

# WHOLE WIDE WORLD

*Assembling the program for Whole Wide World has given us an opportunity to break through cultural frameworks to reveal the universal, human impulse inside of our dancing. While we come from different generations and from vastly different techniques of dance, we have worked and studied together, affecting each other's artistic practice for a decade. Whole Wide World brings a collection of our solos - the quintessential expression of both modern dance and classical Indian dance - and the premiere of a newly created duet onto a single program that unifies through contrast. - Peggy Baker and Nova Bhattacharya*

## ***maskura*** (2000)

choreography, performance: Nova Bhattacharya

original music: Ed Hanley

costume: Cheryl Lalonde

lighting: Roelof Peter Snippe

*maskura* is a requiem, offering the hope that what is remembered will never be lost.

## ***Krishna's Mouth*** (2006)

choreography, text and performance: Peggy Baker

music: Karen Tanaka, *The Song of Songs*

cellist on recording: Shauna Rolston

lighting: Marc Parent

costume: Caroline O'Brien

for Ahmed Hassan

The Hindu deities also lived human lives, and there is a story about Lord Krishna as a baby that I love. He's in a garden with his mother and he's crawling on the ground. He grabs a clot of earth and puts it in his mouth. His mother slaps his hand away, and when she reaches in to clean out the dirt, she sees the entire universe in her baby's mouth. PB

## ***Map of the Known World*** (2002)

choreography: Peggy Baker

performance, text: Nova Bhattacharya

original music: Ed Hanley

costume & set design: Caroline O'Brien

lighting: Roelof Peter Snippe

“To be modern is not a fashion, it is a state. It is necessary to understand history, and he who understands history knows how to find continuity between that which was, that which is, and that which will be.”

Le Corbusier, on the definition of ‘modern’

## ***Strand*** (1997)

choreography: Peggy Baker

music: Ann Southam (*Spatial View of Pond*, 1986, revised 1995)

pianist: Ann Southam

costume: Caroline O’Brien

lighting: Marc Parent

***Strand*** was inspired by Ann Southam’s exquisite music and by the autobiographical writing of May Sarton, whose journals eloquently chronicle the way in which minutiae accumulate to fill a lifetime. PB

strand: margin of sea, lake, or river; constituent filament in necklace, hair, DNA; element in any composite whole

## ***Aleatoric Duet No. 1*** (2011)

choreography: Peggy Baker

dancers: Peggy Baker, Nova Bhattacharya

original music: Ben Grossman

lighting: Simon Rossiter

aleatoric; randomly, by chance

Two solos, assembled separately as movement memories from dances created over a span of two decades, reveal unexpected synchronicities and counterpoint when performed simultaneously.

## **for Whole Wide World**

Stage Manager: Jeff Morris

Touring Technical Director: Simon Rossiter

Metcalf Foundation Arts Management Intern: Ellen Bayley

Producer: Meredith Potter Arts Management

Running time: Approximately 70 minutes, no intermission.

There is a pause before the final piece, *Aleatoric Duet No. 1*.

## Artists' Biographies

Born in Edmonton in 1952, **Peggy Baker** was a founding member Dancemakers (Toronto / 1974), toured internationally with Lar Lubovitch's celebrated New York company throughout the 1980s, and joined Mikhail Baryshnikov and Mark Morris for the inaugural season of their White Oak Dance Project. She established Peggy Baker Dance Projects in 1990, her repertoire distinguished from the outset by collaborations with extraordinary creators and performers, including choreographers Paul-André Fortier, James Kudelka, and Doug Varone, and lighting designer Marc Parent. Her commitment to live music has led to artistic alliances with some of Canada's finest composers, musicians and ensembles, including a twenty-year creative relationship with pianist Andrew Burashko. Her company has been presented at major dance venues and festivals across North America, Asia, and Europe. Ms. Baker was director of dance for the Summer Arts Institute of Simon Fraser University from 1991 – 1994, is a frequent guest at the Juilliard School in New York, and is Artist-in-Residence at Canada's National Ballet School (appointed in 1992). She is the recipient of numerous awards including the 2010 Walter Carsen Prize, the Governor General's Award for Lifetime Achievement in the Arts, the Order of Canada, the Order of Ontario, an honorary doctorate from the University of Calgary, and five Dora Mavor Moore Awards. [www.peggybakerdance.com](http://www.peggybakerdance.com)

**Nova Bhattacharya** trained in bharatanatyam with Toronto's Menaka Thakkar and was the first graduate of Nrytyakala, The Canadian Academy of Indian Dance. Post-graduate studies were undertaken with Thakkar as well as with gurus Kalanidhi Narayan and Kitappa Pillai. Her development in contemporary dance has been informed by her ongoing work with Peggy Baker, Sasha Ivanochko and Louis Laberge-Côté and in butoh by Yumiko Yoshioka and Denise Fujiwara. Eager to explore the scope for innovation within the bharatanatyam form, Bhattacharya began choreographing in 1997. Her creations have been characterized as "a contemporary expression of the Bharatanatyam form ... and more" (Vancouver Sun) and have been commissioned by the Canada Dance Festival, Cahoots Theatre Projects, Danceworks, Dusk Dances, Theatre Direct Canada and Toronto Dance Theatre (Four at the Winch). Close partnerships with music creators and performers have been integral to her work, and her collaboration with composer Ed Hanley since 1999, has produced several outstanding works including *maskura* (2000), *Related Fragments Remix* (2009) & *Isolated Incidents* (2010). In 2008 she established Ipsita Nova Dance Projects. With a varied and acclaimed repertoire, which includes creations from Bhattacharya, Peggy Baker, Mika Kurosawa, Dana Gingras, José Navas, Menaka Thakkar, and Laurence Lemieux, the company's productions have been presented by Canada's National Arts Centre (Ottawa), Toronto's Danceworks and Kalanidhi Fine Arts, Vancouver's Dancing on the Edge and Vancouver International Dance Festival, Halifax's Live Art Dance Productions, Tokyo's An Creative and in Germany by fabrik Potsdam and Tanz! Heilbronn. [www.ipsitanovadance.com](http://www.ipsitanovadance.com)

**Ben Grossman** is a musician, composer and improviser living in Guelph, Ontario. Having been exposed to a wide variety of music from a young age, he spent his youth building homemade synthesizers, effects and tape loops and playing electric guitar in his parents' suburban basement and with various groups in various warehouses around Toronto. Through percussion and his interest in non-equal tuning systems, Ben became involved in the study, performance and recording of traditional Turkish, Arabic, Irish, Balkan, and French music.

**Ed Hanley** began his tabla (north Indian classical percussion) training in Toronto with Ritesh Das, and has studied with master drummers Swapan Chaudhuri in California and Anindo Chatterjee in Calcutta, India. Ed has performed across Canada, and in the USA, Europe and India in a variety of world, jazz and classical settings with artists such as vocalist Suba Sankaran, violinist Parmela Attariwala, clarinetist James Campbell, multi-instrumentalists George Koller and Donald Quan, Persian ensemble Mehrvarzan, percussionists Trichy Sankaran, Rick Lazar and Vasudevan Rajalingam, flautist Ron Allen, Hindustani vocalist Vinayak Pathak and ensembles including autorickshaw, The Toronto Tabla Ensemble, The Penderecki Quartet and Jane Bunnett and the Spirits of Havana. His work can be heard on a number of recordings and soundtracks. Ed has composed, produced, and engineered a number of compositions for dance and film out of his own studio, and has co-produced two autorickshaw albums with Suba Sankaran, including the critically acclaimed, JUNO nominated *Four Higher*.

Born in Toronto, **Jeff Morris** attended Claude Watson School for the Performing Arts as a music and theatre major. Following high school, he studied technical theatre production and administration at the Ryerson Theatre School, pursuing a growing interest in stage management for dance. After leaving Ryerson, he worked as Production Stage Manager for Toronto Dance Theatre (1990 – 1995), Production Manager for *Dancers For Life* (AIDS Committee of Toronto, 1991 - 1997), Stage Manager for Theatre Passe-Muraille (*Never Swim Alone*, *Metamorphosis of a Shadow*), the Fringe Festival of Independent Dance Artists (fFIDA), in addition to stage managing for a broad range of Toronto's independence dance artists. In 1995 he joined the National Ballet of Canada, and has since been Stage Manager for a wide range of the company's classical and contemporary repertoire, including world premieres of Jean-Pierre Perreault's *Comforts of Solitude* and James Kudelka's *The Four Seasons*, *Cinderella*, and *An Italian Straw Hat*.

A native of Ireland, **Caroline O'Brien** has nurtured a passion for textiles from an early age. The simple elegance of her work and her intrinsic ability to enhance the lines of the dancer and the mood of the dance can be seen in her design collaborations with numerous national and international choreographers including James Kudelka, Yvonne Ng, John Neumeier, Dominique Dumais and Sabrina Matthews, as well as several works with Matjash Mrozewski. In addition to designing for the stage, Caroline is an award-winning sculptor and is frequently sought after for original creations in evening attire. She is an associate professor at Ryerson Theatre School and is currently engaged in postgraduate research at the National College of Art and Design in Dublin. Caroline O'Brien regularly collaborates with Peggy Baker, and since 1988 has designed numerous costumes for works in her repertoire.

**Marc Parent** has worked as a lighting designer for more than 25 years, and has created more than one hundred designs. A specialist in design for contemporary dance, he has worked with choreographers both in Canada and abroad. Marc

has lit most of Peggy Baker's solo work, and has designed for Danièle Desnoyers, Daniel Léveillé, José Navas, as well as many other choreographers connected to Montreal's contemporary dance scene. He has also frequently designed for theatre, notably for directors Denis Marleau, François Girard, and Martin Faucher, and in 2005 was nominated for two Masque awards by the Académie québécoise du théâtre. He is currently resident lighting designer for Les grands ballets canadiens de Montréal. As a self-taught designer, Marc has earned popular and critical recognition around the world for his exceptional works.

**Simon Rossiter** has lit more than thirty productions with a variety of companies and individuals, including Canadian Children's Dance Theatre, the Crazyfish Collective, the Classical Theatre Project, D.A. Hoskins, Event Horizon Dance, Inklings Theatre, Mammalian Diving Reflex, Oakridge Musical Theatre, ProArteDanza, the School of Toronto Dance Theatre, Lacey Smith, Darryl Tracy, Toronto Youth Theatre, urban ink, and has assisted on productions with the Grand Theatre London, Mirvish Productions, Opera Atelier, and théâtre français de Toronto.

After studies with Samuel Dolin (composition) at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto and with Pierre Souvairan (piano) and Gustav Ciamaga (electronic music) 1960-3 at the University of Toronto, **Ann Southam** began teaching at the Royal Conservatory of Music in 1966. Her association with the New Dance Group of Canada (later Toronto Dance Theatre) began in 1967, and she became composer-in-residence in 1968. She composed many electronic scores for this company, and for other dance companies and choreographers. In 1977, with Diana McIntosh, she helped to create Music Inter Alia, which promoted Winnipeg new music concerts until 1991. Southam was a member of the Canadian League of Composers; and a founding member, first president (1980-8), life member (2002) and honorary president (2007) of the Association of Canadian Women Composers. She was a sponsor for new music events, including The Excentricities (1998) concert featuring women composers; the Arraymusic Young Composers' Workshop; and Continuum Contemporary Music. She was an associate of the Canadian Music Centre, which named its recording collection the Ann Southam Digital Audio Archive. She received the Friends of Canadian Music Award in 2002. Ms. Southam died in Toronto, November 26, 2010.

**Roelof Peter Snippe** began his lighting design career with Toronto Workshop Productions under the direction of George Luscombe. He went on to enjoy a long working relationship with Toronto Dance Theatre creating designs for over 150 works in their repertoire. His many other credits include original designs for the Danny Grossman Dance Company, Dancemakers, Kaeja d' Dance, Denise Fujiwara, Tedd Robinson and Claudia Moore. Over the past 35 years Ron's work as a Lighting Designer, Stage Manager and Tour Coordinator has taken him to national and international festivals across Canada, throughout Europe, Central and South America and Asia.

**Karen Tanaka** is acclaimed as one of the leading living composers from Japan. She has been invited as a composer in residence at many important festivals, and her music has been widely performed throughout the world by the major orchestras, ensembles, international festivals and on radio. She has composed extensively for both instrumental and electronics media. "Her music is delicate and emotive, beautifully crafted, showing a refined ear for both detail and large organic shapes..." The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians. Karen Tanaka currently lives in Santa Barbara, California.

# DanceSpeak

Saturday, Feb. 5, 2011 at 7:30 p.m. & Sunday, Feb. 6, 2011 at 2:30 p.m.

Sullivan Mahoney Courthouse Theatre, Downtown St. Catharines

*\*All ticket holders are invited to remain in the theatre for a post-show discussion with Jon Eben Field.*

When I read that as a young person Peggy Baker liked to dance in the rain, I knew I had to ask her about what that experience meant. In response, she described how the rain “brought the awareness of the inside and the outside world together and then the world beyond that” in a way that combined “many different levels of awareness, movement, imagination, sensuality, space, and a sense of the contour and volumetric shape of my body.” Peggy is not only one of the most acclaimed contemporary dancers of her generation, she is also remarkably gifted at communicating the experience of dance. While performing in St. Catharines, Peggy Baker will share the stage with Nova Bhattacharya, a dancer whose performances are deeply informed by her training in bharatanatyam (a style of classical Indian dance), collaboration with contemporary choreographers, and explorations into contemporary movement vocabularies. Both Baker and Bhattacharya work primarily as solo performers and are therefore aware of how their practice develops a heightened connection with audience members because of immediacy. There is literally no one else to look at. Also, they also both deliberately present the dancing body as a space for concentrated dialogue about what it means to be human.

Nova Bhattacharya trained initially with Menaka Thakker, one of the early ambassadors of bharatanatyam in Canada in the 1970s, and she remembers her as a “vivacious, vibrant, and compelling performer.” Although the classical bharatanatyam repertoire is connected with devotional elements of Hinduism and theatrically enacts “stories of gods and goddesses,” Bhattacharya tries to “engage the audience in taking a journey with her” as a performer. As she says, “to be able to enter into a theatre and empty your mind of those things (like visa bills, and garbage, and friends who aren’t doing well) and go with somebody is very spiritual.” In her work, Nova Bhattacharya accomplishes this journey by connecting the abstract and narrative components of her art. She points out that “for the dance to really connect with an audience, a dancer can’t just be waving their arms around, there has to be something going on for them internally.” This internal process is a type of inner narrative that allows the dancer to use their body to communicate, even if done through “abstract, strange movements.”

Although Peggy Baker has received the Order of Canada, the 2009 Governor General’s Award for Lifetime Artistic Achievement, and

residence at the National Ballet of Canada since 1992, she is remarkably grounded and down to earth about her practice and art. She believes that “one of the pleasures of dance is being able to witness another person’s body in its totality.” She has been dancing long enough that she is “pretty unselfconscious” with her body, and so invites the eye of the viewer. As audience members, we are welcomed into the space of the performance and encouraged to watch the dancer’s body as it moves. We are invited to make sense of what we see. As she says, “we all become more aware of our bodies when we watch another person dance, of what we are empathizing with and what we are drawn to. We are watching with our eyes and listening with our ears, but somehow we take it in with our whole person and body.” As a dancer, Baker keeps open the “spontaneous and intuitive levels of dancing” while “being very directed inside the vocabulary of the dance.” Dancing this way becomes a “harmonized integration that requires a dropping away of everything else outside of it and an absolute concentration on the demands of entering into the action.”

Peggy Baker will open the show by performing *Krishna’s Mouth*, a piece set to music by the composer Karen Tanaka. The music deeply affected Baker when she first heard it, and she decided to enter the studio with no limits set in her mind in terms of movement or ideas. As her improvisation developed into choreography, she realized while she danced that she was reciting the story about Lord Krishna as a baby. Although initially an inner narrative, the story became an explicitly voiced aspect of the choreography. This performance will set an interesting tone as we will see “a middle-aged modern dancer of European descent doing a piece of contemporary choreography in which is told a story from the Hindu tradition.”

In Nova Bhattacharya’s *maskura*, the storytelling and abstract elements of *bharatnatyam* are explicitly combined. Set to music by Toronto tabla player Ed Hanley, this piece focuses on “physical patterns, rhythmic footwork, and connections to the music” that bring together both the abstract and expression-based sides of Bhattacharya’s choreography. This work demonstrates how she works in and through her classical Indian training, while also pushing the boundaries of her form. Bhattacharya will also perform *Map of the Known World*, a piece of choreography Baker made for her, which is “mysterious” and explores the “*bharatanatyam* form from a contemporary aesthetic.” Bhattacharya sees the possibility of deeply human communication in dance because “the human form and experience are intrinsically connected, and no matter where you live and who you are, there is something at the core with which we can all connect.” Her strikingly direct and conscious choreography opens a door into a dance world that is defining itself in this performance.

Baker will also perform *Strand*, a restrained piece set to a hauntingly beautiful piano piece by Canadian feminist composer Ann Southam. Baker's body creates a flow of evocative, subtle, and elegant movements which elicit deep emotional resonances that range from comfort to shock, while remaining recognizable as day-to-day bodily expressions. The programme will conclude with the world premiere of *Aleatoric Duet #1*. In this piece, both dancers simultaneously perform solo choreography from different works by Baker that, in their juxtaposition, intersection, and overlapping, explore "proximity and perspective" on the stage.

Peggy Baker recently came to St. Catharines to demonstrate and speak about her practice. When I watched her dance, I was unprepared for how extraordinarily expressive her body is when she moves and how she evokes powerful, near primal, emotions with the most subtle gestures. She displays a phenomenal ease in her body as she dances, which allows her to communicate a very wide range of meaning. I felt that she is completely herself while she dances, as if somehow through years of practice, performance, and patience, her art and her person have become synonymous. When I asked Bhattacharya how she felt about dancing with Baker, she said, "The first thing that popped into my mind was to say, 'It's been a dream.'" Then she went on, "But you don't even dream that you're going to get to share a programme with somebody like Peggy Baker." And yet they are coming together in St. Catharines to share their experiences, art, and movement as meaningful explorations of the human form with us.

Written by independent, writer and editor Jon Eben Field.  
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