BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

LOUISE LECAVALIER

Born in Montreal, Louise LECAVALIER studied modern dance in Montreal and New York. A professional dancer since 1977, she has performed with such companies as Nouvelle Aire and Pointépiénu, and for independent choreographers in Montreal and New York. In 1982, she choreographed the solo *No, No, No, I Am Not Mary Poppins*, presented in Montreal in 1982.

She joined La La La Human Steps in 1981 for its production of *Oranges* and went on to perform in each of the company's productions up until 1999. In 1985, Louise Lecavalier became the first Canadian to win a Bessie Award in New York for her performance in *Businessman in the Process of Becoming an Angel* (1983).

She danced in *Human Sex* (1985), *New Demons* (1987), *Infante* (1991) and finally, *2* (1995) and *Exaucé/Salt* (1998), where she achieved a rare maturity as a dancer. As the company's icon and luminary for nearly two decades, she gave heart and soul to her art. She embodied dance on the outer edge, performing with passion and unrestrained generosity, dazzling audiences worldwide. She has been described as "the most tragically brilliant dancer alive today. A flame on legs" (*Melody Maker,* London). "The essence of La La La Human Steps. Often imitated, never equalled. She remains the untameable platinum-blonde rebel, refusing all chains. For her, dance is an act of sharing" (*Le Monde*, Paris).

Louise Lecavalier also participated in each of La La La's major collaborations. In 1987 she was invited to dance with Marc Béland at *Rendez-Vous 87* in Quebec City, alongside two dancers from the Bolshoi Ballet. In 1988 she performed with David Bowie in a benefit concert for London's Institute of Contemporary Arts. Choreographed by Édouard Lock, this piece was also part of *Wrap Around the World,* a show conceived by artist Nam June Paik and simulcast in several countries. In 1990, along with Donald Weikert, she was a guest artist in David Bowie's *Sound and Vision* tour, performing in some twelve cities, including New York and Los Angeles. In 1989 she starred in Carole Laure's video *Save the Last Dance for Me*, while in 1992 she appeared in *The Yellow Shark* concert, performed by Frank Zappa and the Ensemble Modern of Germany in Frankfurt, Berlin and Vienna.

In the spring of 1994 she appeared in the film *Strange Days*, directed by Kathryn Bigelow in Los Angeles. In August of the same year she played in *Élizabeth Chénier,* from the series *Pour tout dire,* a National Film Board production directed by Martin Baril. In the fall of 1996, she and Édouard Lock appeared in the documentary *Inspirations* by British director Michael Apted, an exploration of the creative processes of artists from various disciplines, including painter Roy Lichtenstein, singer David Bowie, and architect Tadao Ando. In August 1997, she took part in the improvisational project *Crash Landing—Second Chance* at the Internationale Tanzwochen in Vienna, along with choreographers Steve Paxton and Meg Stuart, musicians David Linton and Harry de Wit and actress Kate Valk of the Wooster Group, among others. In the winter of 1998, she was a lecturer in dance at the Université du Québec à Montréal.

In May of 1999 Louise Lecavalier received the Jean A. Chalmers National Award, Canada's most distinguished dance prize, the first time it was awarded to a dancer. On May 29, in Porto (Portugal), she danced the 50th performance of *Salt,* her final appearance with La La La Human Steps, thus ending her fruitful collaboration with Édouard Lock, after eighteen years of total commitment to the company.

In March 2003, she performed in an evening's work entitled *Reclusive Conclusions and Other Duets* at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, a programme consisting of three duets choreographed by Tedd Robinson, which also included the participation of Margie Gillis and Mako Kawano. During the following two years, Louise had a further occasion to collaborate with Tedd Robinson when he created *Cobalt rouge* for her and three male dancers. This work premiered at the National Arts Centre and was performed at the Théâtre Outremont as part

of the Montreal HighLights Festival in February, 2005, at the Venice Biennale in June of that same year, and on tour in Brazil in March 2006.

Following the creation of the solo piece, *"I" Is Memory*, choreographed by Benoît Lachambre in 2006, she collaborated with Canadian choreographer Crystal Pite to create the solo, *Lone Epic*. *Lone Epic*, *"I" Is Memory*, and *Lula and the Sailor* — a duet from *Cobalt Rouge* — were the three components of a programme touring Canada, Europe, and Japan from 2006 to 2009 for her production company, Fou Glorieux, a flexible structure founded in 2006, which has allowed her to pursue, in solo and duet form, research based on virtuosity, the surpassing of limits and risk-taking – a quest for the absolute in which she seeks to unveil the "more-than-human within the human."

The duet *Is You Me*, a collaboration between Louise Lecavalier and Benoît Lachambre produced by the company Par b.l.eux, was created in spring 2008 at Festival Transamériques in Montreal and performed 54 times in international tours until the summer of 2011. The double bill made up of *Children,* a duet conceived by Nigel Charnock and *A Few Minutes of Lock,* three updated duets by Édouard Lock, was presented 92 times from 2009 until the end of 2013 in North America, Europe, and Australia.

In parallel to these performances, Louise Lecavalier created a new work, *So Blue*, which she choreographed and staged. The first part of this piece was performed in preview at Festival Sommerszene in Salzburg in July, 2012. The world premiere took place on December 7, 2012, at tanzhaus nrw in Dusseldorf, and the North-American premiere on June 7, 2013 at Festival TransAmériques in Montreal. *So Blue* continues to tour in North and South America, Europe, and Asia. In June 2015, in Toronto, it won the Dora Mavor Moore Prize for Outstanding Production following its presentation at the 2104 Luminato Festival.

The world premiere of Louise's most recent work, *Battleground*, took place in Germany in February, 2016, followed by its North American premiere at the Monument National in Montreal as part of Festival TransAmériques 2016. Like *So Blue*, *Battleground* has been touring internationally.

Also in 2013, Lecavalier performed in the short dance film *Off Ground*, directed by Boudewijn Koole and choreographed by Dutch mimographer, Jakop Ahlbom. Winner of the Public's Choice Award at the 2013 Cinedans – Dance on Screen Festival in Amsterdam, *Off Ground* also garnered the Award for creativity in March, 2014, at the 32nd Montreal International Festival of Films on Art. A documentary on Louise and her work, *Louise Lecavalier – In Motion*, directed by Raymond St-Jean and produced by Ciné Qua Non Média, was broadcast by ZDF/ARTE, the European culture TV channel, in January 2018 and was released in cinemas in Montreal, Quebec City, and Sherbrooke at the end of March 2018.

In February-March 2018, Louise created and performed the dance segment of the play *Les Marguerites*, directed by Denis Marleau and Stéphanie Jasmin and presented at Espace GO, Montreal.

Louise Lecavalier has received the highest distinctions awarded in her field. She twice received Canada Council grants and studied in New York for extended periods in 1982 and 1986. In the summer of 1994, she received an advanced study grant from Quebec's Conseil des arts et des lettres to specifically perfect her training with the boxer Milford Kemp. In February 2003, she received a Career Grant from the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec. In December 2008, she was appointed Officer of the Order of Canada, the country's highest honour. In June, 2011, she was named "Dance Personality of the Year 2010-2011" by the Syndicat professionnel français de la critique ((French Critics' Union), in Paris. In November 2011, she became the very first winner of the Prix de la danse de Montréal, an initiative of choreographer Marie Chouinard. In September, 2013, she won the prestigious 2013 Léonide Massine dance prize in the category of "Most Outstanding Female Dancer of the Year on the Contemporary Scene" in Positano, Italy.

In March, 2014, Louise Lecavalier and her company, Fou glorieux, won two very prestigious awards, almost back to back. The company received the 29th Grand Prix du Conseil des arts de Montréal, and the dancer was among the winners of the illustrious 2014 Governor General Performing Arts Award (GGPAA) for lifetime artistic achievement, Canada's highest distinction in the performing arts. In March, 2015, she was among the 35 personalities honoured for their contribution in highlighting Quebec's achievements in the arts and culture internationally. She was awarded the insignia of the Ordre des arts et des lettres du Québec, thus becoming a Companion of the Order. In November 2017, she won the Prix Denise-Pelletier, the highest distinction in the performing arts awarded by the Quebec government, and in December that same year, she received an honorary doctorate from the Université du Québec à Montréal.

Louise Lecavalier occasionally gives training sessions and master classes in Canada and in Europe.

March 11, 2019