



CENTRE NATIONAL DES ARTS
NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE

Le Canada en scène. Canada is our stage.

THRESHOLD

Le Patin Libre



STUDY GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

NAC 2018-2019 DANCE SEASON

Cathy Levy, Executive Producer, Dance

LE PATIN LIBRE

THRESHOLD

NAC Dance ~ Student Matinee

Date: Friday, May 10, 2019

Running Time: 1:00 pm – 2:05 pm (65 minutes)
Includes a 15 minute intermission

Location: Minto Skating Centre
2571 Lancaster Road, Ottawa

Choreography: **Le Patin Libre** (Alexandre Hamel,
Pascale Jodoin, Samory Ba,
Jasmin Boivin, Taylor Dilley)

Performers: Alexandre Hamel, Pascale Jodoin,
Samory Ba, Jasmin Boivin,
Taylor Dilley

Dramaturg: Ruth Little

Music: Jasmin Boivin

Costumes: Pascale Jodoin

Lighting Co-Designers: Lucy Carter, Sean Gleason

Technical Director
and Sound Designer: David Babin

Co-Producers: **National Arts Centre**
Danse Danse
Dance Umbrella, UK
Théâtre de la Ville de Paris
Nuits de Fourvière de Lyon

BIOGRAPHIES

Alexandre Hamel – Founder, Artistic Director, Choreographer, Skating Artist

Alexandre Hamel was first trained as a traditional figure skater. He competed on the international circuit, received the bronze medal at the Canadian Figure Skating Championships in 1998, accumulated three provincial champion titles, was on the Junior Canadian National team between 1998 and 2000, and won medals in Holland, Croatia, and the US. He also performed professionally for Disney on Ice. Hamel founded Le Patin Libre in 2005, eager to use his passion for skating outside the constraints of competition and “on ice” show-business. He still directs the company, while staying involved as always with performance and creation. He is very committed to the importance of sharing contemporary performing arts with general audiences.

Pascale Jodoin – Choreographer, Skating Artist, Tour Director

Pascale Jodoin was first trained as a traditional figure skater and performed as a circus artist. Her free-spirited attitude kept her away from the strict canvas imposed on young figure-skating women. She joined Le Patin Libre in 2009 after seeing a performance, auditioning, participating in workshops offered by the founding artists, and dancing in underground ice parties organized by the collective.

Jasmin Boivin – Composer, Musical Director, Choreographer, Skating Artist

Classical cellist and electro-acoustic composer Jasmin Boivin was first hired as a DJ for Le Patin Libre before starting to compose soundtracks for the group. In 2011, during a creation residency with the company, he began to develop his own ice-dancing style, combining his skills as an amateur hockey player and his interest in social and urban dances. With his clashing hockey skates, he was integrated into the performance and creation team while still composing the soundtracks and acting as musical director.

Samory Ba – Choreographer, Skating Artist

Born in France, near Paris, Samory was trained as a traditional figure skater. After performing for various ice shows, including Holiday on Ice, he chose to quit this industry and a well-paid position to take a huge gamble, as the collective was still precarious: joining Le Patin Libre, He has had an important influence on the company’s creations.

Taylor Dilley – Choreographer, Skating Artist

Taylor Dilley was trained as an ice dancer and competed on the national scene in Canada. He worked as a professional ice-dance partner, dancing with amateur female figure skaters. He joined Le Patin Libre in 2011 while he was in France, where the collective was involved in a creation residency. In a preceding career, he was also a Kung-Fu world champion. His passion for martial arts brings a special influence to his skating style and his involvement in the creation and performance team of Le Patin Libre.

ABOUT LE PATIN LIBRE

Le Patin Libre was founded in 2005 by Alexandre Hamel, then a retiring professional figure skater and fine arts university student. The group's first performances were modestly offered on frozen ponds, during the traditional winter carnivals organized by most cities and villages in Québec.

Over a period of 10 years, the performance group grew into a mature company creating what many now describe as contemporary dance on ice. Support from many of the most respected dance institutions in the world (Dance Umbrella Festival in London, UK; Sadler's Wells Theatre in London, Théâtre de la Ville de Paris, Canada's National Arts Centre, and others) has enabled Le Patin Libre to develop its unique style based on the amazing choreographic possibilities of glide.

Glide allows the human body to move through space while being liberated from walking, running, crawling, and other natural gestures. It's an impressive "magic," creating a unique sensation for onlookers and performers alike.

While maintaining an intense touring schedule, Le Patin Libre is very involved in its local community in Montreal. The artists generously organize many activities that transform ice rinks into vibrant community centres opened to all where they are able to joyfully gather sport fans, general audiences, and artistic audiences. The company carries this positive community commitment abroad with the help of its international partners.

An art or a sport?

What we do looks a bit like skating competitions at the Olympic Games and the shows "On Ice". But, it's mostly very different!

What we do is athletic and very difficult. However, we don't say it's a sport! Sports involve competitions where victory is measured objectively (seconds, goals, metres).

With our projects, we seek beauty and the expression of ideas. It's impossible to evaluate this work with quantified measures. Our work needs to be appreciate subjectively: with one's feelings and tastes. Therefore, we commit to the position that our skating is not a sport. It's an art.0

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

For your students to have the best experience possible, we have prepared a small outline of what is expected of them as audience members. As a teacher bringing your students to a performance, please keep in mind that you are responsible for the behaviour of your students.

- ❖ Bring your sweater! Seating is located on the ice.
- ❖ Arrive approximately half an hour before show time to get settled in to enjoy the show.
- ❖ At the end of the show, there will be a Q&A that will last for 15 minutes. Students will be invited to ask questions.
- ❖ Performers on ice rely on the audience for the energy to perform. Audiences need to be quiet, attentive and respectful in order to help create the magic of live performance.
- ❖ Performers can see and hear everything that you do, just as you can see and hear everything that they do, so:
 - Please save your snacks, drinks, candies and gum for another time – the ice rink is not a place for eating and drinking.
 - Please don't leave your seat once the performance has started. It's distracting to those on the ice.
 - Be sure to ask your students to turn off their cell phones and anything that beeps.
 - Please note that you can't take pictures or film the performance.
 - Please discuss what you like and dislike about the performance – but definitely do it after you leave the arena, not during the performance.
- ❖ Ask your students to go to the bathroom before the show. They will also be able to go during the intermission.
- ❖ The running time is 25 minutes, an intermission of 15 minutes, and then another 25 minutes.
- ❖ Dancers love to have their performance acknowledged by your applause, but remember to wait until the whole piece is over.

CANADA'S NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE

Created by the Parliament of Canada as a Centennial project during the 1960s, the National Arts Centre raised its curtains for the first time in 1969.

Today the NAC collaborates with artists and arts organizations across Canada to help create a national stage for the performing arts, and acts as a catalyst for performance, creation and learning across the country.

A home for Canada's most creative artists, the NAC strives to be artistically adventurous in each of its programming streams — the NAC Orchestra, Dance, English Theatre, French Theatre and NAC Presents.

The NAC's *National Creation Fund* invests up to \$3 million of privately raised funds every year in 15 to 20 ambitious new works by Canadian artists and arts organizations from across Canada. The NAC is at the forefront of youth and educational activities, offering artist training, programming, and national programs to support children, youth, teachers and emerging artists in communities across Canada.

The NAC is also a pioneer in new media, showcasing the performing arts across the country through the Kipnes Lantern, the largest transparent LED installation in North America; using technology to teach students and young artists around the globe; creating top-rated podcasts; and providing a wide range of NAC Orchestra concerts on demand. The NAC is the only bilingual, multidisciplinary performing arts centre in Canada, and one of the largest in the world.

The NAC is home to four different performance spaces, each with its own unique characteristics.



HOW TO WATCH A PERFORMANCE

Each person watching may have very different interpretations about what they saw and how they felt. All are valid. Mental understanding is not the key in contemporary dance. Rather than trying to understand intellectually what is going on, instead, relax, take a few deep breaths, then open your body and mind to the dance. You needn't struggle to find a "message". Sometimes a performance just leaves you with a vague feeling, like an abstract painting or jazz improvisation.

At the Performance study:

- ∞ The movement and emotions expressed by the performers;
- ∞ How the performers use the space;
- ∞ Your own moods in response to the show — excitement, anxiety, curiosity, frustration, amazement, sadness;
- ∞ The combination of patterns and shapes on the ice;
- ∞ The relationship between movements, sound, set and costumes.

Questions to contemplate:

- ∞ How does the piece make me feel?
- ∞ Do I recognize any of the gestures or symbols used by the performers?
- ∞ Does the piece remind me of moments or events in my own life?
- ∞ What thoughts, ideas or images emerge for me?
- ∞ What meaning is there for me from this experience?

Remember, in understanding contemporary dance — and, in this case contemporary dance on ice — **there are no rules.**

APPRECIATING CONTEMPORARY DANCE

The best way to appreciate contemporary dance is without expectations, without judgment. Think of it as your own personal adventure. The combination of movement, gesture, costume, and music all work together to take you on a journey. The adventure begins the moment you sit down. Just as when you go traveling, you may experience many different “landscapes” throughout a single dance performance. And remember, you, the audience, are an essential part of the performance. Without you there the show would not come to life.

Live theatrical performance is different than watching a movie. Don't expect the same experience. A contemporary dance show may or may not have a narrative, a storyline. The piece may be about shape, form and bodies moving through space – think of it similarly to how you would an abstract sculpture at the art gallery or of music.

As an audience member, you may feel you don't understand what you're watching. You're not alone. To avoid frustration and embarrassment because they don't “get it”, many people close themselves off to dance completely. However, they miss out on how dance can be exciting, thought-provoking, creative and enriching. Dance can make you see and think about yourself and the world in new ways.

The key is not to pressure yourself with trying to find “the meaning”. There is no right or wrong interpretation. Whether or not a dance performance suits your particular tastes, if you are open to the experience, you will get something from it.

All in all, enjoying a contemporary dance performance is quite simple: be open to new experiences, and let your intuition and your emotions guide you. Be open and receptive to what you are seeing. Let yourself go: experience the different emotions, mental pictures and impressions the dance calls up in you. The key is not to pressure yourself. The truth is, you really can relax. There is no right or wrong interpretation.