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**BOUGE  
DE LÀ**

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DANSE JEUNE PUBLIC

PRESENTS

**THE 26 LETTER DANCE**

**PRESS KIT**

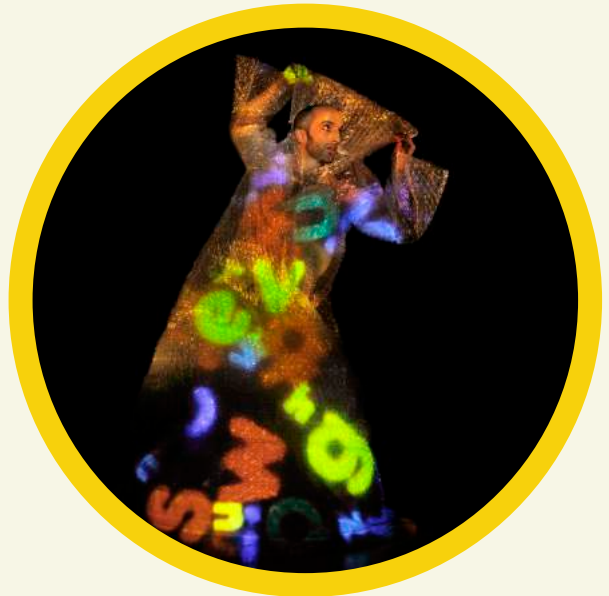
# THE 26 LETTER DANCE

An interactive, multidisciplinary alphabet primer, *The 26 Letter Dance* is a journey into the world of letters and words. Physically and intellectually engaged in the piece, the young spectator is an active participant in this kaleidoscope rich in colours and textured dance.

In this bold and playful work, choreographer H  l  ne Langevin invites children to take part in a unique experience in which they not only see a dance performance but actively *participate* in the various tableaux that punctuate the piece—loosely structured miniatures. The show gets underway with A of course, with Z the last to take his leave. In between, the letters in this alphabet book embody a plethora of words, meanings, emotions and tones of voice.

*The 26 Letter Dance* is a very contemporary and poetic piece that expands the frontiers of performance for young audiences and turns the conventions of theatre inside out.

**FOR AGES 4 AND UP**  
**DURATION: ABOUT 60 MINUTES**



CREATED, DIRECTED AND CO-CHOREOGRAPHED BY  
**H  l  ne Langevin**

CO-CHOREOGRAPHER AND REHEARSAL DIRECTOR  
**Jean-Fran  ois L  gar  **

#### PERFORMERS

**Ariane Boulet**  
**Joannie Douville**  
**Alexandre Parenteau**  
**Georges-Nicolas Tremblay**

#### GUEST CHOREOGRAPHERS

**Caroline Laurin-Beaucage, Menka Nagrani**  
**and Manuel Roque**

#### DESIGNERS

**Maril  ne Bastien** (costumes)  
**Bernard Falaise** (music)  
**Richard Lacroix** (set design)  
**Caroline Ross** (lighting)

#### DRAMATIST

**Claudine Robillard**

#### PRODUCTION MANAGER

**Catherine Comeau**

#### TECHNICAL MANAGER

**Martin Lepage**

#### DANCERS WHO PARTICIPATED IN CHOREOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

**  lise Bergeron, Erin O'Loughlin, Mark Medrano**  
**and Gabrielle Surprenant-Lacasse**





# HÉLÈNE LANGEVIN

**GENESIS** After graduating from the contemporary dance program at Université du Québec à Montréal in 1987, Hélène Langevin joined forces with Ginette Ferland, Rolline Laporte and Guylaine Savoie, three choreographers also driven by a creative spark. They established the collective Brouhaha Danse. The company soon became renowned for its invigorating, festive pieces and in situ happenings that were veritable accolades to nonchalance.

The collective gave pride of place to street theatre, circus skills, performance art, walkabout shows and interaction with the audience. Hélène Langevin created *Brouhaha* (1987) and *Ça frise la frénésie* (1988) plus a series of collectively produced works: *Méfiez-vous des faux frissons* (1989), *Claire* (1991) and *La galerie des horribles* (1992), presented in Dresden, Germany and at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa.

**EPIPHANY** In addition to working within her company, the choreographer has been teaching creative dance to children for the past two decades and notes that childhood has been an inspiring force throughout her career. In 1996 she presented her first work for young audiences, *Roche, Papier, Ciseaux*, and it proved to be a revelation. Now with the company **Bouge de là** (created from the ashes of Brouhaha), she focuses exclusively on performances for children aged 4 to 10, a veritable passion for a woman who has been imparting the pleasure of dance to youngsters for almost 30 years in a spirited blend of pedagogy and creativity.



**I** FOR  
INFLATE



## ART IN MOVEMENT

Hélène Langevin's omnipresent desire to explore different forms of art has led to diverse projects that intermingle dance, video, theatre, the visual arts, shadow play, etc. Throughout her career she has conducted research on the body in movement, her primary objective being to play with theatricality and create a language that allows her to better convey her vision of movement to children.

## COLLABORATION AND COLLECTIVE HARMONY

With a preference for team work plus improvisation as a creative starting point, the choreographer sees herself as a conductor who sets the tone and the quality of the movement, or as a painter whose colour palette consists of the personalities of her dancers, carefully selected for each new piece so that a collective harmony is achieved.

The cooperation between Hélène Langevin and her performers and collaborators is a forum for nourishing exchanges that help shape the creation of the work. The contributions of the dancers constitute an important part of the creative process, and the piece will reflect the colours of each individual involved. Their humanity, the way they inhabit their bodies, their personalities, their rapport with dance, their singularity—all will have an influence on the work. Charismatic and effective communicators, they are the dynamic link between the dance and the spectator.

Playful, whimsical and imbued with poetry, the choreography of Hélène Langevin engages the imaginations of children and stimulates their own creativity.





# CREATIVE PROCESS

It was during a British Columbia tour of *Old Thomas and the Little Fairy* in 2011 that the choreographer first started thinking about the idea for a spelling book in dance form. While on the road on Vancouver Island amidst gorgeous landscapes, H  l  ne Langevin began developing that desire to create a dance in which words would be the lifeblood of the performance.

The dancers on tour with her that spring provided the first words to nourish the incipient project, words that touch a dancer's sensibility: *surpass your limits, agility, movement, risk*. Although those words gathered at the other end of the country were not the driving force in the creation of the piece, they did act as detonators, a suspension bridge between initial desire and the concrete realization of the project. They opened the way to the arrival of other words, those that the choreographer used to give shape to *The 26 Letter Dance*.

In addition to words gleaned during discussions among friends and words unearthed during meditative walks in the forest, H  l  ne sought inspiration in children's libraries. The AB  C  Daire collection from   ditions l'  dune is used as a point of departure for shaping the artistic form of the piece.

In December 2014 H       brought seven dancers into the studio to work on her own emerging alphabet book. She knew then that the choreography would be based on the 26 letters of the alphabet and would consist of a tableau for each letter, with several appropriate words for that letter. The challenge for the young spectators is to discover words that can be made visible by means of dancing and acting, for although the alphabet *begins with A and ends with Z*, in between disorder reigns. A major challenge for the choreographer was organizing the letters of her alphabet. The arrangement of the letters—and thus of the tableaux—would prove to be a daunting, delicate task with infinite possibilities, for depending on its place in the ensemble, each letter could be assigned to all sorts of different words. For many weeks she saw the letter F as *finale*, *flamboyant* and *festive*, before suddenly realizing that it could be the pretext for a *folk dancing* sequence that would allow Z to present the finale of the piece as planned. Fortunately some letters found their definitive place in the ensemble in short order, such as W for *wow* and D for *dance*.

During the winter of 2016 when many tableaux were solidly positioned in this choreographic jigsaw puzzle, an unexpected character came to life in the studio in a dancer's body. It started with a luminous white ball inserted almost by chance in the top of his black hoodie, creating a dorsal line that stretched and curved slightly forward, evoking the slowness and fluid movements of weightlessness. Without knowing precisely how or why, a character with an extraterrestrial air was born in the rehearsal studio that day, one whose discreet and anonymous presence contrasted with the colourful, densely developed alphabet universe of that moment. His place in the ensemble took shape clearly and naturally—he is the silent, attentive spectator witnessing the formation and arrangement of letters and words. Suddenly the theme of the piece opened up, for this enigmatic character represents the illiterate, recent immigrants with no language skills, the mute and the speechless. His presence renders the beauty and richness of language all the more tangible.







# BOUGE DE LÀ



It was with the collective Brouhaha Danse that **Hélène Langevin** created her first performance for young audiences in 1996, *Roche, Papier, Ciseaux*. The remarkable success of that piece led her to establish Bouge de là in 2000, created from the ashes of the defunct collective. Bouge de là remains one of the rare professional dance companies in Québec devoted exclusively to creating dance presentations for children. It has six works in its repertoire: *La Tribu Hurluberlu* (2000), *Like the 5 Fingers on your Hand* (2003), *CHUT!!* (2005), *Old Thomas and the Little Fairy* (2008), *The Studio* (2010) and *Bedtime!* (2013).

**The 26 Letter Dance** is the 7th dance piece by Bouge de là.

F FOR FALL



# CREATIVE APPROACH

Bouge de là has adopted a creative means of introducing young audiences to the world of choreography, thus making dance accessible to children. With a contemporary approach that blends together various art forms, the company presents dance performances that are playful and topical. By fusing dance with other artistic disciplines, the choreographer ensures that the interdisciplinary nature of the experience makes for a show children will long remember. Young audiences of all ages have access to seamless, straightforward and vibrant dance, a major art form that appeals to their artistic sense and their imagination.

# AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Educating young audiences and heightening their appreciation of dance are at the very heart of the artistic mission of Bouge de là. With her extensive experience as a teacher of creative dance, Hélène Langevin offers children a wide variety of dance awareness activities.

At the start of each new dance creation, the choreographer conducts research by presenting dance workshops to children in primary schools. These sessions provide her with feedback as she listens to their ideas and observes their reactions. Hélène Langevin regularly invites school classes to creative residencies with professional dancers so that they too can observe the process of dance creation and respond directly to the choreographic sketch taking shape. This back-and-forth leads her to question her working hypotheses, and to have them either validated or refuted. It favours the creation of a piece that is in harmony with the feelings and experiences of the young spectators.

In conjunction with the Bouge de là performances, Hélène Langevin also designs creative workshops for each show linked to the theme of the work presented.

Through these multiple actions, Bouge de là achieves its objective of offering children an enjoyable contact with dance, an experience that stimulates an emotional response and instills a desire for movement and dance.

# REPUTATION AND AWARDS

Acclaimed by audiences and critics alike, the company has received several awards. In October 2008, *Old Thomas and the Little Fairy* was nominated in the Young Audiences category for a Prix de la critique award from the Québec association of theatre critics. This dance piece, along with *Like the 5 Fingers on your Hand*, was also nominated for a RIDEAU Touring Award, which the company finally received in 2012 for *The Studio*.

Bouge de là has also established a strong reputation outside Québec. In 2012 and 2015, *The Studio* and *Bedtime!* were nominated for a Dora Mavor Moore Award in Toronto for Outstanding Production, Theatre for Young Audiences category. In 2013 Bouge de là was among the finalists in the category Touring Artistic Company of the Year at the BC Touring Council Annual Awards.

# ARTISTIC RESIDENCY

In 2006 Bouge de là became the resident company at the Maison culturelle et communautaire in Montréal North. Every year the borough offers the company use of its facilities to develop and create new dance works or to remount pieces about to go on tour. Bouge de là is proud to present the world premières of its shows to the citizens of Montréal North.



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# DANCERS



## ARIANE BOULET

Ariane received a B.A. in Dance from Université du Québec à Montréal in 2009, and since then has danced for more than a dozen choreographers. Eager to pursue dance that has something very tangible to offer to the spectator, in 2014 she completed a master's in Dance with a focus on the health care sector. That experience led to questions about the importance of faith, doubt, encounters, the landscape, the discovery of the individual and the collective body. Co-founder of the company *Je suis Julio*, since 2010 she has been involved in a dozen works (stage, video and in situ) as a dancer, creator or co-creator. In 2016 she will be working with Hélène Langevin (Bouge de là), Aurélie Pedron, Georges-Nicolas Tremblay and Alejandro De Leon.



## JOANNIE DOUVILLE

After completing a program in Dance Performance at Université du Québec à Montréal in 2009, Joannie Douville completed a certificate in psychology, focusing on developmental psychology. The following year she joined the Compagnie Dave St-Pierre, performing in *Foudres*. Seeking out dance that resonates with both performers and audiences, she currently performs for an integrated dance company (Corpuscule danse) and Bouge de là. Accompanied by her colleagues Ariane Boulet, Andréa de Keijzer and Gabriel Vignola, in 2012 she created *Je suis Julio*, a platform for creation with a mandate to change the world (one person at a time).



## ALEXANDRE PARENTEAU

A Montréal freelance contemporary dance artist since 2004, Alexandre Parenteau hones his dance skills through collaborations with other artists as he pursues his interest in movement and dramatic arts. A technician of the body and its expressive possibilities, he works with choreographers such as Marie-Julie Asselin, Lina Cruz, Harold Rhéaume and Sarah Bild. Fascinated by encounters between dance and theatre, he has explored blending the two art forms in works by Deborah Dunn, Hélène Langevin and Estelle Clareton.

Keen to promote and democratize contemporary dance, Alexandre has plunged into dance for young audiences with the company Bouge de là. He has also performed in many in situ projects by Karine Ledoyen, Harold Rhéaume, Emmanuel Jouthe and Sylvain Émard. On the international scene, he has been a striking presence in choreography by Jean-Pierre Perreault, Estelle Clareton and Benoît Lachambre.



## GEORGES-NICOLAS TREMBLAY

Hailing from a background in visual arts, theatre and dance, Georges-Nicolas Tremblay performed with Hélène Blackburn's company Cas Public for six years on stages around the world. He has also worked with the likes of Harold Rhéaume, Chantal Caron, Estelle Clareton, Louise Bédard and Sylvain Émard. His most recent appearances have been in *Symphonie 5.1* and *Corps secret, Corps public*, the latest creations by Van Grimde Corps Secrets, with whom he has been collaborating since 2014. In addition to his career as a dancer, Georges-Nicolas has been developing his own choreography and working as a rehearsal director and dramatist. He is currently pursuing his master's degree at Université du Québec à Montréal, where he is exploring dramatic arts in dance and the role of the performer in the process, as well as broadening his knowledge of somatics.





## BOUGE DE LÀ

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

**Hélène Langevin**

GENERAL MANAGER

**Amélie Gauthier**

DIRECTOR'S ASSISTANT

**Mathilde Girard**

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