanding tried and tested works. In August 2010, Hervé Palito succeeded Duato as artistic director for one year. In September 2011, José Carlos Martínez took the helm as director, holding the post for eight years.

On 28 March 2019, INAEM—the culture ministry's performing arts' institute—announced Joaquín De Luz as new artistic director as of September 2019.



*Photo credit: Ariel Cecilio Lemus*

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# Carmen

## Creators' note

***“My Carmen is not only based on the female protagonist of the story, but as Merimée’s original does, my ballet focuses on Don José’s love sickness, who, unable to accept the freedom of his beloved, starts a way down to hell, pushed by his primitive instincts: passion and revenge.”***

—Johan Inger

Our version introduces a new character: a child, a silent witness to the violence unleashed by José’s jealousy. It invites us to reflect on our responsibility as examples for future generations.

The story begins in a factory where Carmen and the guard José work. Carmen is desired and admired by all men, although he does not show a particular interest in her. However, thanks to her charms and with the help of a flower, Carmen manages to enchant José. Later, she persuades him to let her escape after being arrested as the instigator of a fight among the female workers.

José is demoted by his superior, Zúñiga, to a simple house porter. There, he witnesses a party that Zúñiga throws in honour of his new lover, Carmen. However, she is grateful to José for letting her escape and returns the favour by inviting him to a night of passion. When Carmen leaves in the morning, a morbid obsession with her begins. He searches for her in every woman and every corner until he finds her embraced by Zúñiga. Faced with jealousy and the helplessness generated by this situation, José can only resort to violence, killing his rival before the astonished gaze of Carmen and the Child.

After fleeing, José takes refuge in a dark place, where he shares his remorse with complicit Shadows. There, he dedicates himself to surviving, while assaulting and attacking innocent victims as a criminal. This space is shared by Carmen and the Child, who then learns and imitates these acts. Spending time together leads to the three of them dreaming of an idyllic life of long-awaited family happiness.

But everything falls apart when Carmen exercises her freedom and decides not to continue in that dark world, allowing herself to dream of a better tomorrow alongside the mass idol, Escamillo, the bullfighter. Finally, José kidnaps her during a party in honour of the idol and leads her towards inevitable tragedy. She surrenders to her fate, becoming a victim of possessive irrationality. The Child has witnessed it all and, full of frustration, fear, and hatred, begins to repeat the story...

Johan Inger  
*Choreographer*

Gregor Acuña Pohl  
*Dramaturge*

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# Staging

The conceptual base of this new staging of *Carmen* centres on a plain and open stage, with clear-cut, solid, and honest visuals and forms. Associations with different atmospheres are created by reinterpreting the original novel and avoiding any locally rooted aesthetics. So, Seville can be any place. A tobacco factory is any industry. And the mountains of Ronda are a frame of mind, pushed to the edge.

On stage, that mood appears as seedy, dark, concealed, and menacing town quarters. To create this atmosphere, three scenic materials are used—concrete, a mirror, and a black corrugated material. The entire set arises out of one shape: an equilateral triangle. By association, the triangle instinctively represents the universe depicted in this artwork; three are a crowd, three stir up jealousy, three, alas, erupt into violence.

Three times three equals nine prisms.

The scenography is synthesized into three moving prisms, each with three different sides, moved by the dancers and choreography. The prisms are used to create the different spaces; clear spaces that do not hinder the message portrayed by the dancing but, rather, reveal possible places and moods just by their form and the material from which they are made.

The floor changes throughout the performance, starting out light and ending darker. Lamps accompany three different moments: the factory, the fiesta, and the mountains. Apart from the costumes, this will be the only touch of colour in the scenography.

This scenography is meant to be dynamic and functional, and to show us, from the viewpoint of a child, the multiple aspects of this universal work of art, including violence and its consequences.

Curt Allen  
*Scenographer*



Photo credit: Ariel Cecilio Lemus



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# Costume design



*Photo credit: Ariel Cecilo Lemus*

are some of Johan's own notes: a free, brave, contemporary soul, perhaps an apocalyptic character. The costumes must convey strength and identity, with a slight touch of aesthetic ambiguity.

The first part will be bright and colourful. Act two becomes darker, with greys and blacks taking the stage.

This starting point for the creation of the ballet's wardrobe, as in any creative process, will be altered and transformed according to the progress and requirements arising from the construction of *Carmen*.

David Delfin  
*Costume design*

The guidelines set by the director of this ballet were sobriety, timelessness, contemporariness, and a subtle proximity with the 1960s, all to be viewed through symbols and metaphors. The personalities of the characters will be tinged by these concepts. The idea is to create a new *Carmen*, removed from stereotypes and from the period normally associated with the story, morphing the characters into their contemporary equivalents.

In this way, soldiers are transposed to an aesthetically different form of power—that of corporate executives. Similarly, the matador, the work's star-studded figure, now more resembles a film or rock star.

This symbolism is reinforced by metaphoric characters. The Romani, whose animal instincts are aroused by the charms of the women rolling tobacco leaves, almost become dogs in heat. The candour, purity, kindness, and mystery to be found in humankind is represented by a boy—an androgynous presence that grows darker as the work moves forward. The violence and frustration are transformed into shadows; characters whose presence grows in the second part of the ballet. The characters are sophisticated during the party in act one, for instance, but the cleaning woman soon brings us down to earth.

And then, of course, we have *Carmen*. Here

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# Carmen

## Compañía Nacional de Danza

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**Choreography:** Johan Inger

**Music:** Georges Bizet and Rodion Shchedrin

**Additional original music:** Marc Álvarez

**Original editor of Carmen Suite, Bizet-Shchedrin:** Musikverlag Hans Sikorski, Hamburg

**Dramaturgy:** Gregor Acuña-Pohl

**Costume design:** David Delfín

**Set design:** Curt Allen Wilmer (AAPEE)

**Lighting design:** Tom Visser

**Assistant to the choreographer:**

Urtzi Aranburu

**Assistant to set design:** Isabel Ferrández Barrios

**Carmen:** Kayoko Everhart (2), Sara Fernández (3)

**Don José:** Alessandro Riga (2), Shlomi Shlomo Miara (3)

**Boy:** Samantha Vottari

**Escamillo:** Yanier Gómez Noda

**Zúñiga:** Benjamin Poirier (2), Josué Ullate (3)

### Duration

Act 1 – 50 minutes

Intermission – 20 minutes

Act 2 – 35 minutes

**World premiere by Compañía Nacional de Danza on April 9, 2015 at Teatro de la Zarzuela, Madrid (Spain).**

### Act I

#### Perros (Dogs)

Álvaro Madrigal (2) / Théo Bourg (3), Erez Ilan, Shlomi Shlomo Miara (2) / Ion Agirretxe (3), Juan José Carazo (2) / Mario Galindo (3)

#### 2 Sombras (Shadows)

Erez Ilan, Shlomi Shlomo Miara (2) / Ion Agirretxe (3)

#### Soldados (Soldiers)

Niccolò Balossini, Felipe Domingos

#### Manuela

Irene Ureña

#### Cigarreras

Martina Giuffrida (2) / Kana Yamaguchi (3), Mariavittoria Muscettola, Ayuka Nitta, Pauline Perraut (2) / Natalia Butragueño (3), Shani Peretz, Laura Pérez Hierro

### Act II

#### Sombras (Shadows)

Niccolò Balossini, Juan José Carazo (2) / Mario Galindo (3), Felipe Domingos, Erez Ilan Álvaro Madrigal (2) / Théo Bourg (3), Benjamin Poirier (2) / Josué Ullate (3), Shlomi Shlomo Miara (2) / Ion Agirretxe (3), Martina Giuffrida (2) / Kana Yamaguchi (3), Mariavittoria Muscettola, Ayuka Nitta, Pauline Perraut (2) / Natalia Butragueño (3), Shani Peretz, Laura Pérez Hierro, Irene Ureña

(2) Dancers performing on Feb 2.

(3) Dancers performing on Feb 3.

Johan Inger was awarded the Benois de la Danse 2016 Prize for his choreography of *Carmen*, created for the CND, and the Venice TV Award 2018.

When Inger was asked to create a new version of *Carmen*, being himself Swedish and *Carmen* a piece with a strong Spanish nature, he faced an enormous challenge. But it was also a great opportunity. The story, witnessed through the eyes of a young watcher, reveals the tale stripped to its mythic and universal elements of passion and violence.

*“There is a certain mystery within this character, it could be any kid, it could be Don José when he was a boy, it could be a young Michaela or Carmen and José’s unborn child. It could even be ourselves, with our very first goodness wounded due to a violent experience that, though brief, has had a negative impact on our lives and our ability to interact with others forever.”*

—Johan Inger



Photo credit: Ariel Cecilo Lemus

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## Johan Inger Choreographer



Photo credit: Bengt Wanselius

The Swede Johan Inger (Stockholm, 1967) had his dance training at the Royal Swedish Ballet School and the National Ballet School in Canada. From 1985 to 1990 he danced with the Royal Swedish Ballet in Stockholm, the last year performing as a soloist. Fascinated by the works of Kylián, Inger was convinced that the next step in his dance career should take him to Nederlands Dans Theater. In 1990 the hour had come. He joined Nederlands Dans Theater I and was a high-profile dancer in this company until 2002.

When Inger tried his hand at Nederlands Dans Theater's annual choreography workshops (now Switch), Jiří Kylián noticed his talent for choreography. After four workshop pieces Inger was asked in 1995 to create his first choreography for Nederlands Dans Theater 2. The resulting *Mellantid* marked his official debut as a choreographer. It was part of the Holland Dance Festival and was immediately a resounding success. It brought him the Philip Morris Finest Selection Award 1996 in the contemporary dance category. In 2001 *Mellantid* was nominated for the Laurence Olivier Award in the best new dance production category.

Johan Inger made his breakthrough as a choreographer in 1995 after a very successful dancing career at the Nederlands Dans Theater. Inger's choreographies have won many prestigious awards. Between 2003 and 2008, he was the artistic director of the Cullberg Ballet, and between 2009 and 2015, he held the position of associate choreographer with NDT. Johan Inger is now an established and renowned choreographer who has shared his works with many dance companies around the world.

Since his debut, Inger has made various works for Nederlands Dans Theater. For his ballets *Dream Play* and *Walking Mad* he received the Lucas Hoving Production Award in 2001. *Walking Mad* as it was later performed by Cullberg Ballet was awarded the Danza & Danza's Award 2005. Inger himself was nominated by the VSCD Dance Panel for the Golden Theatre Dance Prize 2000 and received the Merit Award 2002 of Stichting Dansersfonds '79.

Inger left Nederlands Dans Theater for the artistic leadership of Cullberg Ballet in 2003. Over the following five years he created various pieces for this company. In

the summer of 2008 Inger stopped working as artistic leader for Cullberg Ballet to devote himself entirely to choreography and produced *Position of Elsewhere* (2009) for Cullberg Ballet. In the years 2009 to 2015, Inger became associate choreographer for the Nederlands Dans Theater, creating regularly for both NDT1 and NDT2 (*Dissolve in This*, *Tone Bone Kone*, *I New Then*, *Sunset Logic*, *B.R.I.S.A.*, and *One on One*).

As of 2015, Inger also started to make his own versions of more narrative ballets and created his *Rite of Spring*, *Carmen*, *Peer Gynt*, and *Petruschka*. Inger is now established as an independent choreographer. His works belong to the repertoire of many dance companies over the world such as Nederlands Dans Theatre, Cullberg Ballet, Göteborgs Operans Dans Kompani, Royal Swedish Ballet, Ballett Theatre Basel, Compañía Nacional de Danza, Ballet Staatstheater Nurnberg, Lyon Opera Ballet, and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, among others.

His latest creations include *Swan Lake* for Dresden, *Passing* for Ballet BC, *Dust and Disquete* for Goteborg, *Don Juan* for Atterballetto, *Petruschka* for Les Ballets de Monte Carlo, *Under A Day* for the Lyon Opera Ballet, *Birdland* for Aterballetto, and *Peer Gynt* for Ballett Theater Basel.

Johan Inger has received many awards and in 2016 he was awarded the Benois de la Danse 2016 for his choreography of *Carmen*, originally created for the CND. *Carmen* has also been awarded the Venice TV Award in 2018.



Photo credit: Ariel Cecilio Lemus

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Gregor  
Acuña-Pohl  
*Dramaturge*



Photo credit:  
Alejandro Fidalgo

Trained and educated at the Instituto del Teatro (Seville), the École Philippe Gaulier (London), and the Teatro de la Abadía (Madrid), Gregor Acuña-Pohl has studied under Jacques Lecoq, Friedhelm Grube, Jango Edwards, Leo Bassi, Peter Shub, Antonio Fava, Gabriel Chamé, Hernán Gené, Lluís Pascual, José Carlos Plaza, Alfredo Sanzol, and Ernesto Caballero, among many others. From 1990 he worked as an actor in many companies including La Cuadra de Sevilla, LaAbadía, and the Compañía Nacional de Teatro Clásico.

In 2004, together with actor-singer Ignasi Vidal and choreographer Isabel Vázquez, Gregor founded the Seville Centro de Artes Escénicas, the first musical theatre school in Andalusia. Then, in 2007, the same team created the production group Excéntrica Producciones. His theatrical clown shows, working together with Oriol Boixader, Xevi Casals and Javier Centeno, have won much acclaim. They include *Waiting for Godot* (2012), *Restaurant tú Three* (2008), *Triálogos Clownescos* (2010), and *Fun-Fun-Fun*, all attaining great success in Spain, Italy, Germany, France, and Hong Kong.

As director, Gregor put together the musicals *Happy End* and *Die Dreigroschenoper* by Brecht/Weill, *DJ Tenorio* with music by Cole Porter, *A Chorus Line*, and more. As a dramaturge, he has been working with Swedish choreographer Johan Inger, helping stage the productions *BRISA* (Neederland Dans Theater), *Stabat Mater* (Teatro Maestranza), *Interludio* (Festival Internacional de Danza de Itálica), and more. As a teacher, he has taught in Albacete, Barcelona, Ceuta, Chiclana, Madrid, Malaga, Murcia, Seville, and Temuco (Chile).



Photo credit: Ariel Cecilio Lemus

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Curt Allen  
*Set design*



Curt Allen graduated in scenography and costume design from the Academy of Fine Arts of Munich, Germany in 1991. He has worked as an assistant in the opera houses of Sydney, Zurich, Berlin, Munich, Bogotá, and Augsburg, with teachers such as Filippo San Just, Reinhardt Heinrich, and Peer Boysen among others. Between 1994 and 1998 he became set designer and technical director of the new Fundación Teatro de la Abadía project in Madrid, a project for which he was awarded the National Theater Award from the Ministry of Culture in 1995. He has designed sets and costumes for staging by directors such as Jose Luís Gómez, Gerardo Vera, Ernesto Caballero, Andrés Lima, Alfonso Zurro, Jesús Castejón, Antonio Álamo, Joan Font, Yayo Cáceres, Carlos Vides, Rosario Ruiz, Pepe Ortega, Fernando Romo, Julio Fraga, and Sylvie Nys, among others.

In 2008, together with the architect Leticia Gañán Calvo, she created the architecture and scenography studio deDos, located in Madrid. They currently direct and are professors in the master of scenography at the European Institute of Design in Madrid.

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David Delfín  
*Costume design*



David came to fashion through painting. In 1999, after several individual and group exhibitions and after having worked on paper, canvas, wood, and cardboard, he decided to use second-hand military clothing as a new medium. In them he found a memory, a trace. The names of the people who lived there, grease stains, mending...everything revolved around the thoughts, life, and work of the German artist Joseph Beuys, which included texts written with the left hand. This personal typography has become a recognizable hallmark of his work.

Fashion editors and some emerging catwalks were interested in his work, and he discovered a fascinating medium in which to express his concerns.

In 2001, he created the Davidelfín brand together with Bimba Bosé, the Postigo brothers (Deborah, Gorka, and Diego), a multidisciplinary project where fashion, photography, architecture, and video coexist.

David Delfin passed away in June of 2017.

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Marc Álvarez  
*Additional  
original music*



A music composer originally from Barcelona, Marc Álvarez creates original music scores for theatre, dance, and cinema productions for both the independent and commercial scenes. In 2007, Marc created the music of *El salt de Nijinsky* by choreographer María Rovira for the company Trànsit Dansa (Butaca award for the best dance show) and music of *La niña farola* for the Carmen Roche Ballet, as well as for *La incapacidad de exprimírte* and *Destino/destino*, choreography by Amaya Galeote.

In 2015, Marc was invited by choreographer Johan Inger to compose for his successful piece *Carmen*. Among his pieces for theatre, Marc has been working on *Plataforma* (finalist for the Max Award for best music), *El arte de la entrevista*, *El pintor de batallas*, *Venus*, *El Plan*, *DJ Peepshow*, *El Cabaret de los hombres perdidos* (BroadwayWorld award), and more. Marc is also involved as musical director for *The Opera Locos* (Max Award for the best musical show) with productions in Spain, France, and México. He has been awarded the Bessie Award in 2022 for best sound design/musical composition for *Carmen*, performed at the Joyce Theater in New York in 2022.



Photo credit: Ariel Cecilio Lemus





*Photo credit: Ariel Cecilio Lemus*



To read the biographies of the Compañía Nacional de Danza dancers, please scan the QR code below or visit [cndanza.mca.es](http://cndanza.mca.es).

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Ion Agirretxe  
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BASED ON THE SONGS OF

**STING**

CHOREOGRAPHY

**KATE PRINCE**



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Donor recognition list as of April 11, 2023.

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Robert MacLean  
*Building Operator*  
Ryan Nerona  
*Junior Building Operator*  
Omar Nurse  
*Stage Door Security Supervisor*  
Colin Dyle  
Henry Fernandes  
Margreta Kristiansen  
Pema Lakshey  
Mohammed Shaikh  
Tushar Somani  
Mohuddin Memon  
Reza Moradi  
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*Senior Production Manager*  
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*Production Coordinator*

### **Meridian Hall stage crew**

IATSE Local 58  
Richard Karwat  
*Head Electrician*  
Steve McLean  
*Head Carpenter*  
Marcus Sirman  
*Head of Properties*  
David Baer  
*Assistant Carpenter*

Zsolt Kota  
*Assistant Sound Operator*  
Michael Farkas  
*Assistant Electrician – AV*  
Jason Urbanowicz  
*Assistant Electrician*

### **St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts stage crew**

IATSE Local 58  
Wes Allen  
*Head of Properties,*  
*Bluma Appel Theatre*  
Jay Blencowe  
*Head Carpenter,*  
*Bluma Appel Theatre*  
Giulia D'Amanzo  
*Head Electrician, Bluma Appel*  
*Theatre*  
Benn Hough  
*Head Technician, Jane Mallet*  
*Theatre*  
Keijo Makela  
*Head Sound Technician,*  
*Bluma Appel Theatre*

IATSE Local 822

Susan Batchelor  
*Wardrobe Head,*  
*Bluma Appel Theatre*

### **Meridian Arts Centre stage crew**

IATSE Local 58  
Aaron Dell  
*Head Technician, George Weston*  
*Recital Hall*  
Patrick Hales  
*Assistant Head Technician,*  
*George Weston Recital Hall*  
Grant Primeau  
*Head Technician,*  
*Greenwin Theatre*  
Duncan Morgan  
*Head Technician,*  
*Studio Theatre*  
Ian Parker,  
*Head Technician Lyric Theatre*

# #ArtsStartHere, and it begins with you.

The TO Live Foundation is committed to creating a future where art engages and inspires all Torontonians. A future where all the creative voices of our diverse communities are heard and celebrated. A future where artists have the support they need to experiment and grow.

Visit [tolivefoundation.com](https://tolivefoundation.com) to learn more about how our Foundation is committed to building a better city through the arts.



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**TO Live Foundation**