

Jewish Dance Conference: Spotlight on Allen Kaeja

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Allen Kaeja is an internationally recognized and award-winning choreographer and filmmaker based in Canada. Since 1982, he has created over 160 dance pieces and has directed and/or choreographed for twenty-eight films. Allen is Co-Artistic Director of Kaeja d'Dance with his wife Karen Kaeja. He is co-founder of the CanAsian Dance Festival (1996-present) and fringe Festival of Independent Dance Artists (fFIDA from 1991-2000). His stage works have been presented in festivals around the world, including in Norway, Sweden, Israel, the UK, Portugal, India, Mexico, Venezuela, Spain, the USA, as well as at the VANOC Cultural Olympiad through Chutzpah! Festival. Allen's awards include the prestigious Kathryn Ash Award for Choreography, Clifford E. Lee, K.M. Hunter, and Paul D. Fleck Choreography Awards (Canada), the Bonnie Bird Award (UK), a UNESCO citation, and the Moving Picture Award for best performance (Canada). Allen also performed as Pushkin in Moze Mossanen's Gemini-winning dance film *Nureyev*.

Kaeja's dance films have been screened across the globe and have been nominated for a Gemini and the Banff World Television Festival Awards (Canada) and the American Choreography Awards (LA). They have received special 'Jury Mentions' from IMZ (Europe) and the American Dance Festival (USA). The Kaeja films are also a part of the permanent collection at MoMA and the Jewish Museum in New York, and the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in Israel.

Allen and Karen have been on faculty at The School of Toronto Dance Theatre since 1991 and Allen has also taught at Ryerson University since 2002. He has published his second book, entitled *Transcending Media: Adapting the Dance Production Asylum of Spoons, from Stage to Film*, and is currently working on his third book on Kaeja Elevations, a unique form of partnering developed by himself and his wife.

His presentation "Moving Memories" at the Jews and Jewishness in Dance Conference is based on his six stage and seven dance films based on WWII narratives. These draw on experiences of the Holocaust through the stories spoken by his father, who was a POW; escapee of the Kutno Ghetto; captured as a Resistance fighter; survivor of Auschwitz: Buna; and escapee from Nordhausen.

<https://www.kaeja.org/artistic-director>