

## Project InTandem Press Clippings

### Project InTandem celebrates the collaborative talents of Calgary's female contemporary dance community

March 5, 2020 by Taylor Ritchie

[https://theyyscene.com/2020/03/05/project-intandem-celebrates-the-collaborative-talents-of-calgarys-female-contemporary-dance-community/?fbclid=IwAR1NQQeJzf01dNfeXYi6v3hF6xPrvXqKk4N\\_jFqMgk4Ffp0m8IyT8V5CuFA](https://theyyscene.com/2020/03/05/project-intandem-celebrates-the-collaborative-talents-of-calgarys-female-contemporary-dance-community/?fbclid=IwAR1NQQeJzf01dNfeXYi6v3hF6xPrvXqKk4N_jFqMgk4Ffp0m8IyT8V5CuFA)



March is here, spring is just around the corner and what better way to celebrate the beginning of this new season than by supporting Calgary's blooming dance scene. If that doesn't entice you enough, it is also International Women's Day this weekend, and Project InTandem is bringing you an all-female cast that embodies boldness, risk-taking and athletic awe in an exciting evening of contemporary dance featuring the works of local choreographers Meghann Michalsky and Sylvie Moquin.

After a momentous experience premiering the first Project InTandem show in 2017, Michalsky and Moquin were thrilled for the opportunities that presented themselves when they decided to produce the project again, but with brand new works.

"We know what's coming, and we have huge ambitions to make Project InTandem 2020 even better than our last production," says the powerhouse duo.

Although the two admit that it can be difficult to wear so many hats – administrators, producers, dancers, choreographers and brand consultants — they find the challenge thrilling and fulfilling. One of the greatest triumphs of self-producing this show, is being able to present in their dream venue: The GRAND in downtown Calgary. The beautiful theatre, was built in 1912 and offers itself as a space to create, think, dream, and grow – which is exactly what Meghann and Sylvie set out to do.

In terms of choreographic growth, both Michalsky and Moquin have seen a shift in their work since 2017. Moquin has recently engaged in a mentorship exchange with Karen Kaeja of Kaeja d’Dance. This artistic journey has led Moquin to become interested in investigating how bodies can support one another to fly, flip, spin and hover.

“I am passionate about partner work, floor-work, rhythmic relationships and movement that is bold and challenging, but that also holds a great deal of grit, emotion and intention,” she says. “It is important to me that movement comes from a true and visceral place.”

Moquin’s piece — moving through, it all amounts to something — “uses circular repetition and visceral investigations to explore the universal concept of change and failure. What does it mean to change? What does failure inside of change feel like? How does it fit on one’s skin, shape the landscape of relationships and carve the architecture of the routes we take?” Moquin speaks of her personal relationship towards struggles with mental health, and how her interest in the effects of the mind and the power of thoughts gives her a sense of hope.

On the other hand, Michalsky has shifted her work to be informed by the body first instead of a theme or concept. Often described as vigorous, vivid, animalistic and interknit, Michalsky speaks to her work and interest in the human body. “I am fascinated with how the body is embedded with memory. I believe memory or experience cannot leave the musculature or nervous system. I have trust in the body. Therefore, I trust what my body repeatedly does and trust that’s where the work needs to go. I am interested in mixing sequential movement flow with dynamic power and explosive range. I work with a lot of tension, glitching, tremors in the body because this is the rigidity I’ve experienced through my traumas in this life and my past lives.”



Michalsky's piece, *Deep END*, dives into the conflict between dancer and movement, where the dancer has to process in real-time, moment to moment. "Nothing worthwhile in life comes easily, so the structures that the dancers endure in this work shouldn't either. This demands the dancers to ride these waves or the piece becomes too physically demanding. Sensations will come and they will pass. How will we all ride the wave?"

Something that is important to both Michalsky and Moquin when creating work is to collaborate with female artists. Michalsky talks about the fact that her new piece is made for females.

"My work focuses on a primal movement aesthetic, exploring the power of the female body through a state of nature (not tamed or domesticated)," Moquin says, adding, "there is such empowerment and sense of nurturing and care in the way (females) share space together in the creative process. Choosing to live an artistic life isn't an easy one, and the journey we have gone through together has a sense of rally — that we are all in this together. I think together, we also feel a great sense of pride in providing opportunities to some of the amazing female artists in our city. They are incredible — and we are excited for Calgary to witness their strength and talent!"

Another important aspect to the creators of Project InTandem is building Calgary's dance scene. "It's very important to us, and it's the reason Project InTandem was created in 2017. We were only getting opportunities to make five- to fifteen-minute length works and we wanted to take the next step in our creative careers to make longer work but no one was giving us that opportunity. So we created it. We believe it's crucial in our city to give emerging artists the opportunity to create and be featured in evening length work and be a part of longer processes."

They continue, "We want to give artists reasons to stay and thrive in Calgary. We also believe that, in order for Calgary to really be 'on the map' on a national-scale, we need to continue to be presenting and creating high caliber work in this city, and we hope we can play a part in that."

(Photos courtesy Tim Nguyen.)

## Project InTandem runs until March 5 to 7, in the Flanagan Theatre at The GRAND at 8 p.m.

Tickets can be purchased at: <https://www.showpass.com/project-intandem/>.

<https://dailyhive.com/calgary/female-produced-project-intandem-weekend?fbclid=IwAR1QSh9xRxIhDLrxdYXMuaeOVGsXOTVM1G3EA8EsKnz5TaXmWPLArLyHchl>



Project InTandem (Tynan Allan)

*This article was written by Tynan Allan, Host of [The CultureING Podcast](#) and Director of Growth at [liveweb.io](http://liveweb.io)*

[Project InTandem](#), featuring dance artists Meghann Michalsky and Sylvie Moquin, who curated, produced, and choreographed the show, is an electric experience of movement and art. The show examines the journey of self-discovery that every women experiences; the passion, the excitement, the highs, and the lows. Attendees' senses will be on edge thanks to visually dynamic lighting and effects.

Taking place in the lead up to International Women's Day, the show marks a celebration of the power and determination that women possess. Attendees will be able to experience the world premier of Deep END by Meghann Michalsky, which touches on themes of chaos, pain, fear, and constraint that humans strive to let go of in order to become the best version of themselves.

"To be a producer, choreographer, and dancer all in one show is the hardest thing I've ever done," Michalsky said in an interview with Daily Hive.

"Most days, especially the month before the show, I had to wear all the hats in one day — meaning my days were 13 to 16 hours at times. My choreography is really challenging, it has mathematical repetitive rounds of movement, so it's very cognitive but yet still very physical. But I am so happy and blessed to wear all the hats, it's a thrill — I feel very fulfilled and it provides so much creative freedom."

In addition to being award-winning choreographers and dancers, both Michalsky and Moquin are boldly venturing to make waves in the prairie region with a passion for seeing contemporary dance thrive in Calgary. *Project InTandem* runs from March 5 to 7 at The GRAND, with tickets available [online](#).

## Project InTandem brings contemporary dance to Calgary

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17/03/2020

<https://www.calgaryjournal.ca/arts-entertainment/5005-project-intandem-brings-contemporary-dance-to-calgary.html>



*Choreographers Sylvie Moquin and Meghann Michalsky find it to be a life-long dream to be a headlining show at the Flanagan Theatre in The GRAND.*

Calgary is known for many things but contemporary dance is not one of them. Still, two independent female choreographers are trying to change that by coming together to create a headlining production.

The GRAND, the oldest theatre in Calgary's downtown core, was filled with nearly 200 applauding audience members this International Women's Day weekend as Project InTandem, a contemporary dance group, held their second performance.

Sylvie Moquin and Meghann Michalsky started Project InTandem in 2017. The two felt as though they had already exhausted the opportunities available to them in Alberta, so they took a chance.

"That's where our initial inspiration came from, the lack of opportunity, so we decided to create it," says Michalsky.

Both Moquin and Michalsky's works are inspired by the ebbs and flows of different mental health challenges. In her piece, Michalsky explores the separation of opposing sensations in the body to expose the power of internal conflict. She also draws inspiration from her personal experience with spiritual resurrection and the need for change.



*“You’ll always eventually come out of the deep end, it’s just a matter of when and if you’re patient enough to ride out the wave.”*

“My work is called Deep END because you have to go deep to do the work. You’ll always eventually come out of the deep end – it’s just a matter of when and if you’re patient enough to ride out the wave.”



**Calgary based dance artist Kyra Newton performs her solo in Sylvie Moquin’s choreography. Photo by Nikita Lehnert-Thiel**

Moquin’s piece, “moving through, it all amounts to something,” has an underlying message of hopefulness. In her exploration of the concept of neuroplasticity, she finds empowerment.

“For me, it’s been something that I can grasp onto, and it provides me with a sense of hope. It provides me with a sense of ‘I don’t have to be a victim in my current circumstance, I have the ability to change, rewire, move through, and keep working,’” she said.

Although each choreographer has a different creative process, both of the dance projects have been in the works for over a year and a half which has involved gathering ideas, researching movement structures and putting together a dance crew.

Moquin has four dancers: Valentina Dimitriou, Brenna Goertson, Kyra Newton and Chantal Wall. Both Moquin and Michalsky are also performers in Michalsky’s piece, along with Kaili Che, Valentina Dimitriou, and Katherine Semchuk.

This event is Semchuk’s first dance with Project InTandem, but she has worked with Michalsky for the past couple of years. She started in the studio in October, helping research movement ideas.



**Born and raised Calgarian Valentia Dimitriou performing in Sylvie Moquin's piece, moving through, it all amounts to something. Photo by Erin Sweere**

"My favourite part of the process is trying to understand Meghann's physicality, really get into her mind and trying to articulate what she's trying to get out of the movement and trying to articulate that through my own body. It's challenging, but it's exciting when something clicks," Semchuk says.

The young dancer reflects on what part of the evening performances she is most looking forward to, and in doing so reveals why events like this are important for the city.

"Having Calgary to be able to see the work that these two amazing people have put into producing the show and choreographing is what I'm most excited about. There's not a lot of self-produced contemporary dance in Calgary or Alberta, so it's great that Calgarians get to see this."

The two choreographers both want to change the arts community in Calgary and are actively trying to improve the city's contemporary dance scene. They came together to create Project InTandem in hopes of broadening their reach as creators as well as their impact. By including younger dancers in the process, they hope to encourage them to stay in the community.

"We have seen a lot of people leave the city to go elsewhere to pursue the arts, so we are trying to impact the community to stay here and show them that worthwhile art is happening in Calgary," says Michalsky.

***"I am interested in showcasing a female in a way that's not necessarily shown on Instagram or Hollywood."***

“Yes, it has been an opportunity for Meghann and I to create work and develop our chops as choreographers, but it's also a platform of opportunity for everyone involved. To be able to provide those higher scale opportunities here in Calgary, it's important to us, and it's been part of our platform from the very beginning,” Moquin added.

The show strategically took place on women's day weekend from March 5 to 7. Though the performance wasn't created specifically with the day in mind, both Moquin and Michalsky's work portrays many aspects of empowerment and femininity.

“I am interested in showcasing a female in a way that's not necessarily shown on Instagram or Hollywood,” Michalsky says. “I let femininity be bold physicality instead of limiting it by a concept.”

Most of the artists involved with the performance aside from the dancers are also women. Both Moquin and Michalsky are proud to have a team of 'bold, amazing women' as part of the project.

“To be showcasing that talent on this scale is just crucial for our society to see, and for Calgary audiences to see, and I think both works really dig into that,” says Moquin. “It's bold, there's a lot of prowess, there's physicality. It's unapologetic.”