

# Inamorata Dance Collective

## Company History

The Inamorata Dance Collective was founded in 2014 by Mexican Canadian dancer, Sofí Gudiño. Gudiño draws on her roots in flamenco arts and physical theatre to collaborate with contemporary dancers, writers and musicians to produce dance theatre shows. Since it's founding, Inamorata has set out to use performance art as an accessible platform for storytelling and community engagement. They have worked with over twenty-five artists in their three years as a collective, experimenting in crossovers with film, technology, opera, traditional flamenco and theatre. With a strong emphasis on the collaborative process, all artists contribute in more than one area of the production, growing their personal repertoire in theatre and learning from each other. The Collective is premiering their first full length production, *Picaza*, in the Toronto Fringe Festival.

## The Company:

### **Sofí Gudiño, Founder and Director**

Sofí is a Toronto based performer who was raised in the flamenco tradition. She began dancing flamenco at the age of five at the Academy of Spanish Dance, and draws from her roots in this form of movement as inspiration for her art. Since then, Sofí has had a growing passion for the stage, and worked as a performer, soloist, and choreographer throughout the GTA. She has appeared across the city in festivals such as Nuit Blanche, The Toronto International Flamenco Festival, numerous runway and off-broadway shows, film festivals and World Pride. In 2015, Sofí co-founded The Space, an immersive art event series in Toronto that focused on making fine art accessible, and highlighting both established and emerging artists. Sofí currently works as the Director of Inamorata Dance Collective, a dance theatre collective she founded in 2014 to explore experimental crossovers between contemporary and flamenco dance, theatre and music.

### **Andrea Perez Leon, Artistic Director**

Andrea is a Venezuelan born artist whose career began by exhibiting her photographic works across her hometown, Porlamar. While completing her major in Civil Engineering, Andrea's passion for dance became ignited while working for a Venezuelan dance company, Alma Flamenca, as their co-producer, photographer and art director. In 2014, the political and social climate in Venezuela drove her to seek a home elsewhere, and so she moved on her own to Toronto, Canada. In 2016, Andrea completed her second degree in Interior Design, and began to collaborate with the Inamorata Dance Collective. Andrea always focuses on merging her varied disciplinary backgrounds, while artistically researching the crossover of polarities, trying to find that breaking point where things become the exact opposite, almost like exposing the thin line between reality and its reflection. Her works often express her constant fascination for feelings of loneliness, pain and the changes around her close environment.

## **Nicole Karges, Dramatic Director**

Nicole Karges is a Toronto based actress completing an undergraduate Specialist Degree in Theatre and Performance at the University of Toronto. She has been a proud and passionate member of the Inamorata Collective since its formation, and is honoured to be reprising her role as Dramatic Director. Some of her previous credits include the series of “Beckett Shorts” directed by Adam Paolozza, Dr. Tracey Ringo in “In Conflict”, and Annabel in the short film “Annabel”. Nicole has also had the pleasure of being trained by Ken Gass (Canadian Rep) and Kate Lynch (Stratford), for many years. She has gained experience with all aspects of theatre both on and off the stage throughout her career and is grateful for the opportunity to continue learning. If she isn't working on a project, you can be sure to find her spending far too much time with her own imagination.

## **Eryka Gudiño-Barthold, Writer**

Eryka Gudiño-Barthold is an Expressionist working with sound, visuals, and words. Driven by necessity at a young age, she began to use her creativity and imagination to express herself in various media, including joining The Youngest Shakespeare Company as an actor at age ten, writing poetry and prose at the age of eleven, and teaching herself guitar at fifteen. Having majored in Cinema Studies at U of T, Eryka now attends OCADU for Graphic Design. Eryka has showcased her art across the city as "Erika M.", and debuted her all female punk band, "Crutch", at the Velvet Underground as part of Omit Limitation's event "The Alley III". In 2016, Eryka co-founded The Space, a pop up art gallery series she curated for four successful shows. Currently, Eryka works as the curator for The Rude Collective and the in house writer for Inamorata Dance Collective. Eryka's most recent work delves into the dichotomous relationship between religion and sexuality, and deeply explores the Maddona-Whore complex with her newest project, *Sancta Maria*.

## **Benjamin Barrile, Composer**

Benjamin Barrile is an accomplished flamenco guitarist who also has extensive experience in jazz, classical and world music. In addition to leading his own group, Benjamin has performed and recorded for many artists including: The Café Olé - a multi-award winning group that incorporates a unique mix of flamenco and jazz. In 2000 Benjamin set off to Spain for the first of many times, a country that had long captivated his imagination, in search of flamenco and what would be the most significant journey of his life so far. Benjamin is also a resident guitarist at Toronto based Carmen Romero's School of Flamenco Dance Arts and Esmeralda Enrique Spanish Dance Company. Benjamin has appeared on numerous television and radio broadcasts including CBC, CityTV, Jazz FM, and Telelatino. Benjamin is currently recording his own solo album.

**Mark Marji, Composer**

Mark Marji is a music producer and sound engineer based out of Toronto, Canada. Born to Jordanian parents, the music of the Middle East (both classical and contemporary) played a significant role in his upbringing, and serves as a notable influence on his musical compositions. Under the producer moniker Marji, his work has been featured in publications such as Noisey and Complex Media. Mark is currently prepping the release of his genre-bending musical project "Everything, Everytime" - set to release early Summer 2017. "Much of the time I experience life through sound before any other sense. It is subtle and calming, visceral and energetic; experienced physically, sonically, emotionally and subconsciously. A beautiful conduit for human emotion. I'm so fascinated by the ability of our ears and brains to pinpoint a specific sound in the middle of din, or hear an entire soundscape all within a few moments. The pursuit in capturing and replicating these experiences is what drives me as an audio engineer and sound designer."

**Kahvontay Willis-Slaughter, Principal Dancer**

Kahvontay Willis-Slaughter is Modern Contemporary Dancer originally from London, Ontario. In the past, he has trained at Jo Read School of Dance, George Brown College, and is currently training with Dark Dance Company under the Artistic direction of Allison Bradley. Kahvontay is going into his final year of Centennial College's Dance Performance Program. This is his second season with Inamorata Dance Collective, and he is honoured and thrilled to be apart of it.

**True Skalde, Principal Dancer**

True Skalde is a classically trained ballet and competitive dancer. Since the age of 3, she trained in ballet all over the United States under the prestige of Katerina Fedotova, Ashleigh Berney, Ana Maria Martinez, and Aleksey Plekhanov. In 2015, she was awarded a full scholarship to The Governor's School at Radford University. Upon moving to Toronto, she fell in love with contemporary dance. She dances to express not only her own thoughts, but the ideas, feelings, and stories of others. *Picaza* is True's debut as a principal dancer, and her first foray into the Toronto arts scene.

**Nazanin Meshkat, Corps Performer**

Nazanin Meshkat is a flamenco dancer based in Toronto, Canada. She began her journey as a dancer apprenticing with Esmeralda Enrique's company, has trained with numerous flamenco greats such as Rafaela Carrasco, Domingo Ortega, and Concha Jareño amongst many others, and has been a member of La Compañía Carmen Romero. She currently spends a few months of the year in Madrid, Spain, training with flamenco masters at Academia de Flamenco Amor de Dios. In 2013, she started her solo career as a choreographer and performer. Her original work has been presented at Dance Matters, Fresh Blood and in *tablaos* in Toronto and Madrid. She is grateful to the support of the Ontario Arts Council for the support of her choreographic work.

**Nicole Haber, Corps Performer**

Nicole is a recent graduate from the Randolph Academy for the performing arts and is sharing her love, passion and talent for what she does anyway that she can. She signed with Seventh House Talent agency in January 2017 and has been given many opportunities to showcase her singing, acting, dancing, and composition abilities. She truly loves her job as a performer and has wanted to do this her whole life. She hopes to travel with her work, exploring the world and doing something incredible and impactful that will make people listen. She is extremely grateful to be given a part in this show and to be able to get the opportunity to really work on and build upon her dancing skills.

### **Sam Yang, Corps Performer**

Sam Yang is a contemporary dance artist based in Toronto. Ever since moving to the city, his goal has been to learn as much as he can from his fellow dance artists around him. He is constantly working on his own movement and developing his own artistic voice through improvised work. He has had the pleasure of dancing with Artists in Motion, Inamorata Dance Collective, Impromptu Movement, Parahumans, and Nostos Collectives. He firmly believes that as an artist, it is important to invest yourself in movement work, and to use it as a tool to continue growing.

### **Hailey Gardener, Principal Musician & Corps Performer**

Hailey is so thrilled and proud to be a part of Inamorata Dance Collective's fifth season show! Having gone to school at St.Clair College for Music Theatre Performance in Windsor, Ontario, she would consider herself a dancer/singer/actor. One of the highlights of her career was dancing in the opening ceremonies for the Pan Am Games in 2015. Since moving to Toronto a few months ago, Hailey has been doing mostly Heels and Hip-Hop dance work. She is overjoyed to be back doing her favourite style again (contemporary) in this show. Hailey is most excited to premiere her original music in *Picaza*, and to explore the traditional music of Central and South America for the first time on stage.