

**PERFORMER, WRITER/CREATOR:**

Lua Shayenne is a multi-disciplinary artist who, for over 10 years, has been weaving stories, through dance, song and word. Her art practice is embedded in her African roots and her Faith. Her goal is to “effect a spiritual conquest” by establishing a relation with the human hearts and create original, inspiring and relevant art.

A 2016/17/18 K.M. Hunter Dance award nominee and a recipient of the 2013 BMO seeds Fund Award for Artists working in community, Lua proudly tours with Lars Jan’s (NYC/LA) HOLOSCENES (Toronto/ Florida/ Miami/ New York/ London,UK/ Abu Dhabi/ Australia tours), a multidisciplinary water installation on climate change.

Lua was recently featured in Fall for Dance North, Dusk Dances/Canadian Stage in High Park, JAMII’s eclectic programming including SEVEN, The wedding Part II, WAYO children’s Festival and is co-choreographer for National Ballet School’s Sharing Dance 2021.

Lua is the creator and interpreter of the dance theatre children series titled, *Tales and Dances Around the Baobab*. The fourth tale of the series, being developed under the series, is *YASSAMA and The Beaded Calabash*, with development support from the Wee Festival and le Théâtre Français de Toronto (May 2022 premiere).

As the artistic director of Lua Shayenne Dance Company (LSDC), Lua commissioned, produced and danced in DORA nominated KIRA, The Path | La Voie which premiered at the Luminato Festival and toured in Ontario, to rave reviews. She is also creating two works for LSDC: WAVES | VAGUES and FRONTIERS | FRONTIÈRES.

Lua is also an educator and community builder. She teaches at the Ryerson University’s dance program and brings African dance, music, storytelling and culture to grassroots organizations and schools all over Canada and Europe.

[IG/FB: Luashayenne](#)

**MUSICIAN: CÉCÉ HABA** hails from Guinea, W. Africa. His passion for percussion (djembe and dundun) led him to study the traditional rhythms of his culture. He has performed with Lua Shayenne Dance Company at Dusk Dances, City of Toronto’s Canada Day, Centre Canadien pour l’unité de la famille, La Maison, Jamii and more. He is the musician and composer of a new multi-disciplinary children’s work, *Yassama and the Beaded Calabash*, co-developed by Wee Festival and Théâtre Français de Toronto, premiering in 2022. Cécé accompanies dance classes for artists such as Pulga Muchochoma, Newton Moraes and Lua Shayenne.

**DIRECTOR:** Originally from Montréal, **Karine Ricard** studied at the École de Théâtre de St-Hyacinthe. She began her career creating and co-writing the cabaret *Les Effeuilleuses* presented at the Lion d’Or and the Casino de Montréal. She then self-produced a variety of works, including François Archambault’s *Adieu beauté* at the Théâtre Prospero. She worked for several years with the Alliance théâtrale haïtienne de Montréal, where she wrote and directed a number of productions. In 2004, she moved to Toronto where she directed at the Fringe Festival. She has appeared frequently on the Tft stage: *Le Misanthrope* by Molière (2007), the Tft’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary show *Ici, les arbres s’enracinent dans l’eau* (2016) and *La Seconde Surprise de l’amour* by Marivaux (2018). Perfectly bilingual, she has also performed in English, notably in *The Numbers Game* (2016), a series of theatrical pieces presented at the Storefront Theatre. On the small screen, Karine has performed in such television series as *The Detectives*, *The Coroner*, *Orphan Black*, *The Covert Affairs*, *Météo+*, *Toi et moi* and *La Malédiction de Jonathan Plourde*. In 2020, she wrote *Les Septs Péchés capitaux*, presented as part of the Les Feuilles Vives playwriting festival as a podcast. Currently, Karine is shooting a children’s series which will be presented in French and English on Radio-Canada and CBC. Karine is distinguished by her charisma, positivity and creativity, qualities that will be essential as the world recovers from the pandemic and the theatre regains its breath. Karine is the new director of Théâtre français de Toronto.

**DRAMATURGE: Lynda Hill** is a director, arts educator, curator, and creative producer dedicated to theatre for young people with a special interest in Theatre for Early Years.

From 2001 to 2019, Lynda led Theatre Direct Canada, an innovative theatre for children and youth where she oversaw the creation and production of dozens of award-winning productions that engaged audiences in Toronto and toured provincially and nationally. She initiated a range of large-scale residencies and education projects with schools and founded the company’s drama school in 2009 designing the programs and curriculum.

In 2014, Lynda founded the WeeFestival which has to date has presented 35 productions from around the world and across Canada for children 0-6 years. Lynda's theatre creations for early years include *Flying Hearts*, a sensory performance for children of All Abilities co-created with choreographer Michelle Silagy and *Old Man and the River*, a table top puppetry performance for children 3-7 years. She also led a 5-year storytelling and drama project, *The Firefly Project*, which gathered and dramatized the stories of over 5,000 kindergarten students of newcomer families in Toronto. Prior to joining Theatre Direct in 2001, Lynda served as an officer for the Ontario Arts Council, the Co-Artistic Director of Cahoots Theatre Projects, and Associate Artistic Director of Nightwood Theatre. In 1995 Lynda was awarded a fellowship at Akademie Schloss Solitude in Stuttgart, Germany where she created site-specific and performance-based installation works in collaboration with designer Cary Gayler. As a freelance director and arts educator, Lynda also worked with a range of companies in Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver. Finally, she directed a number of radio dramas for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation including the first 5-channel surround broadcast of Strindberg's *A Dream Play*. In addition to promoting equitable access to arts experiences for all young children, Lynda has over her three-decade career, has championed greater representation and participation of culturally diverse and Indigenous artists as well as D/deaf or disable artists in professional theatre. She is proud to be a member of IIAN. Lynda and her partner James are proud parents of two young adults-Tessa and Quinn!

**COSTUME DESIGNER: Rachel Forbes** is a Toronto based Set and Costume Designer. Her work has seen several stages and other spaces in and around Toronto including The Shaw Festival, Factory Theatre, Theatre Passe Muraille, Buddies in Bad Times, Tarragon Theatre and a few of Toronto's historic house museums. She has had the pleasure of working with many great companies including Obsidian Theatre, Trey Anthony Productions, Watah Theatre, Video Cabaret, Pro Arte Danze and Canadian Rep Company. Rachel is interested in the point of intersection of the visual arts and installation world with that of theatre and live performance. She has created costumes for many pieces that combine movement and dance with textual theatre. Rachel has a specific interest in and has been exploring the artistic expressions that are part of the African diaspora. Rachel is a graduate of Ryerson Theatre School's Performance Production program. She has been mentored closely by Astrid Janson and Obsidian Theatre Company.