

# SKY DANCERS

A'NÓ:WARA DANCE THEATRE | KAHNAWAKE



Photo: Brian Medina

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**HARBOURFRONTCENTRE.COM**

## ABOUT SKY DANCERS

A visually stunning dance piece exploring the impacts of the Quebec Bridge disaster of 1907, which killed 33 Mohawk ironworkers from the community of Kahnawake. When the bridge collapsed while under construction, it caused a wave of after-effects that stretched out to the whole world. It is a universal story that touches on themes of disaster, families, community, resilience and building bridges between people and generations. Using both contemporary and traditional practices, a direct descendant of this disaster, Barbara Kaneratonni Diabo, brings the past to the present in a way that will enthral audiences and deepen understanding of Indigenous people's history.

**65 MINUTES | NO INTERMISSION**

**"Telling our stories through art is important and follows a long tradition that is still growing. Honouring my ancestors' path, looking forward to future generations, and understanding and exploring different perspectives, for me, is key to evolution. My goals are to inspire others, encourage cultural pride, uplift the spirit, and increase education and communication. Many things have hindered our bodies and spirit, but I choose to dance freely."**

**– Barbara Kaneratonni Diabo**

## Biographies

### BARBARA KANERATONNI DIABO CHOREOGRAPHER & DANCER

Barbara is Kanien'keha:ka (Mohawk)/mixed heritage from Kahnawake and lives in Tiohtià:ke/Montreal. An award-winning choreographer and dancer for over 30 years, she was awarded the prestigious Prix de la Danse de Montreal category Interprète (dancer) in 2021. She highlights Indigenous themes and perspectives by combining powwow, Haudenosaunee dance, and other contemporary styles. Barbara has performed across Canada and internationally, including at the Banff Centre, National Arts Centre, Confederation Centre for the Arts, Place-des-Arts and Prismatic Arts Festival. She also works with various organizations to help to educate, create safe spaces and support Indigenous artists. Her goals are to inspire others, encourage cultural pride, uplift the spirit and increase communication.



Photo: Emily Jamnik

### GREGG PARKS CREATIVE PRODUCER

Gregg Parks toured the world widely as an onstage performer before turning his focus on production. Since then, Parks has had extensive experience managing, directing and producing for diverse cultural organizations. Whether establishing a new performing arts festival, leading the development of international museums or creating award-winning performing arts productions that tour globally, Parks has accumulated a wealth of experience and success. Currently, he directs the operations of Y2D Productions Inc., a Montreal-based production company that continues to develop original shows and tour them internationally.

### ANDY MORO SET / VIDEO / LIGHTING DESIGN

Andy Moro is a video / lighting multidisciplinary artist.

Presently Andy Moro co-directs the Indigenous Activism Arts organization ARTICLE 11 with partner Tara Beagan. ARTICLE 11 recently premiered Beagan's Deer Woman, designed and directed by Moro, at the Kia Mau Festival in Wellington (NZ) and the Sydney Festival, followed by a run at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival's Indigenous Contemporary Scene/Selfconscious Productions' Canada Hub and the Arts Centre Melbourne.

Moro most recently designed Beagan's Ministry of Grace for the Belfry Theatre in Victoria, Ian Ross' The Third Colour for Prairie Theatre Exchange, Natalie Sappier's Finding Wolastoq Voice, the Dancers of Damelahamid's Minowin, and Marie Clements' Unnatural and Accidental Women at the National Arts Centre Indigenous Theatre's Inaugural Festival. He has collaborated extensively with Santee Smith's Kahawi Dance Theatre. Moro is currently developing a series of autobiographical performance/video sculptural installations. The ROOM series has been installed site-specifically at the Arts Commons in Calgary and the historic 'Aud' Hotel in rural Nanton, Alberta.

### MICHAEL TEKARONHIANEKEN DIABO MUSIC COMPOSER

Michael Diabo is a Mohawk composer, arranger, musician and ukulele fanatic from Dartmouth, NS. He was nominated for a Genie Award for Best Canadian Soundtrack and won the Atlantic Film Festival Craft Award for the Thom Fitzgerald film Beefcake. Diabo's work has been nominated for several Indigenous Music awards. As the leader and songwriter for the internationally acclaimed trio Urban Surf Kings, many of his songs are licensed for use in television, film, commercials and the web. These include the YTV series 15Love, the feature film Gidget: the Accidental Icon, MTV's Ridiculousness and others. He continues to work at creating music that combines traditional and modern music.

### ARIK PIPESTEM HOOP COACH

A Arik Pipestem is a First Nations performer, dancer and choreographer. As a world-renown artist, he has had the pleasure of collaborating and performing alongside many companies, in media and with artists, including Taboo (Black Eyed Peas), the Calgary Flames, So You Think You Can Dance, Cirque du Soleil: TOTEM, Kahawi dance theatres: Transmigration, The Chimera Project: Bears, Stars and Trees and the A'NÓ:WARA Dance Theatre's Sky Dancers. Pipestem has broadened his performance to other forms of media, including video and film, including Hey Viktor! (2022), DREEZUS- Red Winter (2016) and Shaun Frank-Together (2021). As an esteemed First Nations hoop dancer, Pipestem continues to research new and innovative ways to explore hoop dance through dance productions. These works include The Hole in the Sky (2018), Crux (2015) and TradCirque (2013).

### JEFF CHIEF COSTUME DESIGN

Jeff Chief is Cree from Onion Lake First Nation on Treaty 6 territory in Saskatchewan and currently lives in Saskatoon. Chief has been a costume stitcher, cutter and designer in theatres across Canada. His recent design credits include Flush (La Troupe du Jour), Cottagers and Indians (Persephone Theatre), The Gift (GTNT), Life Here: The Refugee Project (Belfry Theatre), Being After Hockey (La Troupe du Jour), Ahtoyakwin 4 (the Crossing Theatre), Ministry of Grace (Belfry Theatre), Kronborg: The Hamlet Rock Musical (Confederation Centre of the Arts), Honour Beat (Theatre Calgary), Hedda Noir (Theatre NorthWest), Le Wild West Show de Gabriel Dumont (National Arts Centre) and Ipperwash (Blyth Festival).

### MC SNOW MAKE-UP DESIGN

MC Snow is an interdisciplinary artist from Kahnawake. Snow is currently creating sculptures for the city of Montreal and sits on the board of the Biennale d'Art Contemporain Autochtone (BACA).

### OLIVIER ARSENEAULT DANCER

After obtaining his bachelor's degree in architecture in 2007, Olivier Arseneault opted for a career in the field of dance. With a diverse background, ranging from folk dance to classical ballet through tango and capoeira, he stands out for his very physical, even acrobatic contribution and a particular sensitivity to partner work in percussive dance. At the same time, Arseneault works in front of and behind the camera on numerous artistic projects.

### DANIELA CARMONA SÁNCHEZ DANCER

Daniela Carmona Sánchez is a dancer interested in syncretism, cultural practices in dance, literature, popular narratives and dance theatre. A graduate of the National School of Contemporary and Classic Dance in Mexico (INBA), Sánchez also obtained a scholarship for a workshop by the Institute Limón of New York in Los Angeles. She danced for Barro Rojo Arte Escénico (Mexico) from 2014 to 2018 in Mexico, Colombia, EUA and Africa. Sánchez participated in Carmen (Opera de Montreal), in the Festival Quartiers Danses (2019-2020 A'NÓ:WARA Dance Theatre) and the festival Servi au Volant (Quebec). Currently, she is working on projects with Indigenous women choreographers with the A'NÓ:WARA Dance Theatre and Red Sky.

### SEBASTIAN "BASH" HIRTENSTEIN DANCER

Sebastian "Bash" Hirstenstein's captivating versatility, unshakable fearlessness and endearing qualities in performance have allowed him to work with a broad spectrum of choreographers and companies like BouchardDanse, Addy Chan, Michael Caldwell, the Canadian Opera Company, Emilio Collalillo, Lenny de la Pena, Barbara Kaneratonni Diabo, Rodney Diverlus, the Dietrich Group, Scott Fordham, Gadgety, the Kahawi Dance Theatre, Little Pear Garden Dance Company, Jennifer Nichols, Kevin Ormsby, Red Sky Performance, Jennifer Thiessen and Kylie Thompson. As a Toronto-based artist, Hirstenstein is ecstatic to be a part of Sky Dancers!

### LAUREN ASHLEY JILES DANCER

Lou Lou La Duchesse de Rière, aka Lauren Jiles, is an Afro-Indigenous internationally renowned neo-burlesque dancer hailing from the Mohawk territory of Kahnawake, Quebec. She began her burlesque career in 2005 and has since headlined shows across North America and Europe.

She has been thrice voted into the Burlesque Top 50 by 21st Century Burlesque and crowned the New Orleans Queen of Burlesque in 2018 and holds titles at the 2019 Burlesque Hall of Fame. She has also contributed to the world of contemporary dance as a company dancer with the A'NÓ:WARA Dance Theatre (formed by renowned Mohawk dancer Barbara Diabo).

### KEENAN SIMIK KOMAKSIUTIKSAK DANCER

Keenan Simik Komaksiutiksak is a Two Spirit Inuk artist from Rankin Inlet, Nunavut. Their passion for dance emerged early and later gravitated towards dance and circus arts. Komaksiutiksak is a contemporary dancer and circus artist who has travelled to over 40 countries performing as a dancer and circus artist on AIDA cruises. A few of their show highlights include Sept moment du Joie with Cirque Éloize, dancing for Taboo on the Black Eyed Peas at the North American Indigenous Games, joining the Sky Dancers tour with the Anó:WARA Dance Theatre and the tour A Lest Du Nod with Nadere Arts.

### OLIVER KOOMSATIRA DANCER

Oliver Koomsatira has performed 1,300 times in 250 dance, theatre, film and TV productions, reaching 500,000 spectators across Canada, the United States and Europe. His screenwork also got 10 million audience members. Dance credits include PPS Dance (Co-production Danse Danse), NIGHTLIGHT - Gerse Stamos (Agora de la Danse), Willi Dorner (FTA), Fleuve-Espace Danse (Quartiers Danses/La Rotonde), Danse Sursaut (Festival des Arts de Saint-Sauveur), Ballet Ouest (Festival International Danse Encore) and La Toumente (Tangente). Koomsatira is the recipient of The Elsa Bolam Award (2008) in recognition of Outstanding Achievement by an Emerging Theatre Artist and MyTheatre's Outstanding Ensemble Award 2015 (Banana Boys - Factory Theatre).

### SABRINA PIPESTEM DANCER

At six years old, Sabrina Pipestem started in the ballroom, competing in ten ballroom dances and salsa, bachata and kizomba. She has a background in circus. Her previous projects include teaching Dominican bachata at the 2017 Ritmo Cuba international dance festival, partnering up with the Woezo Africa Music & Dance Theatre and Creaternity joined an exploration piece called Hole in the Sky, which merged contemporary and hoop dancing. Her current projects include dancing with the Anó:WARA Dance Theatre Dance on Tour. These days, her focus is on contemporary dance and hoop dancing.

### CLAIRE BOURDIN PRODUCTION COORDINATOR

Claire Bourdin is a Montréal-based stage manager, production coordinator and sound designer supporting pieces with equity, inclusivity and diversity of representation at their core. She is thankful for her current opportunities managing the premiere tour of In My Body (BBOYIZM/Crazy Smooth, Spring 2022), coordinating the world premiere exhibition of DIVINA DALI (La Girafe en feu, Summer/Fall 2021) and sound designing Justin Eddy and the Great Cosmic Crisis (dir. Murdoch Schon, Doorstep Theatre, Fall 2021). Bourdin thanks the Anó:WARA Dance Theatre for folding her into the group and sharing this story with audiences across Turtle Island.

## Special Thanks

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## SKY DANCERS

**CONCEPT, CHOREOGRAPHY**  
Barbara Kaneratonni Diabo

**CREATIVE PRODUCER**  
Gregg Parks

**SET, VIDEO, LIGHTING DESIGN**  
Andy Moro

**COMPOSER**  
Michael Tekaronhianeken Diabo

**COSTUME DESIGN**  
Jeff Chief

**MAKE-UP DESIGN**  
MC Snow

**LIGHTING DESIGN**  
Aurora Torok

**VIDEO, SOUND DIRECTOR**  
Samuel Boucher

**PRODUCTION COORDINATOR**  
Claire Bourdin

**Dancers**  
Olivier Arseneault, Daniela Carmona Sánchez, Barbara Kaneratonni Diabo, Sebastian "Bash" Hirstenstein, Lauren Ashley Jiles, Keenan Simik Komaksiutiksak, Oliver Koomsatira, Sabrina Pipestem

**REHEARSAL DIRECTOR**  
Olivier Arseneault

**HOOP COACH**  
Arik Pipestem

**PARKOUR COACH**  
Téodor Tanase

**OUTSIDE EYE**  
Mary Francis Moore

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Marah Braye

**CHIEF PROGRAMMING OFFICER**  
Iris Nemani

**PERFORMING ARTS**  
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Nathalie Bonjour

**CO-CURATOR, JUNIOR FESTIVAL**  
Mary Francis Moore

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Tyler Shaw, Amy Hunter

**ASSISTANT PRODUCER**  
Erica May

**COMPANY MANAGER**  
Rosie Driscoll

**FESTIVAL ASSISTANT**  
Devon Harvist

**PRODUCTION**  
**DIRECTOR**  
Jamie Rodriguez

**PRODUCTION MANAGER, THEATRES**  
LJ Savage

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**MANAGER, VISITOR SERVICES**  
Christopher Hackett

**ASSISTANT MANAGER, VISITOR SERVICES**  
Ian McNulty

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Saskia Rinkoff

**COORDINATOR, VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT**  
Lily Stafford

**HOSPITALITY COORDINATOR**  
Jane Angus

**FLECK DANCE THEATRE**  
**HEAD ELECTRICIAN**  
Allan Day

**STAGE CARPENTER**  
Jackson Sayliss

**AUDIO ENGINEER**  
Phil Clemo

**FLYPERSON**  
Rob Martin

Stage Technicians at the Fleck Dance Theatre are represented by Local 58 of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Technicians, Artists and Allied Crafts of the United States, its territories, and Canada.

**THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS!**

