

# *PointeTango Dance Company*

PointeTango Dance Company emerged from the question: ‘What happens when classical ballet meets Argentine tango?’ To answer this, Canadian born dancer and choreographer, Alexander Richardson moved to Buenos Aires in 2010 and began researching and living the life of tango. After teaching and performing all over the world in tango festivals, television and film, Alexander created PointeTango with his partner Erin Scott-Kafadar. Their mandate is to create and tour new innovative works showcasing the authenticity of improvised tango and the elegance of classical ballet. Having trained and worked in both disciplines of classical ballet and Argentine tango extensively, Erin and Alexander challenged themselves to develop a new dance vocabulary of “PointeTango”. The PointeTango technique respects the codes and connection of the Argentine tango “abrazo” (embrace) while searching for new solutions and opportunities to the challenges encountered when transitioning from heels to pointe shoes. PointeTango is the only company in the world to improvise Argentine tango on pointe. Their work has been performed on cruise ships internationally, featured in dance film projects and they perform regularly in stage shows and milongas in Buenos Aires and Canada. They have toured their two original highly acclaimed shows: *Para Dos* and *Into the Tango* across Canada in the summers of 2018 and 2019 respectively to sold out theatres. Their festival tours have earned them of the prestigious Best of Festival award in addition to Favourite Dance Show and Favourite Duo, Best Artistry and the Patron’s Pick awards to name a few. PointeTango had scheduled an international tour for PointeTango’s newest show *Tango in the Dark* (spring/summer 2020) before the Covid-19 pandemic hit. As an alternative to presenting live shows, PointeTango continued to share their art by creating video projects for digital distribution and, with a grant from the Canada Council for the Arts, produced their original video of “PointeTango: In Search of the Abrazo” in collaboration with the Payadora Tango Ensemble.



PointeTango’s dancers Erin and Alexander created their newest show, ‘*Tango in the Dark*’, while living in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 2019/2020. They had an international tour scheduled to seven different cities in 2020. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the tour was cancelled and they made, ‘*Tango in the Dark*’ into a feature film with the Payadora Tango Ensemble. The film was chosen to be apart of numerous digital arts festival across the globe and won the "Best On-Demand Show" at the 2021 Pittsburgh Fringe Festival.

PointeTango is excited to announce their return to the stage and to finally performance *Tango in the Dark* live on stage with Payadora at the Toronto Fringe’s Next Stage Festival in January 2022.

## ***Alexander Richardson (He/Him)***

### ***Director, choreographer and dancer of PointeTango Company***

Originally from London, Ontario, Alexander discovered a passion for the performing arts through his involvement with the London Youth Symphony, high school theatre and musical productions and dance classes in ballet and modern dance at the School of Toronto Dance Theatre. The drive to create led him to Montreal where he completed a three-year degree in classical ballet at Ballet Divertimento and a separate three-year Bachelors Degree in Fine Arts, music composition and contemporary dance at Concordia University.

His idea to create a new technique of 'PointeTango' emerge from the question: What happens when classical ballet meets Argentine Tango? To answer this, Alexander left Montreal in 2010 for Buenos Aires and began researching and living the life of tango. He has since moved back to London, Ontario to share his passion for art and dance in his hometown. Alexander is also the author of the online multimedia book; *Tango Scales: How to practice and learn Argentine tango*.



After teaching and performing in Buenos Aires, international tango festivals, on cruise ships in the Caribbean, Mediterranean and Pacific, and in television and film, Alexander created a new theatre company with his partner Erin Scott-Kafadar. Their goal: to create original innovative theatre using the influences of Argentine tango and classical ballet. Alex is currently the principal artist and director of PointeTango Company for which he has choreographed and starred in award-winning shows *Para Dos* (2018) and *Into the Tango* (2019) and he had scheduled an international tour for PointeTango's newest show *Tango in the Dark* (spring/summer 2020) before the Covid-19 pandemic broke out. As an alternative to presenting live shows, Alexander continues to share his art by creating video projects for digital distribution and, with a grant from the Canada Council for the Arts, he produced an original short film entitled "PointeTango: In Search of the Abrazo" in collaboration with the Payadora Tango Ensemble. Alexander continues to develop his skills as a choreographer and artist as he learns to adapt his craft to the challenges of creating, editing and directing for film.

## ***Erin Scott-Kafadar (She/Her)***

### ***Principal dancer of PointeTango Company***

Erin Scott-Kafadar grew up in a house full of art and dance. Whether she was dancing in the studio during her mother's ballet class or joining the circle of Turkish folk dancing at her father's restaurant in Turkey, dance and music were always a big part of Erin's life. She was born in Montreal, Canada where she completed a ten-year professional degree in Classical Ballet at L'École supérieure de ballet du Québec during which she started her professional career as a ballet dancer in 2010, touring with Le Jeune Ballet du Québec and with Ballet Ouest de Montreal's production of 'The Nutcracker'. Directly after graduating from L'ESBQ, she joined the Ballet Eddy Toussaint and was quickly promoted to Principal Dancer to tour with the company internationally for four years.



In 2016, Erin embarked on a new artistic path with her long time partner in life and on stage, Alexander Richardson, and made the choice to dive into the world of Argentine tango. She began her training in Buenos Aires, where she studied with maestros Francisco Forquera, Gabriel Missé, "Los Totis", Natalia Hills, Hugo Mastrolorenzo, Facundo Piñero y Vanessa Villalba and many others. She is currently the principal artist of PointeTango Company which has led her to perform on stages and dance floors with her partner Alexander Richardson in Buenos Aires, on cruise ships internationally and in festivals and events across Canada. She has starred in award-winning theatre shows *Para Dos* (2018) and *Into the Tango* (2019) and was scheduled to perform in an international tour of PointeTango's newest show *Tango in the Dark* (spring/ summer 2020) before the Covid-19 pandemic broke out. While the theatres remained closed, Erin continues to perfect her craft and dives into the challenges of adapting her art for film projects.

She has recently starred in the feature film 'Tango in the Dark' made in collaboration with Payadora Tango Ensemble. She has also begun her career as a grant writer for PointeTango, winning the company a grant from the Canada Council for the Arts to produce a film for dance.

## *Payadora Tango Ensemble*

Payadora is a contemporary chamber music ensemble that performs Argentinian/Uruguayan tango and folk music and original compositions inspired by that tradition. Payadora has self produced two albums and has developed a loyal following across Canada over the past six years. The ensemble balances a combination of virtuosity and creativity, with stylistic accuracy. The ensemble features a collection of some of the most respected chamber musicians in Canada. Founded in 2013, Payadora has become one of Toronto's most vibrant and sought-after acts. Their broad scope in tango draws from the height of Buenos Aires' Tango tradition, including compositions by De Caro, Pugliese, Troilo, and Salgan, to the masterful, contemporary sounds of Astor Piazzolla and beyond. Drawing from eclectic backgrounds in Classical, Jazz, Latin, Eastern European folk music, and improvisation, Payadora's performances exude technical virtuosity, playful spontaneity, and rhythmic vitality.



Their recordings are played regularly on Jazz FM's Cafe Latino and Classical 96.3. The Argentinean consulate recently made a video in support of Payadora showcasing interviews and live videos from Payadora's concerts. In addition, Payadora is the featured ensemble in the 2019 documentary "The Sounds of Canada: Argentina."

Highlights from Payadora's past performances include sold-out shows at the Ottawa Chamberfest, Indian River Music Festival in PEI, St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, Harbourfront Centre, Toronto Music Festival, the Lula Lounge, the Jazz Bistro, the TD Toronto Jazz Festival, and for the Canadian Opera Company's World Music Series at the Four Seasons Centre. Payadora has been featured with the London Symphonia, Cathedral Bluffs Symphony and the Hannaford Street Silver Band, Festival of the Sound in Parry Sound, Stratford Summer Music Festival, Leith Festival in Owen Sound, Music in the Morning in Vancouver and Vancouver Island Music Festival.

They are currently collaborating with Grammy award-winning "Yiddish Glory" in concerts and have composed and arranged an entire record of Polish and Yiddish Tango. They will be performing at Queens University and a live TV broadcast for Zoomer Radio.

They received a grant from the Ontario Arts Council to produce a full-length film of 11 pieces in collaboration with PointeTango which they released in 2021.

They were selected to perform their show "Tango in the Dark" with PointeTango Dance Company as part of the Next Stage Theatre Festival and will be performing five live shows in Toronto in January 2022.

Payadora will be releasing their third album with a grant from the Ontario Arts Council in 2022. Additionally, Rebekah received creation grants from Ontario Arts Council and Toronto Arts Councils to compose new works for Payadora.

## *Rebekah Wolkstein, violin, voice (She/Her)*

Celebrated for her stunning virtuosity, nuance and broad musical versatility, Wisconsin-born violinist, Rebekah Wolkstein has established a strong presence on the Toronto music scene. Rebekah has worked as an orchestral musician since winning an audition at the age of 16. She has performed and toured extensively with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, The National Ballet of Canada, The Canadian Opera Company.

An active studio musician, Rebekah is also at home playing in the styles of Folk, Klezmer, Pop, Latin, and Jazz and can be heard on numerous recordings including new releases by Donovan Woods, Laila Biali, Royal Wood and Justin Gray.

Rebekah is the first violinist of the Venuti String Quartet. She has performed as a violin soloist with Esmerelda Enrique Spanish Dance Company, Kaeja Dance and live to air with Simon Spiro on classical 96.3 FM and with Russell Braun.

Aside from her active performing career, Rebekah holds a Doctorate in Violin Performance from the University of Toronto as well as degrees in violin from the Cleveland Institute of Music. A dedicated educator, Rebekah teaches private lessons and ensembles out of her own studio and at Humber College.





## *Drew Jurecka, bandoneon, violin (He/Him)*

Drew Jurecka began his relationship with Payadora as record producer for both of their albums. He is an accomplished jazz and session violinist but also as an arranger, producer, composer and multi-instrumentalist. Trained classically, he studied with Lorand Fenyves and has a degree from the prestigious Cleveland Institute of Music. Drew has spent the last twelve year years playing jazz, pop, rock and other contemporary styles in Toronto. Though violin is his primary instrument, he also works frequently as a performer and recording sideman on viola, saxophone, clarinet and mandolin. For five years, Drew played with Jeff Healey as part of his Jazz Wizards band, which toured extensively across Canada. Drew can be heard on three of Jeff Healey's CDs, including the Juno Nominated "Last Call". Drew has also toured nationally and internationally with The Polyjesters, Jesse Cook, Stuart McLean and the Vinyl Cafe, Alex Pangman, the Bebop Cowboys and Jill Barber.



Drew's arrangements have been used on countless records for artists across Canada, the United States and Europe. Drew has written original scores for eight stage plays, including seven for Vancouver-based 'Monster Theatre' and one for Tracey Erin Smith's play "the Burning Bush", which has been performed extensively in Toronto and New York City. He has also written and produced music for film, including the award winning documentary "Cuba Libre" and the recent shorts "An Insignificant Man" and "Sidestep Goosestep".

Drew currently teaches violin at Humber College, where he has helped to create the only specialized jazz strings post-secondary program in Canada. In seven years, the program has quadrupled in size and now includes ensembles, technique and master classes in addition to private lessons. His students have gone on to win international jazz awards and to perform and record in Canada, the US and France. From 2002 - 2011, Drew was the director of the Jazz series at the Northern Lights Music Festival in Guadalajara, Mexico. During that time he sold out nearly every show, performing with renowned Canadian artists such as Richard Underhill, Daniel Barnes, Terra Hazelton, Sophia Perlman and Jill Barber. He is also a member of the Venuti String Quartet, a crossover quartet with violinist Rebekah Wolkstein.

## *Robert Horvath, piano (He/Him)*

Robert Horvath is a versatile pianist, gaining wide recognition in the province of Ontario. He has performed regularly with the CBSO since 2008 performing Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2 in C minor and Bach's single, double, triple, and quadruple keyboard concerti in one evening. In 2008, he performed Gerald Finzi's Eclogue for Piano and Strings with the York Chamber Ensemble, and in 2003, was part of the Royal Ontario Museum's grand re-opening. Robert, who has been praised as "...a fine pianist with musical imagination and sensitivity" by McMaster Artist-in-Residence and internationally acclaimed pianist Valerie Tryon, will be featured soloist in recital for The Caskey School of Music concert series with a program entitled "Chopin and Friends". Speaking of his recording of Bach's F minor Piano Concerto, renowned vocal coach Elaine Overholt said, "His nuances are exquisite. His incredible technique allows Robert so much range with the dynamics, and his heart leads you to the magic." An important priority for Robert Horvath is music education. He founded the Horvath School of Music in 2002, and he has been an assistant teacher for Elaine Overholt at the Big Voice Studio in Toronto where he teaches classical piano, jazz (harmony), song writing and improvisation. Robert was a recipient of a Canada Council grant in 2008. He earned his Masters Degree in Piano Performance and Pedagogy from the prestigious Franz Liszt Academy of Music and the Bela Bartok Conservatory of Music in his native Hungary; his musical ancestry can be traced back to Franz Liszt.



## *Joseph Phillips, double bass (He/Him)*

Born and raised in Toronto close to the rolling green hills of Christie Pits, Joe Phillips started studying classical guitar at age 9, at the University Settlement House Music School. He attended Oakwood Collegiate, and after some time playing the clarinet, he discovered the double bass. Time spent playing in various blues bars, Irish pubs and booze cans and four years studying with renowned classical virtuoso Joel Quarrington have led to a busy and diverse career. When not playing principal bass in Orchestra London Canada, Joe can be found making music with artists as varied as The Art of Time Ensemble, Via Salzburg Chamber Orchestra, Group of 27 Chamber Orchestra, cabaret siren Patricia O'Callaghan, songwriters Jenny Whiteley, Sarah Slean, Ruth Moody, the Wailin' Jennys, Corin Raymond and Rita Chiarelli, jazz bassist/cellist/composer Andrew Downing, banjoist Jayme Stone, Canadian fiddlers Pierre Schryer and Shane Cook and Irish flute and whistle virtuoso Nuala Kennedy. Joe has performed with the National Arts Centre Orchestra, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Les Violons du Roy, I Musici de Montréal, Tafelmusik and the Festival of the Sound and is an annual participant in the Sweetwater Music weekend in Owen Sound, Ontario. He lives in London, Ontario with his partner and their two children.

