

worldstage

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bluemouth inc.
(Canada/USA)

Dance Marathon

**Enwave Theatre
231 Queens Quay West
February 4 - 7, 7:00 p.m.
\$15.00 - 30.00**

**Box office: 416-973-4000
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bluemouth inc. – *Dance Marathon*

Production Notes and Overview

A World Premiere!

Award-winning interdisciplinary theatre collective, bluemouth inc., presents an interactive, duration-based performance event inspired by the physically gruelling spectator sport from Depression-Era North America.

A genuine endurance contest and staged performance event, hopeful amateurs can mix with bluemouth inc. performers under the direction of floor judges and the merciless movement of the clock to shape participation theatre. Those with two left feet can simply sit back to enjoy the fancy footwork.

Historically, the economic success of the dance marathon relied on promoters hiring and embedding eccentrically skilled performers among the actual dance contestants to create unusual and exciting situations. Using this model, selected audience members are each paired with a different performer, as if they were dance partners set within the larger framework of the dance marathon.

Bluemouth inc. continues their exploration of the audience/performer relationship within a performance duration context. *Dance Marathon* explores themes of endurance, competition, survival, and voyeurism among others.

As a social phenomenon, *Dance Marathon* also serves as an appropriate point of departure for exploring some very contemporary issues, including interpersonal competition, physical and psychological endurance, self-destruction, deception, shyness and intimacy. These themes will be used as starting points for creatively exploring the dynamics of one-to-one audience-performer relationships.

This project brings together an eclectic team of artists that include the four core members of bluemouth inc. – Stephen O’Connel, Sabrina Reeves, Lucy Simic and Richard Windeyer – two associate members – jazz vocalist Ciara Adams and lighting designer David Duclos – as well as Bruce Barton, a dramaturge specializing in interdisciplinary process.

Company & Performance History

bluemouth inc. was created in the spring of 1998 when four artists from different artistic disciplines came together through a shared interest in developing hybrid performance.

The collective’s first piece was entitled *MAPPING CURRENTS* for the Edgy Women Festival at Studio 303 in Montreal. The project established the company’s mandate toward the collective creation interdisciplinary performance works. This piece was followed by a 1999 performance of *SPIRAL* and *CEASEFIRE* during the 2000 Montreal Fringe Festival.

In the fall of 2000, bluemouth inc. relocated to Toronto and immediately produced *AMERICAN STANDARD*. This move represented a significant shift in the collective's growth because two of the original members stayed in Montreal and were replaced in Toronto by a sound designer and a filmmaker. *AMERICAN STANDARD* was followed by a performance installation at The Gladstone Hotel entitled *LENZ*, in May of 2001. The company began to become recognized for its unique style of engaging audiences in intimate and unusual settings.

Bluemouth inc. received its first project grant in 2002 to workshop a piece entitled *SOMETHING ABOUT A RIVER*. *SOMETHING ABOUT A RIVER* is a triptych, its three cycles taking place at three different sites along the buried Garrison Creek. The first of these three workshops was entitled *THE FIRE SERMON* and was presented at The Metro XXX Theatre.

In the fall of 2002, bluemouth inc. hosted a round-table discussion, bringing together local interdisciplinary artists and invited guests. The purpose of this gathering was to discuss some of the difficulties facing the dissemination of interdisciplinary work across Canada. A result of this event was the creation of the Pan-Canadian interdisciplinary website www.popstart.ca.

The second workshop of *SOMETHING ABOUT A RIVER* was entitled *DEATH BY WATER* and took place in the winter of 2003 at Trinity Bellwoods Park. Small groups of viewers were transported by rickshaw from a funeral parlor to the park, where they watched an outdoor performance from inside a wooden shed. In August the third and final part of the river trilogy, *WHAT THE THUNDER SAID* was presented at the 2003 Summerworks Festival.

That same month bluemouth inc. received an Ontario Arts Council to present the entire *SOMETHING ABOUT A RIVER TRILOGY*. In the following November the company completed their most ambitious endeavor to date by presenting the five hour performance of *SOMETHING ABOUT A RIVER* over three different location across downtown Toronto. This production was nominated for 6 Dora Awards, and received the award for Outstanding Independent Production.

Bluemouth Inc.'s most recent project is *THE MEMORY OF BOMBS* which was initially developed through an on-going residency at the Theatre Centre in Toronto, and workshopped as part of the Toronto Summerworks Theatre Festival.

As a not-for-profit performance collective, bluemouth inc. continues to explore formal issues related to site-specific work: compositional counterpoint between the properties of film, movement, sound design and spoken word; a temporal installation integrated within a challenging setting; and an ongoing adjustment of the relationship of the performance to the spectator.

Performance History

1998 - *Currents* for the Edgy Women Festival at Studio 303 in Montreal.

1999 - *Spiral* at the Montreal Fringe Festival.

2000 - *Ceasefire* at the Montreal Fringe Festival.

American Standard at Bar Code on College Street in December.

2001 – *Lenz* at The Gladstone Hotel

Pas Avec Espoir, Pas Sans Espoir (a triptych film installation for Body Geometry) at Theatre Passe Muraille.

2002 – *Something About a River workshop one: The Fire Sermon* at The Metro XXX Theatre.

2003 – *Something About a River workshop two: Death by Water* at Trinity Bellwoods Park.

Something About a River workshop three: What The Thunder Said at 2003 Summerworks Festival.

Something About a River workshop one, two and three over three different locations across downtown Toronto.

2004 – *The Memory of Bombs* work-shopped as part of the Toronto Summerworks Theatre Festival.

Biography

bluemouth inc. are four artists trained in various disciplines, brought together by a common vision of sharing their training and forging a new language. The four artists include **Stephen O’Connell**, **Sabrina Reeves**, **Lucy Simic** and **Richard Windeyer**.

Stephen O’Connell has a BFA in modern dance from Rutgers University and an MFA in interdisciplinary art from Simon Fraser University. From 1990 to 1997, he was co-Artistic Director of [Radix Theatre](#) in Vancouver, a site-specific interdisciplinary performance collective. His collaborations include experimental films which have been screened at The Vancouver International Film Festival, The American Dance Festival, and the Moving Pictures Festival in Toronto. He is also the Co-Artistic Director of FREE FALL, a biannual festival in Toronto, Canada of new and interdisciplinary performance and currently a member of the steering committee for Performance Creation Canada, a nationwide network dedicated to the nourishment, management and study of performance.

Sabrina Reeves graduated from Carnegie-Mellon with a BFA in Drama. Upon graduation she moved to New York where she worked as an actor in film and theatre from 1990-1997 (some credits: *Big Night*, *The Misanthrope*, *My Children! My Africa!*, *Soul Food*). In 1997 she moved to Montreal where she co-founded bluemouth inc. with Lucy Simic. Sabrina is also a professional photographer/videographer who contributed to the WarChild documentary: *Musicians in the War Zone* and directed the David Usher video ‘*My Way Out*’.

Lucy Simic has been creating experimental performance for over ten years, with a particular interest in combining text and movement. Currently based in New York, she has worked in Vancouver (as co-Artistic Director of Radix Theatre), in Toronto, Montreal and London, England (through a commission by Woodenhead Works and Sirius Productions). She has taught movement for actors at Humber College, specifically Chi Kung and River Work, and teaches movement improvisation in the bluemouth inc. workshops. She holds a degree in French, Dance and Mathematics from Simon Fraser University and an MFA in Playwriting from York University

Richard Windeyer (BMus, MFA) creates music, sound and visuals for experimental theatre, radio, film, and integrated media projects. When not working with bluemouth inc., he collaborates with laptop trio FINGER, The Open Ears Music Festival and the occasional solo project. His work has been heard across Canada, Europe, the U.K., and on the Internet.

Press Notes and Reviews

American Standard

- “Movement, design and atmosphere contributed to one of the most intimate works this year. A company to watch for sure.”
— *Glenn Sumi, NOW magazine, Dec. 2000*

Lenz

- “Too often, multidisciplinary performance is experimental but soulless. In stark and bloody contrast, *Lenz* has a dramatic heart throbbing at its centre. Created by the always fascinating bluemouth inc., the site-specific show has viewers visit three hotel rooms to learn the story of *Lenz* (Stephen O’Connell), his sister Iris (Sabrina Reeves) and Pierre Rivière (Christopher Taylor Wright), the latter at first a shadowy player in the tale. Murder, a blurring of internal and external realities and the quest for connection with other people make up various strands of the plot...Writers O’Connell and Reeves bring the kind of in-your-face intensity (that’s an intentional acting style, since they work in close proximity to the audience) that never rings false, while Richard Windeyer’s soundscape enhances the chilling quality of the text. Wed beautifully to its setting, touching uncomfortable feelings that people usually ignore, *Lenz* is scary, heightened theatre. And I mean that as a compliment.” Rating: NNNN
— *Jon Kaplan, NOW, October 2002*
- “...an environmental adventure unlike anything I’ve ever partaken of in my years of theatre going...visceral and affecting...If you care about challenging, boundary-stretching theatre, then go see this show.”
— *Martin Denton, NYTHEATRE.COM, October 2005*

Something About A River, Part One: The Fire Sermon; Lenz

- Memories of staging tricks are often what audiences retain from interdisciplinary performances. Bluemouth inc. — Stephen O’Connell, Sabrina Reeves, Lucy Simic and Richard Windeyer — delivers the entire package, complete with story, characters and most importantly, emotion. In *The Fire Sermon*, set in a porn cinema and the first part of a trilogy, and later — superbly — in *Lenz*, played out

in various hotel rooms, the company kept surprising and mesmerizing viewers.
 — *Jon Kaplan's "Top 10 Toronto Theatre Artists of 2002"*

Something About a River, Part 3: What the Thunder Said

- Critics's Pick: "This powerful show by site-specific troupe bluemouth inc. takes us (by bus, blindfolded) to an undisclosed location, where we see evocative, suggestive scenes unfold with bold theatricality and heartbreaking beauty. An Eastern flavour underlies the work, which on the surface seems to be about the price of gung-ho American values. Unforgettable. NNNN."
 — *Glenn Sumi, NOW magazine, Aug. 2003*

Something About a River

- "The company that's bringing me to my critical knees is Toronto's Bluemouth Inc. In one, five-hour evening, Bluemouth is remounting all three parts of its trilogy, an environmentally staged elegy to a Toronto long dead if not quite completely buried. It's a marathon "performance installation" that requires physical and mental stamina...The work evokes different moods and responses...the images are by turns exquisite, frightening and hypnotic. *** 1/2"
 — *Kamal Al-Solaylee, The Globe and Mail, November 2003*

The Memory Of Bombs

- "The performance itself is more punk circus than theatre...Bluemouth inc. uses movement and music better than almost any other troupe in town. NNN"
 — *Glenn Sumi, NOW magazine, August 2004*
- "The Memory of Bombs unfolds in a haunting location, and a flurry of awe-inspiring images and physical movements assault the senses."
 — *Kamal Al-Solaylee, The Globe and Mail, August 2004*