

ALLEN KAEJA

Co-Artistic Director

Choreographer

Performer

Cinematographer

MA Dance York University

Allen Kaeja is an internationally recognized and award winning choreographer and filmmaker. Invited in 1981 by the Ontario Olympic Wrestling Federation to compete for “the team,” he chose dance as his career instead. Since 1982, he has created over a 160 dance pieces and has directed and/or choreographed for twenty-seven 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 fFIDA (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 has also received a number of commissions from national (including Ballet Jorgen Canada, Mary-Louise Albert, Marie-Josée Chartier) and international dance companies from Sweden, UK, India, Mexico, the USA and Norway, among others. Allen’s awards include the prestigious 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. Allen has worked in collaboration with and as a choreographer for exceptional theatre directors and companies such as Albert Shultz - Soulpepper; Gillian Raby - Brock U; and Jason Sherman - Factory Theatre.

In addition, Kaeja films have been screened all 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 American Dance Festival (USA). The Kaeja films are also a part of the permanent collection at the MoMA and the Jewish Museum in New York, the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in Israel and in a new exhibit at the Museum of Civilization opening 2015, as well as owned by many university libraries. Allen has just completed “sweet exit” for the Contact International Dance Film Festival starring Karen Kaeja and musician Daniel Payne. Allen is filming Extraordinary TO Dances for the Canada 150 project: Dance Film with 22 Dance Artists: broadcasters FibeTV1 (Canada) and MarqueeArts (UK).

Allen and Karen teach Master classes in Kaeja Elevations, Contact Dance, Improvisation and Dance Film. They are also currently on faculty at The School of Toronto Dance Theatre (since 1991) and Brock University (2013 - present), as well, Allen has taught Partnering and Dance Film 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. Allen is currently working on his third book, *Kaeja Elevations*, in which he has completed principle cinematography and photography.

Allen worked as the International Guest Choreographer and Judge for Mexico's Canal 22 and their dance reality series *Opera Prima*. Allen's commission from Ballet Jorgen Canada, *YET AGAIN* (2015), a quartet for four powerful men, continues to tour nationally and internationally with the company. Allen also completed the "ROGUE show" (2015), his first solo show ever, with Director/Dramaturge, Bruce Barton.

Allen has recently won the Kathryn Ash 2016 Choreography Award and been nominated for the: 2015 Ontario Arts Foundation Artist Educator Award; exemplifying excellence in arts education and demonstrating a unique approach to their arts education practice. Allen and Karen were finalists in the TD Diversity Award 2013, *Now* Magazine's "Best Local Choreographer 2011" and Canadian Dance Assembly I Love Dance National Awards for Innovation and Community 2012, of which they won the latter. They were also listed in the *Globe and Mail* BEST DANCE 2012 for *Porch View Dances*!

Allen also co-developed many site-specific and audience interactive engagement performance strategies with Karen Kaeja over the past 30 years. These include: *Porch View Dances* (2012 - present); *Downtown Dances* (2017 & 2016 with Atlantic Ballet Theatre of Canada); *Animating Historic Spaces – Montgomery's Inn* (2016 & 2014); *Fools Paradise – Open Doors Ontario* (2015); *ROGUE show* (2015); *fFIDA* 1991; *fFIDA w CBC Toronto* 1992 & 1993; *Canada Dance Festival with CBC Ottawa* (1996) and *Savage Garden* (1989).

Allen and Karen completed their critically and highly successful 25th Anniversary Concert featuring two new creations: .0 by Allen: “[Allen Kaeja’s] choreography is powerfully physical. Dancers collide, play off each other’s momentum, and rise into the air in mechanically complex lifts and shoulder rolls.” and Taxi! by Karen: “[Karen’s] work is... humanistic, lyrical and emotionally nuanced. Taxi! is about the vagaries of coupling, the journey whose unexpected turns lead to brief encounters and sometimes to unexpected connections.” The Toronto Star. The overall concert: “a program of new work showing that age has hardly withered its strength. It’s made it bolder. Physical daring ... where there are no boundaries...spunk, subtle poignancy and unmistakable sense of humour” - Critics at Large.

They also completed their newest lifeDUETs series which was presented at Theatre Centre in October '15. As well Kaeja d'Dance was runner-up as Now Magazines “Best Local company 2015”. Allen has recently won the Kathryn Ash Award 2016 for Choreography and been nominated for the: 2015 Ontario Arts Foundation Artist Educator Award and has been included in Canada’s Who’s Who since 2001.

Allen and Karen have recently completed CONSUMED a new choreography for The Edge in UK (2017) and will create a new work for Delfos Danza in Mexico (2018). They have recently toured their lifeDUETs concert to Moncton, NB and Vancouver’s VIDF 2017. As well Allen’s .0 and Karen’s Touch toured in a six city tour to Mexico in 2016. They also performed and taught in Japan March 2017. They’re newest concert CRAVE/DEFIANT just completed at the Theatre Centre in May 2017. The overall concert: “bold, innovative and sometimes downright zany contemporary dance” - Toronto Star.