



MORIN LEROUX

ARTS VIVANTS

PRESS KIT

ABOUT



© Marie-Noëlle Pilon

Morin/Leroux · Arts vivants is the result of the artistic collaboration between creators Alexandre Morin and Mathieu Leroux. Their work is deeply rooted in contemporary dance, yet resolutely transdisciplinary. As projects evolve, roles and mediums shift: choreography, stage direction, production design, dramaturgical research, and performance all merge into a vibrant and porous co-creation process.

Their work is built around precise physical tasks and refined bodily states, defined by strict spatial and temporal parameters. The body is often treated in its abstraction—as matter in motion. Their research is driven by both aesthetic concerns and sharp stage dramaturgy; it is infused with an awareness of pop culture, an attraction to media subcultures, a taste for literary material, and a strong sense of experimentation. Morin/Leroux projects advocate for the permeability of knowledge, aiming to engage both seasoned audiences of live arts and those discovering it for the first time. Far from elitism, their approach is rooted in the conviction that an artistic universe can be rigorous, accessible, and emotionally resonant all at once.

Since 2018, seven productions have emerged from the artists' partnership, giving rise to a polished, introspective, and often exhilarating universe.



ALEXANDRE MORIN

Alexandre Morin is a choreographer, performer, and teacher at the École de danse contemporaine de Montréal. A graduate of EDCM in 2013, he received the Hnatyshyn Foundation grant awarded to a promising young contemporary dance artist in Canada. As a dancer, he has danced for Marie Chouinard, Sylvain Émard, and Dominique Porte to name a few. In 2022, he was selected for a choreographic exchange between Italy and Quebec, offered by CALQ, Circuit-Est and CSC Centro per la Scena Contemporanea in Bassano del Grappa. The 2023–2024 season was a pivotal year for Morin, as he presented three well-received shows back-to-back: *Anatomie d'un moteur* (Agora de la danse), *Plasticity/Desires* (co-produced by MAI and La Chapelle Scènes Contemporaines), and *Cutting Through the Noise* (Agora de la danse).



MATHIEU LEROUX

Mathieu Leroux is a writer, performer, stage director, and dance dramaturg. He holds a degree from Université du Québec à Montréal (Acting and directing), a masters from Université de Montréal (French literature), and received the Geneviève-De-La-Tour-Fondue scholarship for excellence in his master's thesis. His novel *Dans la cage* (Héliotrope) was pre-selected for the Chambéry First Novel Prize in France. In 2013–14, he was a writer-in-residence at the Goethe Institute in Montreal and Berlin. Leroux is the creator of a solo show (*La naissance de Superman*, TSF), a group piece (*Scrap*, Espace Libre), and a choreographic duet with Sébastien Provencher (*Bones & Wires*, Tangente). He has published several works (novels, essays, short stories). As a performer, he has danced/acted in works by Helen Simard, Louis-Karl Tremblay, Morena Prats, and Alexandre Morin. As a dramaturg, he has collaborated for many years with artists such as Victor Quijada, Dorotea Saykaly, and Catherine Gaudet. He has also been part of the creative team on productions for tanzmainz (Mainz, Germany) and Ballet BC (Vancouver, Canada).

PLASTICITY/ DESIRES : THIRST OF THE SENSES

BY LÉA VILLALBA,
REVUE JEU, PUBLISHED JANUARY 19, 2024

■
In their new creation, *Plasticity/Desires* presented at MAI (Montréal, arts interculturels), Morin/Leroux dive deep into the notion of desire. Set within a charged, sensual atmosphere, seven performers surrender fully—immersing themselves in the intensity of the music, sculpting the space, and shaping its scenography. What emerges is a multidisciplinary piece that is both sensory and vibrant.



© Jonathan Goulet

After a few disclaimers about loud music, strobe lights, and smoke, the audience steps into MAI's unconventional performance space—a venue marked by scattered pillars and a layout that allows for immersive, 360° viewing. It's the space itself that first sparks intrigue. A water basin, a mass of clay, and simple props like spray bottles instantly pull us into a world of sensuality and human warmth. Slowly, calmly, the seven performers begin to inhabit the stage—spraying one another, moving in close proximity, creating a soft, almost tangible sense of well-being. This tranquility gradually gives way to a mounting restlessness, as physical tasks start to dominate. Jeans are pulled on; daily rituals begin. The music grows louder, sometimes even abrasive. And with this shift, individuality begins to assert itself.

As the piece evolves, so does the set—transformed through striking lighting and sound design. Water comes to life. The walls dissolve, opening up into spaces for movement, for living. The clay morphs, breaks apart, and spreads across the stage. Visually, *Plasticity/Desires* carries us through a range of aesthetics, each evoking distinct sensations—brought to life through the performers' finely tuned interpretations. We follow their constant transformation with curiosity, not in search of a narrative, but in connection with the sensory—with sensation itself.

The music is intoxicating, perfectly enveloping the artistic proposition. From electric guitar riffs to gentle melodic passages and electronic pulses, it propels the dancers into physical ascension.

Sensoriality

The music reaches full intensity. So do the bodies. Each performer now sculpts their own piece of clay—physically engaging with it, attempting to shape their own desire, striving—individually—to fulfill it. Amid the growing noise, each holds up their creation with pride, pushing forward. The sense of collectivity fades, leaving only a faint trace. Individual pursuits take precedence; while everyone is reaching for something, no one truly helps the other get there.

Memories and fantasies begin to surface through trembling movements, undulating gestures, and a languid relationship with the ground—and with the clay. Physical contact becomes rare, though the performers' internal states seem closely aligned. Their trajectories mirror one another. Are we really that different, in the end, when we all walk the same paths?

In a physicality that is both raw and sensual, the performers give themselves over completely—body and soul. Sweat mixes with water, which in turn gives life to the clay. What began as simple energy morphs into sensation, into desire, until it culminates in something like a trance—where human (or is it animal?) instinct takes over. The body becomes matter, and matter becomes body. Everything slips into chaos—but a beautiful, satisfying chaos. Wild. Sexy. Exhilarating to witness.

In parallel with the performance, Morin/Leroux also offers a discussion on performance, material, and movement, along with a screening of their first film, *Liminal Drift*—an exploration of the interplay between outer realities and inner, imagined worlds.

Choreography and Artistic Direction: **Alexandre Morin**
Music Composition and Sound Design: **Jonathan Goulet**
Performers: **Myriam Arseneault, Philippe Dépelteau, Sara Hanley, Chéline Lacroix, Mathieu Leroux, Justin De Luna, Charlie Prince**
Lighting Design: **Karine Gauthier**
Dramaturge: **Mathieu Leroux**
Costume Design: **Angela Rassenti, Jonathan Saucier**
Scenography: **Jonathan Saucier, Alexandre Morin**
Clay Consultant: **Pascale Girardin**
Production Management: **Florence Cardinal-Tang, Elodie Lê** (with support from Parbleux)
Technical Direction: **Sophie Robert**
Production Assistants: **Philippe Dépelteau, Wolfe Girardin**
Rehearsal Director: **Emmanuelle Bourassa Beaudoin**
Scenic Painter: **Véronique Pagnoux**
Assistant Painter: **Vivienne Angelique**
Additional Assistance: **Justine Bellefeuille, Camil Bellefleur**
A production by Other Animals, presented at MAI (Montréal, arts interculturels) until January 27, 2024.



<https://revuejeu.org/2024/01/19/plasticity-desires-la-soif-des-sens/>





© Alain Roberge, La Presse

BY SAMUEL LAROCHELLE,
LA PRESSE, PUBLISHED OCTOBER 19, 2023

In *Anatomie d'un moteur*, created in collaboration with Mathieu Leroux (pictured left), Alexandre Morin returns to his past.

There's something of Billy Elliot in Alexandre Morin's story. Like Billy, he discovered dance at the age of 11 in a rural environment. Billy came from a mining village in northeastern England; Alexandre grew up in a family of mechanics in Quebec's Lower Laurentians. In *Anatomie d'un moteur*, presented at the Agora de la danse from October 25 to 28, Morin brings these two worlds together.

This work—blending dance, cinema, music, and dramaturgy—was created in close collaboration with Mathieu Leroux and Jonathan Goulet. In it, Morin revisits his roots. “I grew up in the woods,” he says. “We moved about ten times, but no matter where we lived, there was always a garage, and our yard turned into a scrapyard. I wanted to explore what still remained of that world for me.” It’s a world he once rejected. “Manual labor and hypermasculinity didn’t interest me. And school was hard for me as a teenager. I was a closeted gay kid, and I couldn’t wait to get out.” Thankfully, dance brought light into his life. “Once I realized I wanted to make a career out of it, I moved to Montreal, where I could flourish—artistically and in terms of identity.”

To do that, however, he felt he had to leave a part of himself behind. “When I arrived in the city and into the gay community, I really hid my rural side. I had an accent and spoke in a way I wanted to ‘fix.’ I wanted to clean all that up.”

Now, after a decade of artistic growth, maturity and distance have brought a more nuanced view of his father’s absence and his discomfort with his rural upbringing. “Now that I’ve come into my own—personally, artistically, and sexually—I’m exploring how it feels to go back there as an adult. It actually feels good to reconnect. I’ve never been closer to my brother.” Although the piece originally set out to address the absence of their father, the creative process shifted focus, placing the sibling relationship at the heart of the project.

"We document my brother at work. He appears on screen. We talk about car bodywork and our childhood memories."

- Alexandre Morin

A brother who, along with their mother and sister, attends all of Alexandre's performances. "After the shows, they wait for me in the lobby to congratulate me. I feel like they don't always have the words to express their experience as audience members, but they're there." Present—and very attentive. "One day, my brother told me that when I was a kid in dance school, the dancers all moved the same way, in sync. But now, in my shows, he felt like I've found my own way of moving. That really touched me."

Reclaiming Manual Labor

In turn, Morin has become curious about the world of his brother and father—especially after something his father once said: if his hands weren't as dirty as his, he hadn't really worked. "I wanted to reclaim manual labor in my own way—and show that my job as a dancer is physically demanding, too." He closely observed his brother's work and the strategies he uses to avoid injury. "I was fascinated to discover the choreography of his body as he interacts with the vehicle. In the piece, we create a dialogue between artist and craftsman—highlighting the sensitive, artistic dimension of his work."

Morin doesn't hide his desire to give audiences tools to engage with the work. Together with his collaborators, he selected autobiographical fragments that lean toward fiction. "We share moments from my life and weave them into the dramaturgy. The video element will also move into fiction—it becomes a gay western bar where someone is searching for emancipation."

Is he concerned about how his loved ones might respond? "I give them space to receive the show. As a creative team, we know we were thoughtful in our choices throughout the process. I do talk about the absence of the father, through the body and through identity—but ultimately, it's become more about reconnecting with my brother and with my roots, and fully embracing them on stage."

Anatomie d'un moteur, Agora de la danse, October 25–28

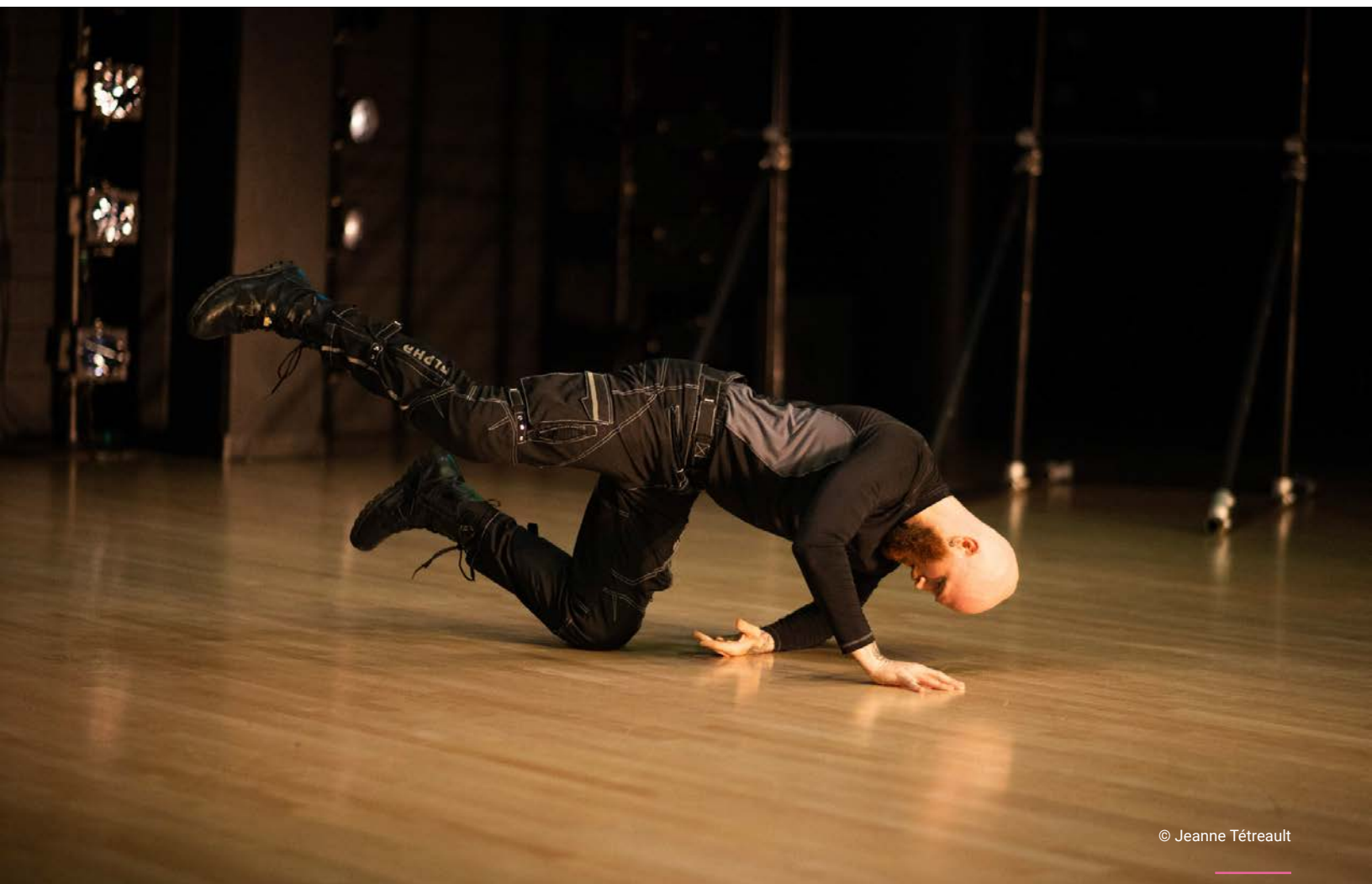


<https://www.lapresse.ca/arts/spectacles/2023-10-19/alexandre-morin/la-danse-du-mecanicien.php>

Rave reviews for Anatomie d'un moteur

<https://www.theatralites.com/post/danse-anatomie-d-un-moteur-d-alexandre-morin-vroom-vroom>

<https://lesartsze.com/anatomie-dun-moteur-quand-la-danse-revele-les-lignees-dhommes-ruraux-du-quebec/>



IN MY (VIRTUAL) FOOTSTEPS IN DANCE: BONES & WIRES



© Vanessa F

BY ROBERT ST-AMOUR
PUBLISHED MAY 12, 2021

Although spring—and its warmer weather—is slow to arrive, the calendar clearly shows that most cultural seasons are coming to an end for many presenters. At Tangente, the season wraps up with the online broadcast of *Bones & Wires*, created and performed by Sébastien Provencher and Mathieu Leroux. I've known Sébastien for quite some time as a choreographer and performer whose work is rich with meaning. I first encountered Mathieu's work as an author, through his haunting novel *Avec un poignard*.

Naturally, I was very curious to see what would emerge from the meeting of these two artists from such distinct creative worlds. From the outset, we are drawn into two parallel universes, each painted in complementary, tangy hues. These are spaces where the two characters appear to be engaged in a mystical, mysterious quest—their movements charged with a sense of urgency, confronting something imminent. Gradually, a kind of awareness emerges: a need for reprogramming. Though each occupies their own space, they seem to remain connected—linked by a high-voltage current.

A pivotal moment arrives when the wall of wires separating them collapses. The divide begins to feel more like shared terrain. Together, they confront a different kind of wall: the wall of incommunicability, of alienation. A barrier that seeks to hold them captive. Their movements grow hesitant, frantic, repetitive. The two bodies brush against one another, attempting to coordinate, to synchronize—but the machine malfunctions. I feel, I know, that the end of the journey is near. That light is possible. "A new day has begun," announces a disembodied, synthetic voice—and indeed, it materializes. The two fighters rest side by side, energy drinks in hand. A moment of respite, a pause, before diving deeper. This is a work full of beauty, with original music by Steve Lalonde and lighting by Hugo Dalphond. Its abstract nature gave me space to project my own story—one that became even more vivid on a second viewing.

I would be remiss not to mention the inclusion of the "making of" feature at the end of the presentation. This thirty-minute segment offered a fascinating look at the creative process and the challenges encountered at each stage of development. I always appreciate hearing directly from creators and their collaborators—and I was especially moved by the emotional resonance in Mathieu Leroux's testimony.

<http://surlespasduspectateur.blogspot.com/2021/05/sur-mes-pas-virtuels-en-danse-une.html>

Rave reviews for the work of Leroux

<https://www.lapresse.ca/arts/litterature/2020-09-20/critique/avec-un-poignard-au-dela-des-nuits-fauves.php>

<https://www.lapresse.ca/arts/spectacles-et-theatre/critiques-de-spectacles/201206/15/01-4535220-scrap-se-prendre-une-claque.php>

LISTENING TO YOUR MUSIC SLOWED + REVERB

BY DAPHNÉ B.
LA PRESSE, PUBLISHED MARCH 31, 2024

When I listen to a *slowed+reverb* song, I sometimes feel as though my solitude is resonating with the entire world. It's the music of those who are alone, together.

Quebec choreographer Alexandre Morin also connects deeply with the slowed-down tempos that define internet culture. He draws inspiration from the *slowed+reverb* microgenre and from EBM (electronic body music) in his latest dance work, *Cutting Through the Noise*, presented at Agora de la danse on April 4, 5, and 6—a piece where 12 dancers “try to find their way in a world where screens rule more than ever.”



© Jonathan Goulet

Nostalgia as a refuge

Morin first discovered *slowed+reverb* videos during the pandemic, while browsing online without much intention. He was quickly drawn in by the nostalgic imagery that often accompanies the genre—scenes from Japanese anime spanning the 1980s to the early 2000s. A longtime fan of the *Sailor Moon* anime, Morin was captivated. For him, the nostalgic aesthetic of the trend offers more than just visual appeal—it becomes a way to escape reality. When your sense of orientation slips away, as it did during the height of the pandemic, it's only natural to reach for something familiar—even if that means idealizing the past. “As a reaction to the pandemic, we kind of retreated, trying to reconnect with our inner child. I started collecting toys from my childhood,” he explains in a phone interview.

The nostalgia that defines *slowed+reverb* could also be described as internet nostalgia, in that it specifically references the cultural tone of the 1980s to early 2000s—a time when the internet still held the promise of a bright, open future. Today's digital reality, by contrast, feels fragmented, extractive, and driven by corporate logic. Against that backdrop, the bittersweet melancholy that lies at the heart of *slowed+reverb* becomes even more poignant.

A unifying solitude

To this melancholy, Morin responds with the idea of community. In *Cutting Through the Noise*, the 12 dancers each move within their own isolated space, as if to evoke the solitude of the pandemic. And yet, they are also united—by the music. Morin sees the unifying potential of the *slowed+reverb* genre as essential to the work. To really understand the genre, he says, watching a few videos isn't enough. You have to read the comments. That's where the shared experience happens—where users speak to each other, responding, reflecting, and opening up about the memories and emotions the music stirs in them. For a moment, they manage to quiet the surrounding static, to *cut through the noise*, and allow themselves a pause—to reflect, to slow down, just like the music itself.



<https://www.lapresse.ca/societe/chroniques/2024-03-31/culture-web/ecouter-sa-musique-au-ralenti-avec-de-l-echo.php>

DEFEATING THE ALGORITHM, HAND IN HAND



BY NOÉMIE ROCHEFORT
SORS-TU, PUBLISHED MARCH 26, 2024

***Cutting Through the Noise* doesn't quite fit the usual profile of a piece that ends up on stage at Agora de la danse. Originally created for a graduating class from the École de danse contemporaine de Montréal (EDCM), the work will nevertheless take shape at the Wilder Building from April 4 to 6. *Sors-tu?* sat down with choreographer Alexandre Morin to uncover the story behind this unconventional project.**

Choreographer, dancer, and visual artist Alexandre Morin doesn't mince words. "It's completely exceptional that we're at Agora with this show," he says enthusiastically. With a mix of vision, hard work—and maybe a bit of magic—*Cutting Through the Noise* has grown beyond its original context at EDCM and found a broader stage.

For many of the eleven performers, this marks their first professional experience. After years of interrupted training and isolation during the pandemic, Morin was determined to give these young artists a genuine opportunity to step into the "real" world of contemporary dance.

Morin's growing reputation certainly helped open some doors. Fresh off the success of his recent solo *Anatomie d'un moteur*, also presented at Agora de la danse, he has less to prove when it comes to the strength of his artistic voice. But in this case, the project's success is also rooted in something deeply human—something rare in a dancer's career.

It was like the stars aligned. The creative process began in the thick of the COVID-19 pandemic, sparking honest conversations around the performers' fears, frustrations, and hopes for the future.

"Before even thinking about the theme for the choreography, I wanted to understand how the pandemic had impacted them," Morin explains. "We wanted to reconnect with the desire to dance." A graduate of EDCM himself, Morin found the experience took him back to his own beginnings. "It reminded me of when I was starting out, ten years ago. I gave them confidence, and in turn, they gave it back to me."

Back to the Early 2000s

This intergenerational exchange became a powerful source of inspiration, leading the choreographer to explore themes of nostalgia and technology. *Cutting Through the Noise* draws from a range of cultural references—some more retro than others—including the Y2K aesthetic, Windows 98, and 1990s rave culture, which even inspired the show's costumes.

Morin finds endless creative material in the cyclical nature of trends and the overwhelming pace of online life, especially given how much time we all spent behind screens during the pandemic.

"I myself fell into those YouTube rabbit holes, where one video leads to another, and then another," he says. If the piece hadn't been called *Cutting Through the Noise*, Morin already had a backup title in mind: Exit the Algorithm. To embody the sense of being caught in endless digital loops, the performers pace the stage in repetitive, almost obsessive movements.

"What's the impact of these tunnels, these loops, on the body?" he asks. He notes how increasingly difficult it is to pursue a career in dance today without promoting yourself on social media—and therefore, in some way, always performing for the algorithm.

The Body–Dance–Music Relationship

Music, as a shared and collective experience, plays a central role in *Cutting Through the Noise*. Morin references the unifying energy of the "Slowed + Reverb" trend—where familiar songs are slowed down and paired with nostalgic anime visuals.

Throughout the show's development, he and the dancers shared hundreds of music tracks. In fact, in the opening moments of the performance, each dancer wears their own headphones and "choreographs their playlist." Later, they converge around Morin's playlist, filled with music by the darkwave band Boy Harsher—whose sound supported him through the past few years.

"This project is a post-pandemic remedy," he says. He hopes the performers' energy will carry through to the audience at Espace Orange. "If people start swaying side to side, then I know I've achieved my goal."

But before thinking about connecting with the audience, Morin focused on something else first: creating a space where the performers could connect with one another. Fortunately, the chemistry was immediate.

"Dance had been taken away from us for months. We had nothing left to lose," he says. "And because I listened—to their needs, their uncertainty, their vulnerability—instead of arriving with a fixed agenda, I think I did my best work yet as a choreographer."

***Cutting Through the Noise* is presented at the Wilder Building (Agora de la danse), April 4, 5, and 6**



<https://sorstu.ca/cutting-through-the-noise-a-lagora-de-la-danse-en-avril-2024-defier-lalgorithme-main-dans-la-main/>



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www.morinleroux.com