

SPOOKY

ACTION



INVERSO PRODUCTIONS / LESLEY TELFORD

Spooky Action

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An interdisciplinary dance project inspired by particle entanglement.

Spooky Action is inspired by Einstein's famous phrase “*spooky action at a distance*” referring to particles that are so closely linked, they share the same existence. A collaboration with poet/performer Barbara Adler, this new interdisciplinary work weaves together contemporary dance, poetic storytelling and original composition to extend the theory to human connections and how are we inexplicably linked beyond physical proximity. Entanglement proves that ‘our world is not local’. Simply by living in increasingly networked societies our daily lives show us that our actions have impact at a distance. The scientific fact of ‘spooky action at a distance’ excites us because it seems to offer a vibrant new way of thinking through our relationships to each other and the world. We experience entanglement as both pleasure and problem: how do we respond to connectivity that happens beyond our choosing? By turns intricate, refined, and dryly witty, *Spooky Action* brings together thought-provoking dance and engaging narrative to probe the mysterious ways we act on each other’s lives.

“TELFORD MAKES THE CONSIDERABLE LEAP FROM CONCEPTUAL TO THEATRICAL WITH ELEGANCE AND WIT...WITH SPOOKY ACTION, TELFORD HITS HER STRIDE AS A CHOREOGRAPHER. THE IDEA OF ENTANGLEMENT HOVERS MYSTERIOUSLY IN THE AIR, CREATING A FRESH PARADIGM IN WHICH TO VIEW THE DANCE.”

~GLOBE AND MAIL, KAIJA PEPPER 2019



Photo by David Cooper / Performer: Lucas Wilson-Bilbro



Photo David Cooper, Performers: Eden Solomon, Stephanie Cyr

Premiere

The Firehall Arts Centre, Vancouver Canada

October 16-19 2019

Upcoming Performances

Showing OFF-DIV November 24, 2019

Showing PushOFF February 6-7, 2020

Shadbolt Centre for the Arts April 22-25, 2020

Past Performances and Development

The Dance Centre, April 20-22, 2017 **Spooky Action-Part 1*

Dance in Vancouver, November 24, 2017 **Spooky Action-Part 1*

Museum of Anthropology April 2018 **Spooky Action-Part 1*

The Dance Centre April 29, 2018 **Spooky Action-Part 1*

Vancouver International Dance Festival March 27-30 2019 **Unison*

Lesley Telford

Choreographer / Artistic Director



Lesley Telford is based in Vancouver, Canada as choreographer and director of Inverso Productions. She combines impulse-based physicality with sensitivity to the minute relationships between performers and their environment. Her recent work incorporates text, visual art and science.

Through Inverso Productions she has produced and choreographed two full-

length works: Spooky Action, which recently premiered to enthusiastic reviews and Brittle Failure, which has been a part of tours and festivals in Spain, the Netherlands and Canada. She has also created numerous smaller scale works through Inverso. Her work has been presented in the CaDance Festival and Korzo Theatre in the Netherlands, International Festival Madrid en Danza and the Reina Sophia Museum in Spain, the Chutzpah Festival, the Banff Festival of the Arts, the Gothenburg Dance and Theatre Festival, the Schmiede Festival, EDAM Choreographic Series, the Fluid Festival in Calgary, and the Vancouver International Dance Festival. She was selected by Crystal

Pite for the Vancouver Mayor's Arts Award 2015 as emerging artist in dance.

As a commissioned choreographer, she has created works for Ballet BC, Netherlands Dans Theater 1, Hubbard Street Dance Company 2, Compañía Nacional de Danza 2, Ballet Vorpommern, International Project for Dance in Rome- DAF, Butler Ballet, University of Utah and Arts Umbrella Dance Company. She is presently creating a work for Les Grands Ballets Canadiens due to premiere March 2020.

Lesley is on Faculty at Arts Umbrella's Professional Dance Program leading the Performance Research Project for emerging professional dancers, involving mentoring, researching and creating performance opportunities.

In her career, she danced with Netherlands Dans Theater 1, Compañía Nacional de Danza and Les Grands Ballets Canadiens. She began her studies with Betty Caplette, Kirkwood Academy, and Goh Ballet in Vancouver and continued to train at in Montréal at École Supérieure de Danse du Québec. She has a Master of Arts in Cultural Production from the University of Salzburg and the Mozarteum.

"TELFORD HAS A PROFOUND WAY OF TAPPING INTO EMOTIONAL AND INTELLECTUAL LANDSCAPES. SHE'S AN EXCITING VOICE TO WATCH AS WE GO FORWARD IN THIS NEXT GENERATION OF CHOREOGRAPHERS."

~Emily Molnar, AD B BC 2019

Inverso Productions

Founded in Madrid in 2012 by choreographer Lesley Telford, Inverso is now a Vancouver-based company. It is a platform for exchange, creating dance through the lens of other art forms. This platform aims to develop collaborative ventures with the goal of creating and building interdisciplinary works alongside other artists. Inverso focuses on choreography as a method of conversation and exchange; between art forms, between dancers, dancers and the physical environment on stage, words and movement, movement and light. Inverso Productions respectfully acknowledges that we create and perform on the ancestral and unceded Indigenous territories of the $w\acute{m}\acute{a}\theta k^w\acute{e}y\acute{e}m$ (Musqueam), $s\acute{k}w\acute{x}w\acute{u}7mesh$ (Squamish), and $sel\acute{i}lwit\acute{u}lh$ (Tsleil-Waututh) First Nations.

Collaborators

Performers/ Collaborators : **Stéphanie Cyr, Eden Solomon, Brandon Alley, Lucas Wilson-Bilbro, Anya Saugstad, Beth Durnie**

Text & Performance: **Barbara Adler**

Composer: **James Meger**

Lighting Designer: **Alan Brodie**

Production Manager: **Heidi Quicke**

Technical Director: **Mark Eugster**

Assistant Production Manager: **Jessica Keenan, Ash Shotton**

Assistant to the choreographer: **Maddy Gilbert**



Press

GLOBE AND MAIL

Lesley Telford's *Spooky Action* makes an elegant leap from scientific theory to theatrical performance

KAIJA PEPPER OCTOBER 17, 2019

Quantum entanglement refers to two particles that share the same properties and, no matter how great the distance between them, a change to one instantaneously affects the other. The mere act of observing one impacts its partner. Dubbed “spooky action at a distance” by Albert Einstein, it’s mind-boggling stuff.

Lesley Telford’s *Spooky Action*, which opened at Vancouver’s Firehall Arts Centre on Wednesday, was inspired by this complicated scientific theory, one that is challenging to fully process even for physicists. Yet, with her team of artistic collaborators, Telford makes the considerable leap from conceptual to theatrical with elegance and wit.

Telford uses science as a jumping-off point only, tackling entanglement at a human level. Her finely wrought choreography for five dancers has them skittering and skating around the stage (they wear socks, which helps the flow) in various configurations, hypersensitive to each other and the space around them. Their articulated bodies, moving with freedom and force, often seemed more like particles of colour and motion than flesh-and-blood human beings.

Brandon Alley, until recently a member of Ballet BC, has one solo where he circles around his own body with flailing arms and legs, ending up spinning in place, low to the floor, a force of nature. The most seasoned of the dancers, he

brings a welcome hint of drama and emotional warmth to some of his movement.

The five performers' bodies, moving with freedom and force, often seem more like particles of colour and motion than flesh-and-blood human beings.

Stephanie Cyr’s precisely articulated feet and lusciously arched torso reminded me of Telford’s own past appearances onstage (her performing career spans Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, Compania Nacional de Danza and Nederlands Dans Theater).

Collaboration, a tenet of Telford’s Vancouver-based Inverso Productions, is an apt approach here, adding layers of visual and aural entanglement. Lighting designer Alan Brodie favours the heightened effects of deep shadow and blazing lights to obscure or reveal the dancers. Composer James Meger’s variously lush or minimalist score floats in and out, his palette of hums, plucked chords and vibrations contributing to, but never dominating, the creative dynamics.

Voice-overs of spoken text were harder to integrate; text always is. Words and movement communicate differently, and when each is intensely styled and loaded, it can be hard to focus on both at the same time. Interdisciplinary artist and performer Barbara Adler used language wryly and colourfully, veering from existential statements such as “The world was happening to me” to intimate domestic observations: “Butter melts in a hot pan. I’m hungry. Noted.” I had to let the text go in order to process the dance more freely.

With *Spooky Action*, Telford hits her stride as a choreographer. The idea of entanglement hovers mysteriously in the air, creating a fresh paradigm in which to view the dance.

Spooky Action continues at the Firehall Arts Centre until Oct. 19.

VANCOUVER OBSERVER

Interdisciplinary entanglements

Inverso brings brings Telford's quantum energy to "Spooky Action" world premiere at Firehall

LINCOLN KAYE, OCTOBER 16, 2019

Inverso's multi-disciplinary Spooky Action, which world premiered last night for an all-too- fleeting three-day run at the Firehall, is steeped in the mysteries of quantum entanglement, an enigma of cutting-edge physics so counter-intuitive that it flummoxed even Albert Einstein.

To a gob-smacked Einstein, this amounted to Spukhafte Fernwirkung – “spooky action at a distance.” But both Telford and Adler are convinced that karmically linked humans experience such instantaneous energy transfers just as inexorably as the minutest quantum monads.

This intuition they translate into vocabularies of movement and words, respectively, that are hardly “spooky” in the kitsch Halloween sense, but distinctly uncanny in their offhand mixture of coolly objective “scientific” automatism and passionately emotive expression.

So, when they're not all coordinated in unison formations, Telford divides her five vastly talented performers – Stéphanie Cyr, Eden Solomon, Brandon Alley, Lucas Wilson-Bilbro and Anya Saugstad – into varying subsets. She then foregrounds an emotive solo or duet against a frenetically “mechanical” background movement (or sometimes vice versa).

Likewise, Adler's recitative. It casually swoops from dry algebraisms to poetic fancy. She hardly misses a beat in lines like “There's A/ and there's B.// You, A,/are on your

own path.//It measures out behind you/ like a line of ants/ on a hard march to something sweet.”

This sense of interconnectedness is a realization that dawns only gradually – about as much of a “story line” as Spooky Action offers. We start out with a solo dancer (Alley) enacting the autarkic infant mind, convinced (as per Adler's voiceover) that he “made the world happen,” simply by opening or shutting eyelids to invoke or dismiss any experience, from weather to his attendant audience of people.

But then the sense of warm, rosy sunlight on his face and closed eyelids reveals that, in fact, “the world was happening to me.” What's more “people happened to me...and when I happened back...they happened more...so I happened harder.” From which flow the lessons of cause-and- effect, sequential time and the Theory of Mind that posits the autonomous existence of intelligible Others.

But here's where Telford's Fernwirkung starts to get Spukhafte: when cause-and-effect collapse into a breathless simultaneity and the onstage Others grow a bit less autonomous and a lot less intelligible.

Dancers clump together into push-me-pull-you composite creatures that scuttle about with startling grace. The two female leads, Cyr and Solomon (“stars” in that they've been with the Spooky Action throughout its three-year gestation), slither together into a black Spandex sheath for a sinuous series of joint undulations where there's no telling whose limbs are which.

Designer Alan Brodie reinforces this affective/objective duality. He starkly silhouettes or side- lights the dancers with explicit lighting arrays, as regular as Cartesian grids, on all 12 edges of the stage space cube. But then he subtly limns individual figures with frontal or overhead spots.



Photo by David Cooper, Performers- Lucas Wilson-Bilbro, Eden Solomon

Support

Inverso Productions is grateful for the support of The Canada Council, The BC Arts Council, The City of Vancouver, The Dance Centre, Arts Umbrella and private donors.



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Photo by David Cooper, *Spooky Action*