



echo echo
FESTIVAL PRESENTS

22ND - 27TH February 2021
O N L I N E

A **Welcome** from the Artistic Director of Echo Echo Dance Theatre Company

January 2021 brought the clear understanding that we would have to jettison all our planned live events. Even though we had, months ago, taken very careful decisions, to programme work that was as adaptable as possible to pandemic restrictions, it became obvious that events with live audiences of any size would be impossible. With new travel restrictions and work-place rules, even a livestream from a private house, which needed a cross border trip and a technical crew in a small space, wasn't going to be possible.

We really didn't want to create a dance-film event or to present filmed versions of performances which really ought to be presented live so we decided that the best idea was to build on what we have learned over the "lock-down" year and create a series of live online events.

For us the Echo Echo Festival of Dance and Movement is fundamentally a live event with real presence and proximity. So we aren't thinking of this as the eighth edition of our festival. We are producing the week of events under the title "Echo Echo Festival Presents" and we'll be using that banner for other events over the next twelve months.

The programme for the week will include online talks, with questions and answers, from all the artists who would have shown their work. There is a series of short, livestreamed, solo dance performances by artists of the Echo Echo Ensemble. There are also some classes, an opportunity to meet and question the whole Echo Echo Dance Theatre Company team about any aspect of the company's work and history, and an online gallery photographic retrospective of the past seven festivals created by Simon Alleyne.

The new works we commissioned aren't lost though. All of the artists whose work we had planned to present have agreed to bring the performances to us later in 2021 or early 2022 when pandemic restrictions have been lifted enough for that to be done responsibly. We hope the online talks will whet the appetite for that.

Please check out the details of what we are offering and join us online for some of the events, and don't hesitate to contact us if you want to know more.

All the best to everyone

Steve Batts
Artistic Director



Festival Timetable

Online

(All times GMT)

Monday 22nd February

- 12noon - 14.00** (Class) - Phrasing with Echo Echo Artistic Director, Steve Batts.
- 19.00 - 19.15** Ayesha Mailey of the Echo Echo Ensemble performs a livestream solo improvisation performance.
- 20.00 - 21.00** Artist talk by Caroline Bowditch (Melbourne) and Linda Fearon (Armagh) about their work-in-progress *Armour Off*, exploring the notions of outer and inner self.

Tuesday 23rd February

- 19.00 - 19.15** Kelly Quigley of the Echo Echo Ensemble performs a livestream solo improvisation performance.
- 20.00 - 21.00** Artist talk by Kate Wilson (Sligo) discussing the development of her piece *Folds of the Soul / Portraits in Time*, a collaboration with three dance artists in integrated processes of improvised dance duet and portraiture in charcoal and oil paint.

Wednesday 24th February



- 12 noon - 13.00** (Class) - Movement Games for all the Family! with Zoe and Tonya from the Echo Echo Ensemble.
- 19.00 - 19.15** Zoe Ramsey of the Echo Echo Ensemble performs a livestream solo improvisation performance.
- 20.00 - 21.00** Artist talk by Suzannah McCreight (Belfast) reflecting on her work-in-progress *Peregrine* and the relationship between dance and music.

Thursday 25th February

- 19.00 - 19.15** Tonya Sheina of the Echo Echo Ensemble performs a livestream solo improvisation performance.
- 20.00 - 21.00** Artist talk by Natasha Bourke (Cork) about her interdisciplinary site-specific work *Testuro Utero Go! Litter Womb* and issues of human existence in a bubble.

Friday 26th February

- 12noon - 13.30** (Class) Gentle Movement for 50+ year olds with Tonya and Zoe from the Echo Echo Ensemble.
- 19.00 - 19.15** Artistic Director of Echo Echo, Steve Batts performs a livestream solo improvisation performance.
- 20.00 - 21.00** Artist talk by Echo Echo Ensemble member Zoe Ramsey, about her festival commission *Dance, for Dance Sake* (working title), and the joy of dancing.

Saturday 27th February

- 14.00 - 16.00** Echo Echo "Open for Questions" online.

22nd - 27th February - Photographic Retrospective Online Gallery

A retrospective exhibition of Simon Alleyne's beautiful images of Echo Echo's past seven festivals 2013 - 2019

Livestream Solos

22nd - 26th February, every evening from 7pm

These five, short, livestreamed solo dances by artists from Echo Echo are presented in a way modelled on the November Dances project that Steve Batts undertook in late 2020. The format of short solo dances each evening proved very successful with well over 1000 log-ins from many parts of the globe, over the twenty one evenings. We decided to continue this format as a way to keep things live and to enervise the connections between ourselves and our local, regional, national and international audiences and colleagues. So, at 7pm each evening one of Zoe, Ayesha, Kelly, Tonya and Steve will invite you to join the audience on zoom for a unique, one-off, movement performance designed for livestream.

Classes/Workshops online

Various

We are offering three workshops taught by Echo Echo artists. They are online, of course, so you can log in from anywhere in the world to join us. On Monday 22nd February, 12 noon GMT Steve Batts leads a two hour class, open to anyone over 16 with an interest in exploring the subtlety and beauty that becomes possible when we pay attention to the details of phrasing in movement. On Wednesday 24th February at 12 noon GMT Tonya Sheina and Zoe Ramsey will teach a one hour class for families where grown-ups and kids can have fun together with movement games. On Friday at 12 noon Tonya and Zoe offer an hour-and-a-half class of gentle movement for anyone over 50 years old.



Photographic Retrospective Online Gallery

22nd - 27th February online

Simon Alleyne, who has been responsible for the photographic and video documentation the Echo Echo Festivals, has created a retrospective exhibition selected from the beautiful images from the past seven editions. A version of this will be available as an online gallery between 22nd and 27th February. Later in the year we will mount the full exhibition of images in the lobby and gallery spaces at Echo Echo Studios.



Photo: Living Witness Productions - Iann Gallos performing Perra at Open Call 2015

Open To Questions

Saturday 27th February

On Saturday 27th Echo Echo is “Open To Questions”. All the staff and ensemble artists will be available online from 2pm - 4pm to answer (or at least try to answer) any questions you might have about the company. Maybe you are interested in the history of the company, the idea of “Poetic Movement”, light and sound, collaboration, the organisational structure, funding, the experience of building a project slowly over decades outside a metropolitan centre, our work with a wide variety of partner organisations, our work with people of all ages and abilities and experiences, our views on art practice generally and dance in particular, the special challenges of the past year... or something else entirely. If you have a question, or just want to hear us respond to other people’s, then join us.

If you want to submit a question beforehand please email to: steve@echoechodance.com and put Open To Questions in the subject line.

Artist Talks

Various

Join us online for a series of conversations exploring the creative practice and ideas of each of the artists who would have presented work at our festival had pandemic circumstances allowed. Steve Batts will interview Caroline Bowditch (Aus) and Linda Fearon (Armagh), Kate Wilson (Sligo), Suzannah McCreight (Belfast), Natasha Bourke (Cork) and Zoe Ramsey (Derry) to find out more about the work they were making for the Echo Echo Festival their personal history, work practice and ideas, and the ways they have adapted to “Covid Times”. We hope these talks will whet the appetite for when we are in a position to present the performances properly, hopefully in the not too distant future.

You can join the conversation with questions and comments towards the end of each interview.

If you have a question you would like to submit beforehand please email: steve@echoechodance.com and put “artist talks” and the name of the artist in the subject line.



Artist Talk: Caroline Bowditch and Linda Fearon

Monday 22nd February 8pm

Melbourne based director and choreographer, Caroline Bowditch and dance artist Linda Fearon, talk about their new collaboration *Armour Off!*, a personal exploration of Linda's notions of self.

Armour Off! is the second of two works developed by Croí Glan in 2020. Performed by Croí Glan's Linda Fearon this brand new solo, is created in collaboration with performance artist and choreographer Caroline Bowditch, and Composer Niall O'Carroll. A deeply personal and insightful exploration of Linda's own experiences of navigating the world, *Armour Off!* is set within Linda's own home and explores the notion of an "outer and inner" self; how Linda prepares herself to face the world outside her front door and what happens when she is truly at home and can let herself go free.

Linda Fearon, a dance artist with a disability from Armagh, trained with Luminous Soul and has since worked with seminal artists in integrated and disability dance development including, Marc Brew, Caroline Bowditch, Claire Cunningham, Candoco Dance and Blue Eyed Soul. She is currently Co-Artistic Director of Croí Glan Integrated Dance.

Caroline Bowditch is an internationally renowned director and choreographer with a disability based in Melbourne. She has worked with Croí Glan as a director on two previous solo works.

Niall O'Carroll is an established composer and performer for television, radio and theatre, with a deep knowledge of Irish, European, American roots, Rock and Contemporary/Electronic music. Niall has previously worked with Croí Glan on the Aerial Dance Theatre production, TILT, for which he both composed the music and performed live.

Armour Off! is Commissioned and Produced by Croí Glan and funded by an Arts Council of Ireland Arts Grant Award for Dance.



Artist Talk: Kate Wilson

Tuesday 23rd February 8pm

Sligo based artist Kate Wilson talks about the development of her festival commission *Folds of the Soul / Portraits in Time*, an embodied approach to image and movement creation within improvised duet and portrait forms.

Portraiture remains a unique and long-established genre for the exploration of our relational experiences of self and other, both in the collaborative act between artist and subject, and in the enduring generated image. Whilst discussion of the inherent dialogic aspects within portraiture have been ongoing throughout its history, the explicitly relational media of dance duet incorporated in *Folds of the Soul / Portraits in Time* seeks to further unveil some of the deeper implicit elements. Contextualised by her background in dance and visual art, Kate has collaborated with three dance artists in integrated processes of improvised dance duet and portraiture in charcoal and oil paint. The resulting installation includes live performance, ten completed works on canvas and paper, and two video works, *Curves of Time* and *Interferometer*. The video works whilst revealing palpable disciplines within singular processes also explore the emerging relationships between drawing and process, and painting and performance. Here we are also invited to consider the drawing process in connection with the expression of trajectory in movement, and painting with the sensing of internal forces preceding movement. With an ongoing interest in how new modes of practice and extended understanding can emerge through a softening of boundaries between dance and visual art forms, *Folds of the Soul / Portraits in Time* investigates the inherent dynamic aspects of ourselves and our interactions, bringing us towards new definitions in visual art portraiture and dance.



Photo: Kate Wilson - Time fold 1, Cadmum Red Deep

Kate Wilson has a background in visual art and dance and her practice, based in County Sligo, is both interdisciplinary and collaborative. She is an honours graduate of the Slade School of Art and recipient of Masters in Creative Practice from Independent Dance & Trinity Laban, London. In 2015 Kate founded Undercurrent network which explores issues of mobility and inclusiveness in the arts, creating innovative performances with movement practitioners from diverse backgrounds. Community & school outreach form an integral part of Kate's practice and research. As a lead artist for the Irish Teacher Artist Partnership design team, she works with the department of Education, training teachers and artists as well as mentoring for Roscommon and Leitrim county council arts initiatives.

Artist Talk: Suzannah McCreight

Wednesday 24th February 8pm

Belfast Artist Suzannah McCreight will give insight into the development of her work in progress 'Peregrine' which explores the relationship between dance and music. She will be joined by her musical collaborator Nick Boyle.

Choreographer/dancer Suzannah McCreight and composer/pianist Nick Boyle, dance and play together like visitors exploring the space, looking for somewhere to settle. The pianist sits at his instrument, the dancer listens for the music and follows its lead. In this suite of four solos, each short piece suggests a new connection to the space, inviting a fresh response from the dancer to the music.

Peregrine emerges from collaborative conversations about the relationship of dance and music. The art of listening is informing the development of the movement, which is leading towards free and playful dancing that follows the music's melodies as they weave, pull, soar and tumble through the space.

The artists will explain their creative journey and their evolving reflections about how music and dance interact.

Suzannah McCreight is a Belfast-based performer, choreographer and contemporary dance tutor. Commissions have included pieces for Maiden Voyage, Open Arts (Belfast), BBC/Imagine Media, De Stilte (Holland), and Springs Dance Company (London).

Suzannah discovered contemporary dance in the Cornwall and National Youth Dance Companies in England before training at TrinityLaban on the BA and MA programmes. She then danced for Transitions, Scottish Dance Theatre, Cathy Seago, Springs, Attik and Maiden Voyage. She has taught at TrinityLaban, University of Ulster and Belfast Metropolitan College and was rehearsal director for BareBones in Birmingham. The commission for Echo Echo Festival 2021 has enabled her to collaborate with Nick Boyle, who she first met creating for Terra Nova's 'Dream' production.

Nick Boyle is a composer and pianist who has worked extensively in theatre. His musical, 'The Jazzelles' (2016/18) sold out throughout NI. He was MD and composer of two of the largest intercultural productions undertaken in Northern Ireland 'The Belfast Tempest' (2016) and 'Dream' (2019). Working with Ian Sansom and Wireless Mystery Theatre he was composer of 'Play of the Book' (2013) and arranger and MD for BBC NI's 'Sing Carols' (2012). He wrote the music for the 'Wish You Were Here Documentary' (2020) conceived and directed by Grace Sweeney and Laura O'Connor.



Photo Mark McCormick

Artist Talk: Natasha Bourke

Thursday 25th February 8pm

Interdisciplinary artist Natasha Bourke reflects on her site-specific performance in-progress *Testuro Utero Go! Litter Womb*, which addresses existential themes in increasingly changing times.



Photo Lisa Meany

Presented outdoors between dusk and nightfall, I perform as a 'separate being' inside a large transparent ball, blindly navigating from day to night, between land and water mass, followed by a figure pulling two smaller balls containing shredded single-use plastics. Intermittent walkie-talkie exchange with a guide outside is core to the soundscape.

The work attempts to visually summarise the safety, isolation and uncertainty experienced, as humans increasingly exist in bubbles. The performer's presence is contained and protected, traversing and adapting to ever-shifting terrain. The vulnerable image echoes the challenges that we grapple with in trying to understand the world. I am mindful of ancient waterways, linking a site to an earlier state and am interested in anatomical/environmental 'containment' of water with its role vibrating through a body/landscape, contrasting the solid and the mutable. The plastics within the balls provide ecological commentary. The first iteration of T.U.G! LW took place in a derelict sea bath, for Kirkos Ensemble's Biosphere in Dublin. In further developing this work with Echo Echo in Derry, I am keen to explore links with Cork, my southern sister city, particularly within uncharted post-Brexit territory.

Natasha Bourke is a Cork-based interdisciplinary artist of Irish/Dutch descent with an extensive movement background (including contemporary, break, folk, jazz, ballet, poetic/authentic movement, contemplative dance, butoh, body weather, aerial/harness, acrobatics, physical theatre, swimming, yoga and tai chi). Her practice embraces performance, lens-based media, installation, archive, drawing and sound. She has a 1st class honours BA in Fine Art and has been involved in numerous live/filmic projects across Europe since 2007. The artist's roots, life and mixed experience of intense ballet training from infancy, underpin her work which contemplates themes of self and society such as identity, isolation, institution, legacy, transience, perception, polarity, pathos and play. With a surreal, ironic and spectral aesthetic, Bourke continually investigates new ways to merge and refine the different strands of her practice into a unique coherent poetic language, whilst maintaining an open approach and process. T.U.G! Litter Womb is the starting point of an ambitious new water-based vision that Bourke is developing with support of the Arts Council, Echo Echo DTC, Firkin Crane and Cork City Council.

Artist Talk: Zoe Ramsey

Friday 26th February 8pm

Echo Echo Ensemble Artist, Zoe Ramsey talks about her working processes for her festival commission *Dance, for Dance Sake* (working title), celebrating the joy of dance.

"I was commissioned to take the lead role in creating a short 10 minute performance for the Echo Echo Festival 2021 along with the three other ensemble members of the company, Kelly Quigley, Tonya Sheina and Ayesha Mailey. I wanted to create and choreograph something where the 'theme' was dancing and the piece was therefore about dancing, dancing together, and the enjoyment of dancing, as you see in folk or community dances.

I'm not so concerned about strict technicality or developing moves to symbolise a deeper meaning, I'm concerned with the depth that already exists in dancing and dancing together and seeing someone dance. So I began the process of composing material for my piece from the place of a desire to dance. I also commissioned long-time Echo Echo collaborator, Mark O'Doherty to compose music for the piece, which has resulted in a wonderful track which definitely evokes the desire to dance!

Because of Covid restrictions the ensemble were unable to all be together in the studio, so it started off with one-on-ones, developing material, recording and collecting as we went along; kind of like the process of making a collage. We are still in the process of creating the piece and are looking forward to the next stage when restrictions lift and we can all work together!"



Zoe Ramsey began her dancing journey in 2005 attending Echo Echo's Youth Dance programme *Daring Feet*. She achieved a BA Hons Degree in Dance Performance at Falmouth University in Cornwall and became an ensemble member at Echo Echo Dance Theatre Company after graduating in 2013. She has performed in a wide range of Echo Echo productions including *The Cove* (2017), *Lost in Frost* (2016), *Ludo Lusi Lusum* (2014), *Motion Ensemble* (2013), *The Chess Piece* (2010). She co-created the most recent Echo Echo children's work *A Box* (2017) which has toured locally and internationally. Zoe regularly teaches and works with adults and children of all ages and also practices other movement forms such as Corporeal mime, masked theatre and different martial art practices. She has a deep interest in Contact Improvisation and is one of the organisers of Echo Echo's annual Contact Improvisation Festival.

THANK YOU

Echo Echo Festival Team

Artistic Director - Steve Batts
Associate Artistic Director - Ayesha Mailey
Company Manager - Ailbe Beirne
Development Officer - Anna Nolan
Technical Manager - Barry Davis
Echo Echo Ensemble - Ayesha Mailey, Kelly Quigley, Zoe Ramsey,
Tonya Sheina
Video and Photography - Simon Alleyne
Publicity artwork and design - Ciaran Harley at zoocreative
Board of Directors - Deirdre Gillespie, Esther Alleyne, Mandy
Blinco, Cath McBride

Festival Thanks

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Thanks to all of the Echo Echo staff, ensemble and directors for their commitment and perseverance during what has been a hugely challenging time for the arts and for society as a whole.

Finally, thanks to you - our audiences, colleagues, friends and family for your continued support!

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